Notice:
We suggest that the documents listed below be kept in a secure location, just carry photocopies. However, if you are traveling outside the Durant/North Texas area, you should carry the original documents with you. If you are traveling by air, train, bus or ship, you may be required to show these documents before boarding. Keep photocopies of all your documents separately in case your documents are lost or stolen.

Passport:
Your passport must always be valid. Report a lost or stolen passport to the police because your government may require a police report before issuing a new passport. To renew or replace your passport, contact your country’s consulate in the U.S.

Visa:
The visa is the stamp that the U.S. consular officer placed on a page in your passport. The visa allows you to apply for admission into the U.S. as an F-1 student. Your visa need not remain valid while you are in the U.S. (Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not require visas to enter the United States as students, although they must present a valid Form I-20 at the time of admission.) If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., the next time you travel abroad you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. Exceptions to this rule exist for short trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands. Visas only be obtained outside of the U.S. at a United States Embassy or Consulate.

I-20 Certificate of Eligibility:
Issued by Southeastern, the I-20 is a printout from your SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) record. SEVIS is an internet-based database that allows schools and federal immigration agencies to exchange data on international students in the U.S. Each student has a unique SEVIS ID number, which is printed on your I-20 in the top right corner.
The I-20 is a mirror of your status in the U.S. The I-20 lists the institution where you are permitted to study, your program of study, and the dates of eligibility. The I-20 also allows you to apply for an F-1 visa if you are outside the U.S, apply for F-1 status within the U.S., enter and reenter the U.S. in F-1 status, and prove your eligibility for various F-1 benefits.

The I-20 must remain valid at all times. Request an I-20 extension before its expiration date. Allowing the I-20 to expire before you complete your academic program is a violation of F-1 status. Also, if you graduate before the completion date listed on your I-20 you are considered to have completed your program of study and your I-20 is no longer valid. Please verify your program end date with ISS each semester!

An F-1 international student needs a new I-20 in the following situations:

1. After entering the U.S. the first time
2. After transferring
3. After re-entering the U.S. when exiting out-of-status
4. Shortening or extending the I-20 completion date
5. Changing major
6. Adding a major
7. Significant change in funding
8. Receiving off-campus work authorization
9. Before applying for reinstatement
10. After having a reinstatement application approved in the United States

I-94 (Arrival & Departure Record)

When you enter the U.S. you are issued an admission stamp in your passport and a digital I-94 record will be created. You can print out an electronic I-94 to apply for various benefits such as a Social Security Number.

The admission stamp records the date and place you entered the U.S., your immigration status (for example, F-1 or F-2), and authorized period of stay (indicated by “D/S”, meaning “duration of status”). Be sure to check the stamp to make sure it is correct. D/S means that you remain in the U.S. as long as you are enrolled full-time and your I-20 has not expired.