

## Maintaining your F-1 or J-1 Student Status in the United States

- Make sure that you always enter the United States of America with your I-20 or DS-2019 and student visa (F-1 or J-1) if you are planning to enroll in school.
- Attend the school that you are authorized to attend. If you are transferring to John Jay College of Criminal Justice, an immigration transfer must be completed within 15 days of the beginning of classes of your first semester. Please note: An immigration transfer is completely separate process from transferring academic credits from another school.
- You must use your most recently issued I-20 or DS-2019 for travel. Please note that all F-1 students will be issued a “continued attendance” I-20. This will be the second I-20 you receive, and should be used for travelling after you begin classes at John Jay College.
- Make sure all information on your I-20 or DS-2019 is correct. You are required to notify International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) as soon as possible if there are any changes to the information on the I-20 or DS-2019. Changes may include name, citizenship, degree level, major and source of funding.
- Obtain a new I-20 prior to changing degree levels. This includes changing from a bachelor’s degree to a master’s degree; from Optional Practical Training to a new degree, from one program to another at the same level (bachelor’s to a second bachelor’s degree), etc.
- Your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 must be kept valid at all times. If you cannot complete your degree by the ending date on your I-20 or DS-2019, it is necessary that you request your immigration document be extended at least 30 days prior to its expiration. Please ask your academic or faculty adviser or graduate program coordinator to complete **The Request for F-1 Program Extension Form** and return it with updated financial support documentation to International Service Center for the request’s approval. **DO NOT LET YOUR I-20 or DS-2019 EXPIRE.**
- Your passport must be kept valid at all times. You must keep your passport expiration date valid at least 6 months into the future. If your passport will expire, contact your country’s embassy or consulate in the U.S. for information on renewing it.
- You must inform International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) of a change of address, e-mail address or telephone number within 10 days of the change. Please make

sure that you also update your CUNY First Record. Please visit J-Express for more information.

- Health insurance is not mandated for F-1 students; however International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) highly recommends to have a health insurance throughout the studies. Health Insurance is required by law for J-1 students. Willful failure to obtain and maintain appropriate health insurance coverage is a violation of J-1 regulation and subject to status termination.
- You must register full-time during the fall and spring semesters (You are not required to enroll in courses during the summer). **Full-time for Undergraduate students is a minimum of 12 credits. For Graduate students, full-time is a minimum of 9 credits.** In addition to registering full-time, you must successfully complete a full course load each term. You cannot withdraw from a course if it will drop you below full-time without getting authorization from the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS).

U.S. Immigration regulations will allow an F-1/J-1 student to register for less than a full course load under special circumstances (please see below). However, you must request a permission from your academic or faculty adviser or graduate program coordinator by completing **Application for F-1/J-1 Reduced Course Load Form** and submitting it to International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) for approval.

*IMPORTANT: You are eligible to apply for a reduced course load under following circumstances:*

1. *Improper Course Level Placement*
  2. *Initial Difficulty with Reading Requirements*
  3. *Initial Difficulty with English Language*
  4. *To Complete Course of Study in Current Term*
  5. *Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods*
  6. *Illness/Medical Condition*
- As an international student you may only count 1 online course (up to 3 credits) toward the full-time enrollment requirement.
  - You must maintain good academic standing. For undergraduate students you must maintain a 2.0 Grade Point average (GPA). Graduate students should speak with their respective schools or graduate advisors to find out the requirements for maintaining a good academic standing.
  - Carry copies of your passport, I-20 or DS-2019 and I-94 with you at all times. Carry the originals when travelling within the U.S. or outside of New York.
  - Have your documents checked by a Designated School Official (DSO) or Responsible Officer (RO) before leaving the United States for any travel outside the country. The travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 must be less than a year old when you are entering the U.S. or you might not be allowed to reenter.
  - You must receive permission from International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) or Immigration Services (USCIS) before you can engage in any type of employment in the U.S.

- On-campus work does not require authorization for F-1 students. On-campus work is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the fall and spring semesters. On-campus employment may be full-time during the summer and official school breaks. When you work on-campus, you must maintain your full-time student status or employment will become illegal.
- As a J-1 student, you must receive advanced authorization from your program sponsor prior to accepting any employment in the U.S. At John Jay College of Criminal Justice, most of the J-1 students are under John Jay's Exchange Visitor Program, so your program sponsor is John Jay College and all employment authorizations come from International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS).
- Depart from the U.S within the grace period allowed after you complete your program or if you have terminated your program for some other reason.
- For more questions or concerns please do not hesitate contacting:

**International Student & Scholar Services**

**Ms. Inga Mezale, Deputy Director of International Student Services**

**e-mail: [imezale@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:imezale@jjay.cuny.edu)**

**phone: 646-781-5214**

- Useful Resources:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>

<https://www.uscis.gov>

<https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>