Welcome!

I’d like to introduce you to the ISS office, our team members, and convey important responsibilities that you must follow to maintain your legal immigration status. Our team is your resource for immigration issues, and anything related to your cultural adjustment.
Other supports connected to ISS:

Also helping you to navigate RIT is your PAL - Peer Advisor Leader! If you have not yet connected with your PAL, please email us at iss@rit.edu

Representative Student Organizations (like Global Union) and many international student clubs will also help you connect with RIT Student Life!
Address & phone update required

Immigration regulations require you to update RIT with your new (Rochester) address & local phone #.

Enter these in the Student Info System (SIS) within 10 days of any change.
Email Requirements

Regularly *(at least every other day)* check your RIT e-mail account and read all notices from ISS & academic depts.

Students have been stuck at the border because they ignored emails from our office.

Email management options here: start.rit.edu
Tuition & fees

**eServices** at [www.rit.edu/infocenter/](http://www.rit.edu/infocenter/) lists your financial charges and payment options for tuition, fees, fines, etc.

*YOU* are responsible for monitoring *your* bill – even while on co-op or thesis.

Be sure to click on “Recent Activity” (**not** just “Statements”)

You can apply for a **payment plan** to spread out payments.

Details: [www.rit.edu/sfs](http://www.rit.edu/sfs)
Getting Help from ISS

- We have many answers to your questions on our [website](http://example.com).
  - After checking there, if you still have questions, please contact us via:

- Video “Walk-In” Hours by Zoom: [https://rit.zoom.us/j/446908886](https://rit.zoom.us/j/446908886)
  - Monday through Friday: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, and 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- You can also email us at: [iss@rit.edu](mailto:iss@rit.edu) (Monitored Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm)
- Or call [585) 475-6943](tel:(585) 475-6943) (staffed Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm)
- Or, for after-hours emergencies, call Public Safety at [585) 475-3333](tel:(585) 475-3333)
Important Terms

- **ISS**: International Student Services

- **SEVIS**: Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (ICE database) this is funded by your SEVIS fee.

- **DSO (Designated School Official)** for F-1 students using a form I-20.

- **RO (Responsible Officer)** for J-1 program for students & scholars who use the DS-2019 form.
  - These are the RIT staff who can sign and update your immigration forms (I-20, DS-2019, etc.) and they work at ISS. We can update most forms electronically and email them to you.
Several Government Agencies Enforce Immigration Rules

- **YOU** are responsible for understanding & following
  - F-1 and J-1 rules.

- We are here to help you understand them.

- So...

- Please ask questions before doing anything unusual.
Maintaining your **lawful** status

- It is **YOUR** responsibility to know and follow the rules related to your F-1 or J-1 status.
  - If your spouse or children are in the US, they are also required to know and follow the rules for F-2, J-2, etc.

- ISS will always advise you, but the **responsibility** to follow the rules is **yours**, and there are serious consequences for ignoring or breaking the rules.
Immigration Documents

- **Passport**: keep yours updated through your embassy (or passport authority when home). Should be valid for 6 months when traveling.

- **Visa (F-1 or J-1)**: only needs to be valid at time of entry to US.

- **I-94 record** (access your most recent record online)

- **I-20 (F-1 students)**; **DS-2019 (J-1 students)**
Immigration Documents

You must have *all* of your *original* documents (not copies) when you are downtown at the central bus, train station, or the airport!

And... *whenever* you leave Rochester.
Extended/replaced only by your embassy, or in your home country. Must always be valid while you are in the U.S.
Should have at least 6 months of remaining validity when traveling.
Can only be issued outside the U.S.

The visa is like your “key” to enter.

Your visa can expire after entry, but your I-20 and passport must always remain valid.

If you leave the US with an expired visa, you must obtain a new visa in your home country before returning to the U.S.
Wait a week after entry to the US to retrieve your I-94 record.

Then, print out your I-94 number: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94

You will need the I-94 number if you apply for a campus job, a Social Security Number, or a New York driver’s license.
Form I-20
(describes the terms of your F-1 status)
Please notify ISS of any errors, or need to extend section
Form DS-2019
(describes the terms of your J-1 status)
How long can I stay in the U.S.?

Your form estimates when you will complete your degree requirements. Can be shortened or extended with approval from your Academic Department and ISS.

Students have a grace period to stay in the U.S. after completion of program.

- **60-day grace period for F-1**
- **30-day grace period for J-1**

Within that time, you must depart the U.S. or obtain post-completion work/training authorization. Application details on our website.
To re-enter the U.S. after a trip

Required:
✓ Passport valid at least 6 months into the future
✓ Valid U.S. Visa*; original I-20 (or DS-2019) endorsed (signed) by ISS/sponsor during the current academic year

Also required if you will be renewing your visa while outside the US:
- Recent proof of financial support
- Transcript or “Enrollment Verification Letter” (from Registrar’s Office)
*Travel to/from Canada*

Same as previous page, with one exception:

Your F-1 or J-1 visa, *can* be expired, *if you did not attempt to renew* your visa in Canada.

NOTE: Visa must *not* be expired if you are from Iran, Syria, Sudan, or Cuba

Certain citizens also require a Canadian Entry Visa (available only by mail)

More information at: [www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp) Or, link may be found at [rit.edu/iss](http://rit.edu/iss)

** It can take **2-4 weeks** to get a Canadian Visitor Visa. As of August 2020, the Canadian border is closed for non-essential travel.
Traveling within the US

When traveling outside of Henrietta, always carry your:

- Actual Passport
- Actual I-20 or DS-2019 (not just a photocopy)
- With a travel signature from the current academic year

This is particularly important at Rochester’s long distance bus station, train station and airport! (includes athletes traveling with RIT teams)
How to *Stay in Status*, Part I

Report online to International Student Services for initial registration in SEVIS. We will electronically sign your documents and email them back to you.

Always update RIT with your local address **within 10 days** of any change. ISS will then update SEVIS/US Immigration.

Do this at: [rit.edu/infocenter/](http://rit.edu/infocenter/)
How to Stay in Status, Part II

Each semester*, pursue a “full course of study”**
12 credits minimum for undergraduates
9 credits minimum for graduate students

Exceptions: Co-op counts as full time (but you must notify ISS)
* Official school breaks (mid-Dec to mid-Jan, and summer)
** Limited special circumstances (final term, serious medical) & you must notify ISS
*** FTE (Full-Time Equivalency) for grad students doing courses plus research, thesis, capstone, final project, etc.
How to Stay in Status, Part III

Only 1 online course per semester can count towards your “full course of study” minimum. Plan ahead and choose courses carefully!

If you only need one course to finish your degree in your last semester, that course cannot be an online course. In-person component required.

Consult Academic Advisor & an ISS advisor with any questions.
How to Stay in Status, Part IV

Make normal progress towards completing your degree before the expiration of your DS-2019 or Form I-20

Contact ISS for:
- extension of stay – request before your documents expire
- change in educational levels or programs of study
- transfer of schools
How to Stay in Status, Part V

NEVER work off-campus without advance authorization:

- F-1 must have written approval for off-campus work
- J-1 must have advance written approval for both off-campus and on-campus work

20 hrs/week maximum of on-campus employment, while school is in session

This is monitored by the RIT Student Employment Office.

After completing studies, abide by the grace period rules

- Or, apply for work authorization, a change of educational level, or a school transfer before your documents expire.
YOUR responsibilities:
- Be a full-time student
- Get advance permission for off-campus work
- Keep I-20, DS-2019 & passport valid
- Keep local address & phone # updated with RIT

YOUR benefits:
- Ability to travel
- Ability to work during studies
- Apply to work after studies
- Ability to apply for future visa types