As an international student you are in a unique situation in that you not only have to learn about every aspect of what it means to be a “Buckeye” and about becoming a proud member of The Ohio State University community, but you must also know and abide by the United States Federal Regulations pertaining to your non-immigrant student status.

Maintaining your legal immigration status is very important and is dependent on your understanding and meeting certain requirements as outlined by the U.S. government and the university. Failure to maintain your lawful J-1 student status will result in you losing all benefits associated with your J-1 status, such as on-campus employment and practical training, and could even lead to your deportation from the U.S.

Maintaining lawful J-1 status is ultimately your responsibility! However, we want to ensure that you have the tools and resources necessary for a successful experience at Ohio State, without ever having to experience any problems with your immigration status. Please note that the following information is not all-inclusive and you should always consult with an Immigration Coordinator whenever you are in doubt.

Office of International Affairs
International Students and Scholars
The Ohio State University
100 Oxley Hall, 1712 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210 U.S.A.
(614) 292-6101 - Phone
(614) 292-4725 – Fax
iss@oia.osu.edu – E-mail
Immigration Coordinators are available in Oxley Hall Room 100
Monday - Thursday 1 - 4 p.m.
Friday by appointment only

Note: Please read this handout carefully prior to attending the immigration session at check-in.
Guidelines for Maintaining Lawful J-1 Status

- Keep your passport valid for at least six months into the future
- Enroll in a full course of study during the academic year
- Notify ISS of your address upon arrival and any time you change addresses, within ten days of moving
- Maintain required health insurance coverage
- Extend your Form DS-2019 at least a quarter prior to its expiration
- Obtain approval from ISS prior to reducing your enrollment, withdrawing, or taking a leave of absence
- Consult ISS if you intend to switch majors or degree levels
- Limit on campus employment to a maximum of 20 hours per week (with work authorization), and report on-campus employment to ISS
- Do not engage in off-campus work unless specifically authorized by an Immigration Coordinator at OIA – Know your employment options

Safekeeping Documents
Make a copy of all of your important travel and immigration documents and keep them in a safe and easily accessible location. In addition, you must keep all of your original Form DS-2019s. You may receive several Form DS-2019s during your stay in the U.S., and it is common for a U.S. government agency to request copies of all Form DS-2019s issued to you when you are applying for a benefit or even another visa. You should therefore not discard any immigration documents issued to you.

Passport Validity
Your passport must be valid for at least six months into the future. Contact your country’s consulate or your embassy in Washington, DC (www.embassy.org/embassies/) for instructions on extending your passport while in the U.S.

Full-time Enrollment Requirement
ISS is required to report on each student’s enrollment to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by updating the student’s individual SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) record every term. In order to maintain lawful J-1 non-immigrant student status, international students must be enrolled for a full course of study during the academic year.
Full-time enrollment is required from Autumn Quarter 2011 through Spring Quarter 2012, and during all autumn and spring semesters thereafter. All students will automatically be issued a vacation term for each summer semester beginning summer term 2012.

**Full-Time Enrollment for:**
- Undergraduate Students: 12 credit hours
- Graduate Students without a Graduate Associate Position: 10 credit hours
- Graduate Students with a Graduate Associate Position (GAA, GTA, GRA): 9 credit hours
- Graduate Students with a Graduate Associate Position during Summer: 7 credit hours
- Graduate Students with a Fellowship: 15 credit hours
- Post-Candidacy Graduate Students (with or without a GA): 3 credit hours

**Local U.S. Address Reporting Requirement**
You must inform ISS of your local address where you reside in order to comply with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement requirements. You must update your address within 10 days of moving to a new location. To update your address, visit [http://buckeyelink.osu.edu](http://buckeyelink.osu.edu) and click on “Change Address.” Update the “Current” address with your local Columbus address. Follow this format:

- **Line 1:** 123 Buckeye Rd.
- **Line 2:** Apt. 6
- **Line 3:** Columbus, OH 43221

Please note that you **MAY NOT** use a P.O. Box or your campus office address.

**Health Insurance Requirement**
All J program participants (both J-1 and J-2 dependents) are required to have health insurance coverage as mandated by the U.S. Department of State. To meet this requirement, the University policy requires that students have health insurance through the Ohio State Student Health Insurance plan. For more information about the insurance view the following website: [www.shi.osu.edu](http://www.shi.osu.edu).

Please note that this requirement does not prevent you from ALSO maintaining your current coverage in your home country if you choose to do so. Individuals with preexisting health conditions are particularly encouraged to do this as most U.S. health insurance plans place restrictions on coverage of preexisting health problems. NEVERTHELESS, coverage by the Ohio State Health Insurance plan is required.

**Extension of Form DS-2019**
You must obtain an extension of your Form DS-2019 and J-1 status prior to the program end date noted on your current Form DS-2019. You must submit a program extension form and proof of continued funding to an Immigration Coordinator in OIA to facilitate the extension process. If you are not approved for an extension and do not obtain a new Form DS-2019 prior to your current program end date you are in violation of your J-1 non-immigrant status.

**Reduced Course Load**
Although limited, the Federal Regulations list situations in which an exception to the full course of study or typical full course enrollment requirement may be deemed appropriate. You must meet with an Immigration Coordinator and seek approval PRIOR to reducing your course load below the required minimum. If you do not follow proper procedures you will lose your lawful J-1 student status. A student authorized for a reduced course load based on the following options must resume a full course of study at the start of the next available quarter, excluding an authorized vacation term.
Academic Difficulties
A J-1 Student may only be authorized to reduce his or her course load to no less than six credit hours once due to academic difficulties. The following reasons are acceptable academic reasons for a student to reduce his or her course load:

- was placed in an inappropriate course level
- is having initial difficulties with the English language
- is having initial difficulty with reading requirements
- is experiencing unfamiliarity with American teaching methods

Other Reason
- To Complete Course of Study in Current Term

Medical Reason
- Illness or Medical Condition

In the case of a reduced course load request based on a medical necessity, the request serves the purpose of keeping the department and the Graduate School informed of a student’s request to ISS to reduce or withdraw from a full course of study for a particular term. In a separate review process the student must provide medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist to ISS to substantiate the illness or medical condition.

Travel
You may choose to travel outside the U.S. during your course of study at Ohio State for your annual vacation term or during school breaks or you may decide to take a long weekend trip to Canada, for example. You may leave the U.S. at any time. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have all the required documentation to return to the U.S. in valid J-1 status:

- Required:
  - Passport valid at least six months into the future.
  - Valid J-1 visa stamp
  - Valid Form DS-2019 endorsed for travel by an alternate responsible officer (ARO) at ISS.

- Recommended:
  - Copy of financial support documentation
  - Enrollment verification (Copy of online advising report)

All above mentioned documents are required if you are going to renew your J-1 student visa stamp. You should also obtain an official transcript and/or letter from your academic adviser as your enrollment verification.

To obtain a travel signature you must bring your Form DS-2019 to OIA. A travel signature is necessary as it indicates that you are in good standing at Ohio State and are eligible to return.

Employment
As a student holding lawful J-1 status you are in the U.S. for the primary purpose of engaging in
a full course of study. You must obtain written permission from ISS prior to commencing with any type of employment. Illegal employment is a violation of your J-1 non-immigrant status. To qualify for employment you must be eligible based on one of the following options:

- **On-campus employment**
  You may work on the premises of the campus that issued your Form DS-2019 for a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session as a benefit of your J-1 student status. During term breaks and annual summer vacation terms, J-1 students may work an unlimited number of hours per week as long as you plan to enroll full-time the following term.

  Any on-campus employment must be reported to and approved by the Office of International Affairs prior to the employment commencing. This includes any on-premises employment such as campus dining, library work, etc., Graduate Assistantship (GTA, GRA, GAA), or Fellowship (with work component).

  On-campus employment may only be authorized for up to 12 months at a time. Employment may continue beyond one year; however, your employment authorization must be updated every 12 months.

  To report on-campus employment, you and your employer must complete the J-1 On-Campus Employment Form, which you may download from our website or obtain from the front desk in Oxley Hall 100.

  Reminder: You may **NOT** engage in on-campus employment after you have completed your course of study (commencement date) or after your exchange program end date, unless you have been approved by ISS for Academic Training.

- **Academic Training**
  Academic training is work, training, and experience that is directly related to your field of study. You may engage in academic training during and/or after your completion of studies, part-time or full-time, unpaid or paid, for a maximum duration of 18 months (post-doctoral students may receive authorization for a maximum of 36 months) as long as you meet all eligibility requirements. You must apply, be approved, and have obtained an updated Form DS-2019 prior to beginning academic training and no later than the end date of your program (your graduation date).

- **Off-campus employment based on economic hardship**
  You may be eligible to engage in temporary off-campus work based on severe and unforeseen economic circumstances that have arisen. For more information regarding employment based on economic hardship please visit our website. Strict eligibility requirements apply and you must receive approval from ISS prior to commencing with any type of off-campus employment. Total employment on-campus and off-campus may not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session.

**Change of major and/or educational level**
You were admitted to participate in the J-1 exchange visitor program for a specific program objective. You must complete one degree level prior to changing to another degree level. Significant changes to your original program objective may not be permissible under current U.S. Department of State regulations.
- **Change of Major**
  You must consult with Immigration Coordinator prior to changing your major area of study. If appropriate and your change of major request is granted you will obtain an updated Form DS-2019. However, this is not an automatic process, and it is your responsibility to inform ISS and ensure that your documents are up-to-date.

- **Matriculation: Change of Educational Level**
  You must contact an Immigration Coordinator for instructions as soon as you have decided on a change of academic level and no later than the quarter during which you are completing your current program of study. You must receive an updated Form DS-2019 prior to the quarter in which you are beginning a new level of study. However, this is not an automatic process, and it is your responsibility to inform ISS and ensure that your documents are up to date.

  Matriculation options:  
  - Bachelors to Masters  
  - Bachelors to Doctorate  
  - Masters to Doctorate

**Grace Period**
As a J-1 status holder you have a 30-day grace period following the completion of study (commencement day) or completion of your academic training period to depart the U.S. You may travel within the U.S. during your grace period, but you may not leave the U.S. and return on the basis of your current J-1 SEVIS record.

**Transfer to another U.S. Institution**
For immigration purposes a student is considered to be a transfer student when he or she leaves one U.S. institution (before or after earning a degree) to begin attendance at another U.S. institution while following the proper transfer procedures as outline by the U.S. Federal Regulations. Please note that this does not refer to the transfer of academic credits. You must initiate the transfer process of your J-1 SEVIS record prior to completing your course of study at Ohio State. You should contact an Immigration Coordinator at least thirty days before the end of your study at Ohio State for instructions and options for transferring to another U.S. institution.

**Early Withdrawal or Leave of Absence**
You must inform ISS if you decide to leave Ohio State and not return to your studies for the coming term. ISS is required to report on each student’s enrollment to DHS by updating the student’s individual SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) record every term. As such, ISS is required by law to update your J-1 non-immigrant record if you are not going to be enrolled due to withdrawal from the university or leaving for a prolonged period of time (for example, military service). Informing your academic adviser is not sufficient, you must inform ISS.

**Change of non-immigrant status**
As soon as you decide to change your status, you should see an Immigration Coordinator for eligibility requirements and instructions. Do not stop attending classes without consulting with an Immigration Coordinator first.

**Dependents**
J-2 dependents are currently permitted to engage in study (part-time and/or full-time) without
any additional authorization. Your spouse or child in J-2 status may also apply for temporary employment authorization from USCIS. Please see our website for additional information and instructions.

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**Important Reminder**
The information contained in this handout is not all-inclusive and is only intended to educate you regarding your basic rights and responsibilities while in the U.S. in lawful J-1 student status. When you have questions you should always consult the OIA website or seek advice from an Immigration Coordinator through e-mail, phone or in person during our publicized advising hours. ISS is here to answer your questions.

Sponsored students (for example, Fulbright, LASPAU, USAID, etc.):
J-1 students who are not sponsored by The Ohio State University as stated in section number 2 on the Form DS-2019, must follow their program sponsors instructions on maintaining lawful J-1 non-immigrant status. The advisers at ISS will assist and advise all J-1 students; however, they CANNOT sign Form DS-2019s nor approve applications for those students NOT sponsored by Ohio State. Please plan ahead and know your sponsor’s guidelines and procedures.
What is a Form DS-2019?
A Form DS-2019 is a certificate of enrollment form issued by a university to enable a student to apply for a visa and come to the U.S. to engage in a full course of study in a specific program of study. A student must report to the school that is listed on the Form DS-2019 that he or she used to enter the U.S. The student must also keep the Form DS-2019 valid by keeping the information stated on the Form updated at all times.

What is an I-94 card?
The Form I-94 is a very important document as it is the official record of your arrivals into and departures from the U.S. It is also the immigration document showing in what status an individual has entered the country. An international student’s I-94 card should read “J-1 D/S” to show that the student was lawfully admitted to the U.S. in J-1 student status for the duration of his or her program of study.

What does the D/S written on the I-94 card stand for?
D/S stands for ‘Duration of Status’. The notation allows J-1 student to complete his or her course of study and any subsequent educational level or series of programs as well as take advantage of any J-1 student benefits, as long as he or she maintains lawful status by abiding by the rules and regulations pertaining to J-1 non-immigrant status holders. Your I-94 card must be stamped with D/S and you should consult with an Immigration Coordinator immediately if this is not the case.

What is SEVIS?
The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System is an electronic system that allows universities to issue immigration documents for F-1 student and J-1 students and scholars and in turn aides the U.S. government in facilitating and upholding the integrity of international exchange. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) collects, maintains and provides the information so that only legitimate foreign students or exchange visitors gain entry to the United States. The result is an easily accessible information system that provides timely information to the Department of State, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Each student is issued a SEVIS ID number starting with “N,” which you will find above the bar code on your Form I-20.

Who can sign my Form DS-2019?
Only an alternate responsible officer (ARO) at the Office of International Affairs: International Students & Scholars (ISS) can sign your Form DS-2019. Plan ahead and visit ISS well before your anticipated travel dates. (Sponsored students – if your Form DS-2019 was not issued by Ohio State, you must obtain your travel signature from your official program sponsor).

Can I seek immigration advice from my department and academic advisor?
No. The only personnel at Ohio State authorized to provide you with immigration advice are the advisers at ISS. No one else at the university has access to your immigration record nor has the authority to give immigration advice. It is your responsibility to know what your requirements as an international student are and as such you should always consult with ISS if in doubt.
My friend says he was able to do this last year, so I should be able to do the same, without consulting ISS?
Wrong. Your friends may give you advice on adjusting to the U.S., Columbus, and even your classes; however, due to the complexity of ever changing immigration regulations you should not rely on your friends’ advice concerning anything that may impact your lawful J-1 status.

What or who is ISS?
The Office of International Affairs (OIA): International Students and Scholars (ISS) provides advising to international students, scholars and temporary employees including assistance with immigration regulations and associated paperwork, social and cultural adjustment, and personal and financial concerns. The office also offers social and informational programs and activities.

When do I need to contact/visit an Immigration Coordinator?
Below are some topics for which you may contact and/or visit our office:

- address change
- program extension
- course load reduction
- travel signature
- off-campus employment (Academic Training)
- adding or removing a dependent
- change of education level
- change of immigration status
- transferring out of Ohio State
- early withdrawal or leave of absence
- loss of an immigration document such as the Form DS-2019 or I-94 card
- academic probation, suspension or expulsion from the university

Additional resources:
Office of International Affairs
International Students and Scholars: www.oia.osu.edu
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: www.uscis.gov
U.S. Customs and Border Protection: www.cbp.gov
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: www.ice.gov
Department of State: www.state.gov

Welcome to Ohio State, we look forward to hearing from you!
1. As a J-1 student, you are required to "maintain" your legal status. This means doing which of the following:
   a. Keep your passport valid at all times
   b. Be a full-time student (with some exceptions) for the duration of the academic year
   c. Do not work without proper authorization
   d. Apply for an extension of your DS-2019 before your form expires
   e. Notify ISS of a transfer to or from another school
   f. All of the above

2. Form I-94 is:
   a. The permit to stay and your arrival/departure record
   b. Used by the airlines to count the number of passengers
   c. A useless white card usually found in the passport

3. Form DS-2019 is needed only for travel.
   TRUE   FALSE

4. A student may drop below full-time if he or she is worried about failing a class or getting a bad grade.
   TRUE   FALSE

5. A visa:
   a. Is a permit to enter the U.S.
   b. Indicates current non-immigrant status and the time an individual is allowed to legally remain in the U.S.
   c. Is a type of credit card

6. If your visa expires, you need to:
   a. Leave the country
   b. Do nothing, if not traveling outside the U.S.
   c. Get a new visa from DHS

7. If you are traveling to Canada or Mexico, you will have to:
   a. Obtain a tourist visa for Canada or Mexico, if required
   b. Have your DS-2019 signed before leaving and carry old DS-2019s with the red stamp
   c. Stay less than 30 days if your U.S. visa has expired
   d. All of the above

8. If you apply for a new visa at the U.S. Consulate in Canada or Mexico and you are denied, you will not be re-admitted to the U.S.
   TRUE   FALSE
9. Identify what a student does not need in order to re-enter the U.S.
   a. Valid Form DS-2019 with an Alternate Responsible Officer’s valid signature
   b. Valid passport
   c. A current Ohio State ID card
   d. Valid U.S. Visa. (except for Canada and Mexico)
   e. Verification of adequate financial support

10. ISS staff members also work for the Department of Homeland Security.
    TRUE FALSE

11. If ISS becomes aware that you are not maintaining your immigration status, we will
    attempt to contact you by email and/or phone.
    TRUE FALSE

12. Within how many days after moving to a new address, including your first address in
    Ohio, are you required to report that address change to the Office of the University
    Registrar (http://buckeyelink.osu.edu/)?
    a) 10 b) 20 c) 30 d) Do not have to report change to anyone

13. International students who have been at Ohio State for a year or longer are a good
    source of information regarding immigration regulations.
    TRUE FALSE

14. When school is in session, international students may work on-campus ______ hours per
    week with authorization.
    a) 10 b) 20 c) 30 d) Unlimited

15. As a J-1 international student, you and your dependents are required to have health
    insurance
    TRUE FALSE

16. International students who have a J-1 status can work off-campus only if (circle all that
    apply):
    a. You have been enrolled full time in J-1 status for a full academic year (9 months)
    b. You have applied for authorization (Academic Training or Economic hardship)
       from ISS
    c. The work is directly related to your major
    d. An employer hires you without authorization
Answer Key:

1. f
2. a
3. false
4. false
5. a
6. b
7. d
8. true
9. c
10. false
11. true
12. a
13. false
14. b
15. true
16. a, b and c