MAINTAINING J-1 STUDENT STATUS

What does it mean to be in J-1 Student status?

- You entered the U.S. with a J-1 visa (under the Student category) (or, if Canadian, used only a DS-2019 to enter the U.S.)

  OR

- You entered the U.S. with a different visa, and subsequently applied for and were granted a change-of-status to J-1 by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).

  THEREFORE, your primary purpose for being in the U.S. is to study.

How do I remain in lawful J-1 Student status?

To maintain your J-1 Student status, you must comply with ALL of the following requirements:

- **Keep your passport valid at all times.** While you are in the U.S., you must always have a valid passport.

- **Maintain a valid and accurate DS-2019.**
  - Check section 3 of your DS-2019. The date of expected completion of studies must not have passed. If the expiration date is approaching and you have not finished your program, you must apply for an “Extension of Stay” before the expiration date.
  - To re-enter the U.S., you must have a valid travel signature in the Travel Validation section of your DS-2019. The travel signature should be renewed every year. **Note:** Only (Alternate) Responsible Officers (A/RO’s) can sign your DS-2019.

- **Attend the school you are authorized to attend.** This means that you must report to the school whose DS-2019 you used to enter the U.S. or to which your last school transfer was authorized.

- **Study full-time and make normal progress towards your degree.**
  - Register for 12 credit hours of classroom study each semester (except during summer & winter break). **Note:** Online and Distance Education courses cannot be used to satisfy the full course of study requirement.
  - Register for 9 credit hours of classroom study each semester if you are a graduate student who holds an assistantship. **Note:** Online and Distance Education courses cannot be used to satisfy the full course of study requirement.
- Register for 1 or more credit hours each semester if you have **Certification of Full-time Status** from the Graduate School (Capen Hall 408, North Campus) while working on your thesis or dissertation.
- **Do not drop or resign courses so that you are no longer registered for a full course load.**
  - **Note:** If you were admitted to start a degree program during a summer session, you are required to register for a minimum of 6 credits during the first summer session in which you were admitted.

- **Notify UB of your Change of Address through the HUB Student Center within 10 days of your move.** ISSS will then notify the Department of Homeland Security. If you are on Academic Training, you must report your Change of Address to ISSS by emailing **isss@buffalo.edu**.

- **Maintain adequate health insurance for yourself and your dependents for the duration of your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.** Proof of proper health insurance must be submitted to ISSS, Talbert Hall 210, North Campus. For more information, read **“J-1 Exchange Visitor Health Insurance Requirements”**.

- **Never work without proper employment authorization.**
  - J-1 students are required to have written authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer before they are permitted to work on-campus. Prior to your employment start date, contact ISSS to request on-campus work authorization.
  - Any off-campus employment must meet the requirements for Academic Training and you must obtain Academic Training authorization prior to starting employment.
  - Employment authorization due to unforeseen economic circumstances is possible only in certain “serious, urgent and unforeseen” situations. Request an appointment with an International Student Advisor in ISSS, Talbert Hall 210, North Campus to discuss your situation.

- **Provide ISSS with the e-mail address(es) of any J-2 dependent(s).**

- **Notify ISSS if your J-2 dependents depart the U.S. permanently prior to your departure.**

**Are there any EXCEPTIONS to the full-time course registration requirement?**

There are some exceptions to the full-time course registration requirement:

- **During summer or winter break** (ONLY for continuing students who intend to register for the next term)
  - **Note:** Students who have initial DS-2019’s to start a degree program in the summer or winter must be enrolled.

- **During your final semester** if you need fewer than 12 credit hours to finish your degree
- **Note:** You must obtain written authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer prior to reducing your course load. ISSS also requires a written recommendation from your advisor/professor.

- **Bona Fide Academic Reasons.** If you need to pursue less than a full course of study for one semester and your academic dean or advisor provides a written statement recommending a reduced course load for academic reasons, you are not required to register for a full course load.
  - **Note:** You must obtain written authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer prior to reducing your course load.

- **Medical Problem.** If you need to reduce or interrupt your studies due to an illness or medical condition and have a written recommendation from a licensed medical professional (e.g., physician), you are not required to register for a full course load.
  - **Note:** The medical recommendation must include the reason for the recommendation, the number of courses you may take and the length of time such a reduction is necessary.
  - **Note:** You must obtain written authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer prior to reducing your course load.

**PLEASE NOTE:** A Medical Leave of Absence is different from a Leave of Absence. If you take a Leave of Absence from the University, you must depart the U.S., whereas a Medical Leave of Absence (when approved by an Alternate Responsible Officer) allows you to remain in the U.S. and maintain your J-1 status. If you cannot register for any classes due to a medical condition, you should apply for a Medical Leave of Absence from UB. To apply for it, you will need to meet with your Academic Advisor as well as an International Student Advisor.

Failure to comply with these requirements is a violation of your J-1 status, which may result in serious consequences, including your termination in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), inability to re-enter the U.S., and detention and deportation from the U.S. Please direct all questions regarding your J-1 student status to ISSS, Talbert Hall 210, North Campus.

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