



**University at Buffalo**  
*The State University of New York*

**Office of International Education**  
Immigration Services

## **MAINTAINING J-1 STUDENT STATUS**

As a J-1 student, your principal purpose for being in the United States is to study. It is important that you maintain your status as a J-1 student at all times.

### **What must I do to maintain my J-1 student status?**

In order to remain in lawful J-1 status, you must:

- have a passport that is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond the expected completion date in Section 3 of your DS-2019 (unless your country has an agreement with the United States)
- attend only the school you are authorized to attend
- be a full-time student (12 credits or 9 credits with an assistantship)
- submit timely and appropriate transfer and extension notification to Immigration Services
- not engage in unauthorized employment
- maintain adequate health insurance coverage for yourself and your dependents

### **Are there any exceptions to the full-time study requirement?**

There are some exceptions to the full-time course registration requirement. Exceptions may be made in the following situations or for the following reasons:

- during official school breaks and summer vacations
- in case of medical condition or illness\*
- during your final semester if less than a full course load is required to complete your program
- during your first semester, if documented and approved by the Immigration Services, due to initial difficulties with the English language, American teaching methods, or improper course level placement\*\*
- after you have completed the course requirements for your Master's or Doctorate Degree and have begun work on your thesis or dissertation. In this case, you must obtain a Certification of Full-time Status form from the Graduate School, 402 Capen Hall and bring it to Immigration Services.

*\* For a Medical Leave of Absence, you must apply for a medical leave of absence from the University through the Graduate School or your undergraduate academic advisor. Bring proof of the approved Medical Leave of Absence to Immigration Services.*

*\*\* For a **reduced course load**, you must bring a written statement from a physician recommending a reduction of coursework. The letter must specify the amount of the reduction and the length of time for which it is recommended or required.*

*Please Note: A Medical Leave of Absence is different from a Leave of Absence. Non-attendance under a Leave of Absence requires that you leave the United States, whereas a Medical Leave of Absence allows you to remain the U.S. and maintain your J-1 student status.*

### **What do I do if I have another sponsor?**

If your DS-2019 was issued by another sponsor (not the University at Buffalo), your sponsor may impose additional requirements for maintenance of your J-1 status. Please contact your sponsor to inquire.

### **What will happen if I don't maintain my J-1 student status?**

Failure to comply with the regulations regarding maintenance of your J-1 student status results in violation of your J-1 student status. Violations of your status may result in serious consequences, including termination of your program and removal from the United States.

If you have further questions, please contact Immigration Services, 210 Talbert Hall for assistance.