An F-2 dependent is an eligible spouse or minor child of an F-1 student. F-2 dependents are issued their own dependent I-20 and are considered to be in status in the U.S. as long as the F-1 student is in status. Each F-2 dependent will be given an entry stamp on their passport upon arrival that should state “F-2” and “D/S”, indicating that he/she is eligible to remain in the U.S. as an F-2 for the duration of status as indicated on the I-20.

The following are F-2 regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security. It is essential that you read and understand these regulations. If you have any questions, please let us know. It is your responsibility to follow these regulations or face possible termination of your F-2 status in the U.S.

- **Study**
  There is a significant distinction between an F-1 student and F-2 dependent when it comes to receiving an education. F-1 students are required to be enrolled as full-time students, whereas F-2 dependents are prohibited from it. An F-2 dependent may not engage in any kind of full-time study according to government regulations. The only exception to this is an F-2 child who is enrolled full-time in an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through 12th grade).

- **Vocational or Recreational Part-time Study**
  An F-2 spouse or child may engage in part-time study, as long as the study is vocational or recreational in nature (an English language course, a tennis class, a cooking class). This means that the study is intended as a means of pursuing a hobby or an interest, and is incidental to your status. Part-time study that counts towards a degree requirement, leads to an educational or professional objective, or satisfies a prerequisite is strictly prohibited and would be considered a violation of the F-2 visa status.

- **Work**
  F-2 dependents may not work under any circumstances. This also means that F-2 dependents are not eligible for Social Security Numbers (SSN) under any circumstance, as SSNs are reserved for those who are employed.

- **Travel**
  An F-2 who is traveling outside the U.S. must obtain a travel endorsement on his/her dependent I-20, and must carry all the same documents the F-1 visa holder is required to have when re-entering the U.S.

- **Change of Status to F-1**
  An F-2 dependent may request a change of status to F-1, should the dependent wish to pursue an educational goal. However, the F-2 must wait for the change of status to be approved, prior to being eligible for any F-1 benefits. A change of status typically takes between 2-4 months to process, and an F-2 must be accepted to a program before beginning the change of status process. For more details on how to change your status, please schedule an appointment with an OISS advisor by calling 713-348-6095.

**Note for all F-1 and F-2 visa holders:** You must report any life event that may affect your immigration status such as birth of a child, marriage, change of legal name, divorce or death.