



Northeastern University

International Student & Scholar Institute

BASICS OF MAINTAINING YOUR F-1/J-1 STUDENT STATUS

- Maintain a valid passport and make sure you always print your I-94 each time you enter the U.S. <http://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>
- Before traveling abroad, check page 2 of your I-20 (for F-1 students) or the bottom right hand corner of your DS-2019 (for J-1 students) for a valid travel signature from an ISSI Advisor and make sure your visa stamp is valid for re-entry to the U.S. ISSI will send emails on travel signature sessions. These are also published in their monthly newsletter and on their website. You can also drop off your document at the ISSI for a travel signature. This takes 5 business days.
 - To be valid for re-entry to the U.S. the signature on page 2 of your I-20 or the bottom of your DS-2019 must be less than a year old at the time of your re-entry to the U.S. Additionally, check with the ISSI about regulations regarding validity of the visa for re-entry from Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent Caribbean islands, but not Cuba.
- If you change your name, major, or funding source, you must report it to the ISSI and request a new I-20. The form to request a new I-20 is available on the ISSI website.
- If you change your U.S. address, you must update the ISSI within 10 days. This can be accomplished by updating your address on your myNEU. Please see the Change of Address Request instructions on the ISSI website, <http://www.northeastern.edu/issi/>
- Obtain authorization for employment BEFORE starting any type of work whether it be on-campus, Co-op or an Internship.
- If you will not finish your academic program by the completion date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019, you must apply for a program extension at the ISSI in order to remain in status. This must be done BEFORE the completion date noted on the I-20 or DS-2019. Use the Certification of Program Extension form. Request for program extension must be submitted a minimum of a month in advance of I-20 or DS-2019 expiration.
- Obtain a new I-20 prior to beginning a new degree program (for example if you move from a Bachelor's degree to Master's degree program).
- Do not stay in the U.S. beyond the 60-day grace period after completion of your program of study or post completion OPT. For those in J-1 status, do not stay in the U.S. beyond the 30-day grace period.

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- Obtain authorization from the ISSI to transfer (SEVIS record release) from Northeastern to another school. This must be done within 60 days after completion of an academic program or immediately if you change schools during an academic term.
- F-2 dependents may not work, but may be able to study part-time; J-2 dependents may study and/or work with authorization.
- Read e-mails from the ISSI that may contain important information regarding your immigration status. Regular updates can also be found on the ISSI website and Facebook page.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CPS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

What is a full-time course load?

Full-time enrollment means: **12 credits minimum for undergraduates**
 8 credits minimum for graduate students

How may a full-time course load be divided throughout the academic quarter?

Maintain full-time enrollment during the entire academic term. All CPS students must be enrolled full-time throughout both sessions of each quarter, by enrolling in one or more 6 or 12-week courses in both sessions.

During your final (last) term, you may be enrolled in whatever number of credits you have left to complete your studies. However, even in your last term, you must be enrolled in both sessions of the quarter. If you have only one course left to complete your studies, you must enroll in the first session of the quarter and you must be enrolled in at least one on-ground course, thus completing your program at the end of the first session of the quarter.

Remember, if you have only one course left to complete your program, this course cannot be online.

How many online courses are F-1 and J-1 students allowed to take?

While enrollment in 3- or 4-credit online classes per academic term may be allowed, the online class must always be accompanied by on-ground courses during both sessions of the quarter. Once the full time compliance requirement described above is reached, “extra” on-line classes can be added if desired.

The following are possible examples of full-time enrollment:

Undergraduate Students:

	Session A	Session B
Example 1:	1 on-ground course (3SH) 1 online course (3SH)	2 on-ground courses (6SH)
Example 2:	2 on-ground course (6SH)	1 on-ground course (3SH) 1 online course (3SH)
Example 3:	Show some full-term examples	

Graduate Students:

	Session A	Session B
Example 1:	1 on-ground course (3QH) 1 online course (3QH)	1 on-ground course (3QH)
Example 2:	1 on-ground course (3QH)	1 on-ground course (3QH) 1 online course (3QH)
Example 3:	2 on-ground courses 12-weeks (4QH)	

Is vacation allowed?

Periods of vacations with no registration for courses are allowed at the end of the equivalent of an academic year. Students are allowed an annual vacation that usually occurs during the summer. The exception is if the summer is the first term. Then the student must maintain full-time enrollment status. Additionally, some programs require that students be enrolled during the summer in order to fulfill their academic requirements. Students should consult their Academic Advisor regarding this.

Is taking a leave of absence allowed?

In limited circumstances that warrant a leave of absence, you may apply for one. There are two types of leave. One is medical; the other non-medical. For a medical leave of absence, students need to apply to the University Health and Counseling Services. For a non-medical leave of absence, students need to make an appointment with the ISSI. Taking a Leave of Absence may impact your future eligibility to apply for OPT.

Is dropping courses allowed?

Do not drop below a full-time course load without consulting your College Academic Advisor and an ISSI Advisor. There are special procedures to follow if you have a legitimate reason to drop below a full course of study, and these procedures –if you are eligible-should be followed prior to reducing your course load, not afterwards. Federal regulations specify the extremely limited circumstances in which an F-1 or J-1 student may drop below a normal full-time course load and still maintain their legal status. Students will need to complete the ISSI Reduced Course Load Request form, prior to dropping the course if they will fall below a full-time course load as described previously.

Make continuous progress towards your degree.

Make sure you are making continuous progress towards your degree by consulting with your College Academic Advisor at CPS. Follow this link to know who your Academic Advisor is: <http://www.cps.neu.edu/student-services/office-of-academic-and-student-services-support/academic-advising/support-specialist-caseload>

Academic probation and/or suspension may not warrant the approval for an I-20 or DS-2019 extension.

Remember: Failure to adhere to federal regulations could impact your ability to complete your degree program. Many other regulations and SEVIS operative procedures also exist and may apply to your specific case. The points described above are a summary of the most general rules and are offered as quick reference. For specific questions regarding your immigration status, consult with an ISSI Advisor.