Untangling Immigration and Academics: What Does it Mean to Maintain Status for International Graduate Students?

International Student Services
Division of Student Life
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Goals for Today

Section 1: Introduce ISS
• Overview of international students

Section 2: New Student Entry & Orientation
• Check in and orientation

Section 3: During the academic program
• Full time enrollment
• Online courses
• Reduce course load
• Employment
• Academic extensions
• Change of academic level

Questions
Section 1: Introduce you to International Student Services (ISS)
### International Students @ UW-Madison

Total int’l students (grad & under): 6,183 from over 120 different countries/areas
(additional 1,200 student on OPT)

Top countries/areas: (Spring 2018 numbers)

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Spring 2018 International Student Population

- Undergraduate Students: 3034
- Graduate Students: 2658
- Professional Students: 116
- Non-degree Students: 375
- OPT: 1200
Section 2: New Student Entry & Orientation
New Student Entry & Orientation

Step 1: Enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the 1-20/DS-2019
Late arrivals - two weeks from program start date

Step 2: Attend the mandatory ISS Orientation and complete immigration check-in
Held in August and January 1-2 weeks prior to the start of classes (1/2 day)
Section 3: During the Academic Program
Maintaining F-1/J-1 Student Status

- Enroll full-time
- Report address changes in MyUW
- Maintain valid documents
- Only work as authorized
- Follow U.S. laws and university policies
Enrollment (Fall and Spring Semesters)

International students must enroll full time:

• Graduate students = 8 credits
  33.3% TA/PA = 6 credits
  50% TA/PA = 4 credits
  3 credits for dissertators

• Undergraduate students = 12 credits
Summer Enrollment

- Full-time enrollment is required if your first term is summer:
  - Undergraduates = 6 credits
  - Graduates = 4 credits
    - 33-50% TA/PA = 2 credits
    - Dissertators = 3 credits

- After your first semester, summer enrollment is usually optional
Online Courses

- Up to 3 credits - Fall or Spring semester
- Final semester (even if it is summer) must be enrolled in an on-campus course
- Online courses must be finished prior to completing on-campus courses
Reduce Course Load (RCL)

Reasons for RCL:

- Academic difficulties (can be approved only once per degree level)
  - Initial difficulty with reading requirements
  - Initial difficulty with English language
  - Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
  - Improper course level placement

- Final semester of study

- Illness or medical conditions (medical documentation required)

- Coursework Completed
  - Minimum of two grad level (300+ or above) credits
Reducing Course Load

Students must obtain approval from ISS before reducing their course load in order to maintain legal status

ISS approvals are reported in SEVIS

RCL Form: Applications and forms
Leave of Absence

- Registered at UW-Madison
  - Research Abroad: registered and considered maintaining their full-time (or part-time with RCL authorization)

- Not registered
  - Report leave of absence from the university
On-Campus Employment

F-1 Students
No additional work permission is needed

J-1 Students
Can work with written sponsor permission letter

Both types of students:

• During fall & spring semesters, cannot exceed over 20 hrs/wk

• During vacation periods can work over 20 hrs/week
  (winter, spring & summer breaks)
  * UW may limit to no more than 29 hours per week

• UW policy
Social Security Number

Must have employment offer to apply

Needs a letter from ISS in order to apply for an SSN

- **F-1 students**: Bring a job offer letter to ISS
  - Full name, date of birth, start date of employment
- **J-1 students**: Must request work permission from the sponsor listed on student’s DS-2019. If UW-Madison is the sponsor, bring a job offer letter and the [on-campus work application](#) to ISS.
Curricular Practical Training

- CPT = employment authorization to gain practical work experience for F-1 students
  - Related to field of study

- Only available prior to completing program requirements
  - Allows paid (or unpaid) training in field of study

  Work experience must be an integral part of established curriculum
  - Must be part of coursework for which student earns credit
CPT

What about volunteer work or unpaid internships?

Do students need CPT?

Difference between volunteering and engaging in an unpaid internship.

Volunteering = donating time with an organization whose primary purpose is charitable or humanitarian in nature, without remuneration or any other type of compensation.
Applying for CPT

- Get approval from designated Grad Coordinator or Advisor
- Enroll in academic course (at least 1 credit)
- Complete CPT application
  - Page 1: Completed & signed by Student
  - Page 2: Completed & signed by designated Grad Coordinator or Advisor
  - Page 3: Completed & signed by Employer
- Student can submit in person or our online ISS Application Drop Box
CPT Approval

ISS processing time: Up to 15 business days

• Employment must not begin until I-20 is issued

CPT authorization on new I-20, page 2

• ISS grants CPT on a semester basis, based on enrollment

I-20 is proof of employment authorization

• Submit copy of I-20 to employer

• SSN required for paid employment
Program Completion

According to immigration regulations, the definition of “program completion” is when students complete all requirements for program listed on their I-20

- CPT and employment cannot be reason to extend
- On campus employment ends when student deposits or final exam
Academic Extension

- Reasons for extending I-20 or DS 2019
- Process
- Funding Letter
- 5-year Grad School Rule
- I9 and Glacier
- Extension of I-20/DS-2019 Request
Change of Academic Level

- Exceptions for COL for F-1 and J-1 students
- Process
- Who prepares I-20: ISS or Grad School
- Change of Education Level Request
Academic Dismissal

Students who are dismissed from UW-Madison due to academic performance or conduct issues must depart the U.S., transfer schools within 21 days of dismissal (or appeal) before their SEVIS record is terminated.*

*If students appeal this decision, we count the 21 days from the outcome of the final appeal (If student chooses to withdraw from the university with ISS permission, they have 15 days to depart)
Questions?
The ISS Office

**In person:**
Red Gym, 2nd Floor

**Front Desk Hours**
M-W 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Th-F 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

**Summer Walk-in Advising Hours**
M-W 2 p.m -4 p.m.
Th 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.

**By phone:** 608-262-2044
M-F 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Please leave a message

**By e-mail:** iss@studentlife.wisc.edu
(2-3 business days)

**Via the web:** http://iss.wisc.edu

Access ISS - Newsletter