Maintaining Status for Students

While you are here at Ohio State, you are responsible for maintaining your status with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Within DHS is a program called SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. SEVIS requires all colleges and universities in the United States to electronically report information about F-1 and J-1 students and visiting scholars. Because universities are required to report on the status of all F-1 and J-1 students, failure to maintain your status could jeopardize your ability to remain in the U.S.

There are several important things you must do to maintain status.

1. You may enter the U.S. no more than 30 days before the program start date listed on your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.
2. Before your first semester of study at Ohio State, you must report to the Office of International Affairs for new international student Check-in and Orientation.
3. Keep your passport valid at least six months into the future.
4. Maintain full-time student status and normal progress towards your degree. (Please note that only three credit hours of distance/online courses will count toward full-time enrollment)
   - 12 credit hours for an undergraduate,
   - 8 credit hours for a graduate student, with or without a Graduate Assistant (GA) position
   - 12 credit hours for a fellowship student
   - 3 credit hours for a post-candidacy doctoral graduate student
   - 4 credit hours for a Graduate Assistant (GA) in summer term
   - 6 credit hours for a fellowship student in summer term
5. You are allowed one period of “vacation” per year, during Summer Term. You are not required to enroll full time during summer, and it is no longer necessary to report a vacation request to the Office of International Affairs. For more information on our vacation policy, see the vacation term section of our website.
6. In rare circumstances, enrolling part-time or withdrawing for a semester is permitted. In order to apply, you must first obtain
a Reduced Course Load Form from the Office of International Affairs.

7. You may not work off-campus without seeing an immigration coordinator to apply for employment authorization.

8. If you are an F-1 student, you may work on-campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session. During semester breaks and your annual vacation semester, you may work more than 20 hours on campus. You may not work off-campus without authorization from the Office of International Affairs. If you are a J-1 student, you may work on-campus only with special permission. You may not work off-campus without authorization from the Office of International Affairs. Please visit the employment section for more information.

9. You must notify the Office of the University Registrar within 10 days of an address change (and you may not use a P.O. Box as an address).

10. You should review specific travel requirements prior to any travel outside the U.S.

11. You are required to report a change of educational level to an immigration coordinator prior to the semester in which the change occurs. Updated financial documentation and a formal letter from your program will need to be provided. An updated Form I-20 or DS-2019 will be issued to reflect the level of study.

12. You are required to obtain a program extension one semester prior to the end date reflected on Page 1 of your Form I-20/DS-2019. Failing to extend your immigration record will cause you to lose your F-1 or J-1 status.

13. J-1 students are required to maintain health insurance for themselves and any J-2 dependents throughout their J-1 program. The insurance must meet the standards specified by the U.S. State Department:
   - Medical benefits of at least $50,000 per accident or illness
   - Repatriation of remains in the amount of $7,500
   - Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of $10,000
   - A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness

   Ohio State's student health plan meets these requirements. If you are a J-1 student sponsored by your government, and are waiving the Ohio State insurance for a plan assigned by your government, be aware you must still meet the above standards, and maintain insurance for your J-2 dependents.

14. J-1 students must maintain their “original program objective” throughout their time in the United States in J-1 status. That is, J-1 students may not change their field of study (major or
graduate degree program) while on the same J-1 SEVIS record, as this constitutes a change in objective. Progression from one degree level to another (e.g., Master’s to PhD) in the same field of study is permitted.

Please read the emails you receive from the Office of International Affairs and check the International Affairs website frequently, as updated information will be provided as it becomes available.