



University at Buffalo  
The State University of New York

Office of International Education  
International Student and Scholar Services

## MAINTAINING J-1 STUDENT STATUS

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

- You entered the U.S. with an J-1 visa (under the Student category)
- 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 an I-94 card marked “D/S”.** D/S means “Duration of Status. As long as you maintain your J-1 Student status, you may remain in the U.S. as a J-1 Student.
- **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 get a travel signature in the Travel Validation section of your DS-2019 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.**
- **Remain a full-time student and make normal progress toward your degree.**
  - Register for 12 credit hours each semester (except during summer vacations).

- Register for 9 credit hours each semester if you are a graduate student who holds an assistantship.
- Register for at least 1 credit hour each semester if you have **Certification of Full-time Status** from the Graduate School (408 Capen Hall, North Campus) while working on your thesis or dissertation.
- **Notify UB of your Change of Address through MyUB or the Student Response Center website 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, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus.
- **Maintain adequate health insurance for yourself and your dependents for the duration of your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.**
- **Not work without proper employment authorization.**

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

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

- Vacation. If you intend to register for the next term, you may take a vacation during winter break and summer vacation.
- Final Term. If you need fewer than 12 credits to finish your degree requirements, you are not required to register full-time during your final semester
  - Note: You must obtain prior authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer to reduce 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 a semester and your academic dean or advisor provides a written statement recommending a reduced course load for academic reasons, you do not have to register for a full course load.
  - Note: You must obtain prior authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer to reduce your course load.
- Medical Problem. If you need to reduce or interrupt your studies due to an illness or medical condition and obtain a written recommendation from a physician, you do not have 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 prior authorization from an Alternate Responsible Officer to reduce 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 status.

**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 Visitors Information System), inability to re-enter the U.S. and arrest, detention and deportation from the U.S. Please direct all questions regarding your J-1 student status to ISSS, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus.**