

## Guide for Academic Advisors and Departmental Contacts

### Who Advise and Employ International Students

International Student Advising and Services (ISAS) provide advising services to approximately 2500 non-resident visa holders throughout the year. Typically, these international students and exchange visitors come to OSU to participate in English language and academic preparation programs, pursue bachelors, masters or doctoral degrees, or participate in reciprocal educational exchange programs. You are welcome to contact an International Student Advisor with questions concerning a particular student situation; however, for more complicated matters, we encourage students to schedule an appointment with an advisor. Please visit our website for additional information and downloadable forms that may be of use to your department.

#### REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

##### Full-time Enrollment

International students who are on an F-1 or J-1 visa are required to maintain full-time enrollment throughout their program of study in the United States. Registration requirements for international students are as follows:

Program/Degree Level	Minimum Credits per Term
Undergraduate	12
Graduate (no assistantship)	9
Graduate (with assistantship)	12-16
CAP/CAPN (Conditionally Admitted Program)	Refer to the student's assigned INTO/OSU course schedule
Pathway Program (Graduate and Undergraduate)	12
INTO OSU Academic English	18
INTO OSU General English	18

There are several transcript designations that may or may not meet immigration regulations:

- Audit            A        Does not count toward full-time enrollment
- Withdrawal    W        Does not count toward full-time enrollment
- Incomplete    I        Counts toward full-time enrollment (course must be completed and a grade applied)
- Repeat            R        Counts toward full-time enrollment

In addition, an international student can only have **three** credits of **online classes** count towards their full-time requirements each term. They may take more than 3 credits online, but **only three per term** will count towards the minimum credits listed above.

##### Exceptions to Full-time Enrollment

Immigration regulations regarding enrollment are very strict and allow for exceptions only under certain conditions. International students should not drop or withdraw from a course until they have first consulted with an International Student Advisor. Failure to maintain full-time enrollment throughout the program of study could jeopardize the student's ability to continue his or her studies.

There are a few reasons students would be authorized to be less than full-time. **All reasons require the approval of an International Student Advisor in advance.** Possible reasons for being less than full-time are:

- Students in their first term at OSU experiencing language and cultural adjustment difficulties
- Students experiencing a serious medical condition, including both physical and mental health issues
- Undergraduate students in their final term are eligible to take a reduced course load if the number of credits required to graduate is fewer than 12..
- Graduate students who have completed all required coursework on their program of study and the minimum number of credit hours required for their specific graduate program may be eligible for a reduced enrollment. A reduced enrollment authorizes a student to register for only 3 credits each term. Master's degree students are generally eligible for up to 4 terms of reduced enrollment and doctoral candidates are eligible for up to 6 terms.

## **Vacation Term**

Degree students in F-1 and J-1 visa status are allowed to take one vacation term per academic year, and summer is the standard vacation term. Students in an INTO OSU program do not get an automatic annual vacation. During a vacation term, students are not required to enroll in classes though they may study part-time. Any student may take a vacation term during another term in the year, provided he or she has completed three terms of full-time enrollment, has registered full-time in their first term in a new program or degree level, and plans to register full-time for the same program in the term immediately following the vacation term. In addition, students in a Pathway program must complete three terms in a Pathway program prior to eligibility for a vacation term. Students who wish to take a vacation term should make an appointment with an International Student Advisor to determine eligibility.

Undergraduate students who plan to complete their program in summer term will need to be registered full-time (12 credits) or turn in a Reduced Course Load – Final Term form to ISAS prior to the start of summer term. Graduate students who will be completing their degree during the summer are required to register for a minimum of 3 credits under OSU's Continuous Enrollment Policy and turn in a completed Reduced Enrollment form to ISAS.

## **Leave of Absence/Discontinuing Studies**

Students who have decided to discontinue their studies or take a leave of absence should meet with an International Student Advisor to discuss their immigration status. An advisor will explain how long they are allowed to remain in the U.S., as well as applicable OSU procedures for resuming their studies in the future.

## **EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS**

### **General Information**

For immigration purposes, employment is defined as any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for compensation (money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room or other benefits). As a rule, students should never accept or begin employment off-campus without authorization from ISAS or United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Students who work off-campus without authorization could jeopardize their ability to continue their studies.

An international student may perform on- or off-campus "volunteer" work without pay or other compensation if the activity is historically unpaid, such as helping with a Red Cross blood drive. An international student may not perform volunteer work, such as bussing tables or babysitting. This type of work would be considered employment rather than a volunteer activity and requires prior authorization.

**INTO OSU students are not eligible to work on-campus or off-campus. Please contact ISAS if you have any questions about this.**

### **On-campus employment**

Fully-admitted degree and exchange students in F-1 and J-1 status are permitted to work on-campus a maximum of 20 hours per week during the academic term and full-time (21 hours or more) between terms and during a student's annual vacation term (usually summer), as long as the student intends to register full-time the next term. Students who plan to graduate during summer term may only work part-time since they are not considered to be on a vacation term. On-campus employment includes commercial firms that provide services for students on campus, such as the OSU Bookstore or fast food establishments in the MU, and off-campus employment with firms that are educationally affiliated with OSU's established curriculum. INTO OSU is considered an on-campus employer. If you are unsure whether a particular job is permissible, especially if the primary site of employment is off-campus, please contact an International Student Advisor before hiring the student.

J-1 regulations require written approval by a Responsible Officer from the sponsoring agency as stated on the DS-2019 *prior* to beginning on campus employment. J-1 students who are sponsored by OSU should complete an Employment Authorization Request form and return it to ISAS prior to the start of employment. J-1 students sponsored by an agency other than OSU should contact their Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor directly. F-1 regulations permit students to work on-campus without formal employment authorization. However, Human Resources and Payroll do require verification of a student's employment eligibility.

### **Off-Campus Employment**

#### ***Curricular Practical Training (CPT)***

CPT allows international students in F-1 status to engage in a short-term, temporary internship, practicum, or cooperative education program when it is a required or integral part of the curriculum in their department. CPT is authorized by ISAS and involves

registering for a specific course and interning with a specific company for a specific period of time. Students are required to attend one of the CPT information sessions held by ISAS throughout the year before CPT authorization will be given. If approved, the CPT authorization will appear on page 3 of the student's I-20, which the employer will use to hire the student. Students should plan to attend one of the required CPT information sessions that ISAS offers regularly throughout the year. Students may sign up for these workshops at the front desk of Heckart Lodge.

### ***Optional Practical Training (OPT)***

OPT allows international students in F-1 status to gain up to 12 months of practical work experience in their field of study. Some students who are majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math may be eligible to apply for a 17-month extension of their OPT under certain conditions. Students may use OPT either before or after completion of their studies; however, they must apply for this benefit prior to the 60-day grace period following their last term of registration. Students should plan to attend a required OPT information session approximately 2 terms before their anticipated date of completion. ISAS offers regular OPT information sessions throughout the year. Students may sign up for these workshops at the front desk of Heckart Lodge. OPT is authorized by USCIS, so students should allow 2-4 months for their application to be processed. If approved, students will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS which will allow them to in their field of study during the dates listed on the card.

### ***Severe Economic Hardship***

F-1 students who experience unforeseen economic circumstances beyond their control may be eligible for off-campus work authorization if approved by the USCIS. Students coping with financial hardship should meet with an International Student Advisor to discuss their situation and eligibility for off-campus work authorization. If approved, F-1 students will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS which will allow them to work anywhere during the dates listed on the card. Employment can only be part-time while school is in session. J-1 students who are experiencing unforeseen economic hardship should discuss their situation with an International Student Advisor or their program sponsor.

### ***Academic Training (AT)***

Academic Training allows J-1 students to gain practical experience in their major field of study either with or without wages or remuneration. J-1 students may participate in academic training during or after their studies if written approval is granted by the Responsible Officer from the sponsoring agency. J-1 students should meet with an International Student Advisor for more information.

### **ISAS Processing Time**

All requests to ISAS take approximately seven (7) working days, so students should plan accordingly when requesting employment authorization, social security letters, or other documents or services necessary for employment. Rush requests will not be accommodated without compelling reasons.

## **OTHER VISA STATUSES**

Most students at OSU hold an F-1 or J-1 visa; however, some students, their dependents, and employees of the University may attend classes or seek employment in other visa categories. Common visa statuses are:

- **H-1B visa holders** are generally full-time employed temporary workers who are allowed by immigration regulations to take part-time classes either as a non-degree or degree-seeking student. They are not eligible for on-campus employment unless they have received approval from USCIS to work in that position at OSU.
- **H-4 visa holders** are dependents of H1-B's and may take classes part-time or full-time either as a non-degree or degree-seeking student. They are not eligible for any type of employment.
- **F-2 visa holders** are dependents of F-1 students and may not take classes as a degree-seeking student. They may, however, take part-time classes that are "recreational or vocational in nature." F-2's are not eligible for any type of employment.
- **J-2 visa holders** are dependents of J-1's and are eligible to work on- or off-campus once they have received approval (an Employment Authorization Document) from the USCIS. They may also take classes part-time or full-time.

If you have any questions about a student or employee holding any of these visas, please contact an International Student Advisor in our office at 541-737-6310 or [isas.advisor@oregonstate.edu](mailto:isas.advisor@oregonstate.edu)