

# **THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS**

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**CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

## I. F-1 STATUS

Chicago State University enrolls nonimmigrant students entering the United States on an F-1 visa. The F-1 student is admitted to the U.S. for the duration of his or her status as a full-time student. It is the responsibility of the F-1 student to maintain his or her status while attending Chicago State University. Many Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations require the student to obtain authorization from the Chicago State University Designated School Official (DSO) **before** performing an act that affects the student's status. It is imperative that the F-1 student consult with an Office of International Programs (OIP) advisor and receive the required authorization from the DSO before performing an act that affects his or her student status. The DSO is required to notify the INS of all actions by the student that relates to the student's status.

An F-1 student must meet the following obligations in order to maintain F-1 status:

1. Attend the school authorized on the I-20;
2. Maintain valid immigration documents (Form I-20, Form I-94, Passport or Travel Document, Entry Visa);
3. Maintain a full course of study (full-time enrollment) during the academic year;
4. Comply with specific INS and Chicago State University policies and procedures affecting F-1 status, (See below: Reduced Course Load, Extension of Stay, Reinstatement, and School Transfers.)
5. Refrain from unauthorized employment; and
6. Limit on-campus employment to 20 hours per week while school is in session;
7. Notify the INS and the DSO of any legal changes to his/her name or any change of address within **10 days** of the change.

## II. SEVIS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts the degree of personal information an institution may disclose about a student. The current INS regulations, however, constitute an exception to the FERPA regulations and institutions are required to disclose information as needed to implement the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The OIP will make periodic reports to the INS as required.

### A. CLOSE OF REGISTRATION REPORTS

Each semester, no later than **30 days** after the close of registration, the Chicago State University OIP will report the following registration information to the INS:

1. Whether an F-1 student has enrolled at Chicago State University, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO, or failed to enroll;
2. The current address of each enrolled student; and
3. The start date of each F-1 student's next semester.

B. CHANGE OF INFORMATION REPORTS

Within **21 days** of a change, Chicago State University is required to report the following information to the INS:

1. Any student who has failed to maintain status or complete his or her program;
2. Any student who has graduated early or prior to the program end date listed on the Form I-20;
3. Any student who receives authorization for a program extension;
4. Any other material change to the student's curriculum:
  - a. Change of major or program level
  - b. Authorized course load reduction and return to full-time status
  - c. Certification for practical training, beginning and end dates of certification;
5. A change of the student's or dependent's legal name or U. S. address;
6. Any disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of the student being convicted of a crime; and
7. Any other notification request made by SEVIS with respect to the current status of the student.

III. **FULL COURSE OF STUDY**

A. *GENERAL*: The F-1 student must maintain a full course of study (or engage in authorized practical training following completion of studies) in order to remain in compliance with his or her nonimmigrant status.

1. REQUIRED HOURS:

*Undergraduate Study* – Minimum 12 semester hours

*Postgraduate Study* – Minimum 9 semester hours - may include research or work on a dissertation. Where the graduate student is not enrolled in full-time classes, the DSO will evaluate the student's schedule to determine that the student is engaged in full-time study.

2. EMPLOYMENT: On-campus employment in compliance with the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship is considered to be part of the academic program of a student who is otherwise taking a full course of study.

3. CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT: An F-1 student may be enrolled in two different schools at one time as long as the combined enrollment amounts to a full course of study. The DSO at the school granting the student's degree or certification will be responsible for SEVIS reporting requirements. Where the schools have different full course of study requirements, the reporting DSO will determine what constitutes a full course of study. The OIP must have evidence of the student's enrollment in the other school.

4. ON-LINE / DISTANCE EDUCATION: An F-1 student may not include more than one on-line/distance education class or 3 credit hours per semester towards fulfilling the "full course of study" requirement. On-line/distance education coursework is not an option for students in a language studies program.
5. ANNUAL VACATION: An F-1 student is considered to be in status during the summer vacation provided the student is eligible to register for the next term and intends to do so.
6. TEMPORARY ABSENCE: An F-1 student may take a temporary leave from the United States provided the leave is for 5 months or less.

B. *PROCEDURE*:

**NEW STUDENTS**: All new international students (including transferees from other U.S. institutions) must report to the OIP within two working days upon arrival at Chicago State University to register with OIP. The OIP is located in the Student Union Building (SUB) Room 231. Students are required to bring along their original I-94 card, any I-20, passport (or other travel document), and any other INS document they may have in their possession.

**CONTINUING/RETURNING STUDENTS**: All continuing/returning students must report to the OIP within five working days after arrival, each semester, and complete an International Student Information Sheet. Students who travel outside the United States during the recess/vacation/holidays/break must bring along their travel document(s) and any new INS document they may have in their possession. All students are required to submit a copy of their registration confirmation slip to an OIP advisor at this time.

#### IV. **REDUCED COURSE LOAD**

- A. *GENERAL*: In limited situations, the DSO may authorize an F-1 student to engage in *less* than a full course of study and still remain in lawful status.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. PRIOR AUTHORIZATION - A student must obtain authorization from the DSO **before** performing any action that will result in the student having less than a full-time course of study. Examples of situations which require **prior** DSO authorization:
  - Registering for less than full-time status
  - Dropping a course which will result in less than full-time status
  - Receiving a grade of F or I which will result in less than full-time status

2. MINIMUM COURSE LOAD - A reduced course of study must consist of at least 6 semester hours, except as otherwise noted.
3. RECOGNIZED GROUNDS - Under INS regulations, a DSO may only grant authorization to reduce a student's course load on 3 grounds: **Academic Difficulties, Medical Condition, and Completion of Study.**
  - a. Academic Difficulties
    - i. This option is available only where the student experiences academic difficulties due to:
      - aa. Student's *initial* difficulty with the English language or reading requirements;
      - bb. Student's unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods; or
      - cc. Improper course level placement (insufficient background for the class level).
    - ii. Student must resume a full course of study at the next available semester, excluding a summer session, in order to maintain lawful student status.
    - iii. A student may reduce his or her course load on the grounds of academic difficulties only **once**, during a program level (e.g. once at the undergraduate level, once at the Masters level).
    - iv. A student who reduces his or her course load for academic difficulties may still be eligible to reduce his or her course load for medical reasons.
  - b. Medical Conditions
    - i. This option is available where the student experiences temporary illness or a medical condition.
    - ii. The student must provide current medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor or clinical psychologist substantiating the medical condition.
    - iii. A student may be authorized to reduce his or her course load for a period up to **12 months in aggregate per each program level.**
    - iv. The DSO must reauthorize the drop to less than full-time course load each new semester.
    - v. The student must provide medical documentation each new semester.

- vi. Minimum Load Exception - In the event of a severe medical condition, the DSO may grant a student authorization to reduce the course load to less than 6 hours or to withdraw from all courses.
  - vii. A student may be authorized to reduce his or her course load on the grounds of medical condition on more than one occasion, so long as the aggregate period does not exceed 12 months during one program level.
  - viii. A student who is unable to resume a full course of study within the 12-month aggregate limit, will have to leave the U.S. and reapply when he or she is able to resume a full course of study, or change to a more appropriate nonimmigrant classification.
  - c. Completion of Course of Study  
The DSO may authorize a reduced course load in the student's *final semester* if fewer courses are needed to complete the course of study program.
- B. *PROCEDURE*: Obtain a Reduced Course Load Authorization Document from an OIP advisor and submit it together with appropriate forms to the Registrar.

## V. EXTENSION OF STAY

- A. *GENERAL*: Where an F-1 student will be unable to complete his or her course of study before the program end date provided on the student's Form I-20, the student must request an extension of stay in order to remain in lawful status and remain in the United States.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. The student must apply for the extension of stay **BEFORE** the program end date on the Form I-20;
  2. The student must otherwise be maintaining status and making progress toward completing his or her objective; and
  3. The request for extension of stay must be on documented academic or medical grounds. Academic probation or suspension is not an accepted ground.
- B. *PROCEDURE*: Please consult with an OIP advisor and complete a CSU Extension of Stay Form.

## VI. REINSTATEMENT TO STUDENT STATUS

- A. *GENERAL*: The INS permits a student who is out of status to file an application for reinstatement with an INS district director. Reinstatement is intended to be a rare measure for exceptional cases. **Students should not rely on this option**



**being available.** Furthermore, an INS decision not to reinstate a student cannot be appealed.

APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY: The district director will consider, but not necessarily approve, an application for reinstatement only where the student can show that:

1. The Student has not been out of status for more than 5 months at the time of filing the request for reinstatement, unless the student can demonstrate that failure to file within the 5 month period was the result of exceptional circumstances and that the student filed the request for reinstatement as promptly as possible. [There is a rebuttable presumption that a student who has been out of status for more than 5 months is ineligible for reinstatement.];
2. The student does not have a record of repeated or willful violations of the INS regulations;
3. The student is currently pursuing, or intending to pursue, a full course of study in the immediate future at the school issuing the Form I-20;
4. The student has not engaged in unauthorized employment;
5. The student is not deportable on any ground than section 237(a)(1)(B) or (C)(i) of the Act (relating to being present in the U.S. in violation of the immigration laws); and
6. The student must establish to the satisfaction of the INS, by a detailed showing, either that:
  - a. The violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond the student's control [Such circumstances might include serious illness, a natural disaster, or inadvertence, oversight, or neglect by the DSO, but does not include instances where the request for reinstatement is due to the student's willful failure.]; or
  - b. The violation relates to a reduction in the student's course load that would have been within a DSO's power to authorize and that a failure to approve the reinstatement would result in extreme hardship to the student.

- B. *PROCEDURE:* Please consult with an OIP advisor regarding the INS forms, fee and student documents required for an application for Reinstatement of Student Status.

## VII. EMPLOYMENT

*GENERAL:* An F-1 student may engage in employment only under certain conditions. Engaging in unauthorized employment is a violation of status and can have adverse consequences. **Please consult with an OIP advisor before engaging in any type of**

**employment.** There are several categories of employment: on-campus, off-campus and practical training.

A. ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

An F-1 student may obtain employment on the Chicago State University campus, or at an off-campus location that is educationally affiliated with the school. A student may work on campus full-time when school is not in session and/or during the summer vacation. The INS does not impose any limitation on the type of on-campus employment that a student may obtain prior to the start of classes. A student may engage in on-campus employment if it will not displace United States residents.

RESTRICTIONS:

1. The student must maintain a full-time course of study during employment;
2. Employment may not exceed **20 hours a week** while school is in session;
3. F-1 students do not qualify for federal, work-study jobs;
4. A student may not engage in on-campus employment after completing a course of study, except employment for authorized practical training; and
5. Upon initial entry to begin a new course of study at Chicago State University, an F-1 student may not begin on-campus employment more than 30 days prior to the actual start of classes.

B. OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT - Economic Hardship

An F-1 student may request off-campus employment work authorization based on severe economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control. The INS will approve such applications in limited situations. A student must obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the INS **before** engaging in this type of off-campus employment. The application process generally takes 90 days to complete. Off-campus employment is restricted to **20 hours per week** for a **one-year period** only and other employment opportunities on-campus must be unavailable.

Requirements – The student must:

1. Have completed one full academic year in F-1 status;
2. Receive a recommendation from the DSO;
3. File an INS Application for Employment Authorization;
4. Pay the application fee; and
5. Maintain full-time enrollment during the off-campus employment.

C. PRACTICAL TRAINING

An eligible student may request employment authorization for practical training in a position that is directly related to his or her major area of study. To be eligible for practical training, the student must have maintained full-time enrollment for



one full academic year prior to the request for such employment. Enrollment in a study abroad program will apply if the student spent at least one full academic term in full-time status in the U.S. before studying abroad. There are two types of practical training, curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT).

## 1. CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

### REQUIREMENTS:

- a) To be eligible for CPT, the student must have maintained full-time enrollment for one full academic year prior to the request for CPT.
- b) The student must have an offer for employment that is an integral part of an established curriculum.
- c) The student who engages in one year or more of full-time curricular practical training is ineligible for *optional* practical training, *except* for students in graduate study programs that require immediate participation in curricular practical training.
- d) The student must make a request to the DSO and receive the DSO's endorsement on his or her Form I-20.
- e) The student must receive the Form I-20 from the DSO, updated with specific information regarding the employment.

PROCEDURE: Specific procedures must be followed with regards to filing for CPT. Please consult with an OIP advisor.

## 2. OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

An F-1 student may apply to the INS for authorization for temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study.

- a) To be eligible to begin OPT, the student must have maintained full-time enrollment for one full academic year.
- b) A student may apply for OPT up to 90 days before being enrolled for one full academic year.
- c) OPT must be requested before completing all course requirements for the degree.
- d) A student with authorized OPT may work a maximum **20 hours a week** while school is in session.
- e) OPT must be completed within 14 months following the completion of study.

PROCEDURE: Specific procedures must be followed with regards to filing for OPT. Please consult with an OIP advisor.

## VIII. SCHOOL TRANSFERS

- A. Under INS regulations, F-1 students have the option of transferring from the school listed on the student's Form I-20 to another INS approved school.
1. Eligibility Restrictions - A transfer is not available for a student who has failed to maintain a full course of study. The student who is not eligible to transfer to another school may apply for reinstatement or leave the United States and re-enter in a new F-1 nonimmigrant status.
  2. Time Restrictions - A student must be able to begin classes at the transfer school within 5 months of transferring or within 5 months of the program completion date on his or her current Form I-20, whichever is earlier. Where the student has received authorization for Optional Practical Training (OPT), the student must be able to begin classes within 5 months of transferring out of the school that recommended OPT or the date the OPT authorization ends, whichever is earlier.
- B. *PROCEDURE*: Specific procedures must be followed with regards to the INS, the current school and the transfer school. Please consult with an OIP advisor.

## IX. PROGRAM ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE GRACE PERIODS

### A. ADVANCED ARRIVAL

INS regulations limit the period of time a student may be admitted to the United States prior to the start of a program of study. An F-1 student may report to Chicago State University a maximum of 30 days before the program start date listed on the Form I-20. When establishing the "start of program" date, the DSO will take into consideration factors such as, time to find housing, begin a research project or to attend orientation sessions, etc.

### B. CONCLUSION OF COURSE OF STUDY

INS regulations limit the amount of time a student may remain in the United State at the conclusion of the student's program. Where the student completed his or her program, the student may apply to move to another educational level or transfer schools but employment is prohibited during this grace period.

### GRACE PERIODS

The length of the grace period depends on the nature of the conclusion of study. Where the student:

1. Completed studies or authorized practical training or is intending to transfer to another INS approved school – 60 days maximum;

2. Withdrew from classes with prior DSO authorization – 15 days maximum;
3. Failed to maintain a full course of study and did not obtain prior authorization from the DSO – no grace period.

#### **X. SPOUSE AND CHILDREN OF F-1 STUDENTS**

The F-1 student has the right to bring his or her spouse or minor children to the United States. Such nonimmigrants will enter the U.S. as F-2 dependants and each will be issued an individual I-20 forms.

##### RESTRICTIONS:

1. *Employment* - F-2 dependants are prohibited from accepting employment under any circumstances.
2. *Study* - F-2 dependants are prohibited from engaging in full-time study, except the F-2 child may attend kindergarten through twelfth grade on a full time basis. The F-2 dependant may engage in study that is recreational in nature or apply for a change of status to F-1.

#### **XI. TRAVEL**

A student planning to leave the country at any time must ensure that his or her I-20 has been signed by a DSO prior to departure.

#### **XII. ADMINISTRATIVE CORRECTION OF RECORD**

Where technological or computer problems by SEVIS cause an error in the student's record, the DSO may request that the SEVIS system administrator correct the student's record without a fee.

#### **XIII. INS FORMS AVAILABLE AT OIP**

Students may come to the OIP at anytime during regular office hours and pick the following INS forms:

- AR-11 or AR-11SR
- I-538
- I-765
- I-539

# THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

## FALL 2005 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION EVALUATION

Please help us assess the effectiveness of this orientation/program by taking a few minutes to complete the evaluation. Thank you.

Place a check mark in the appropriate column	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Presenters were well organized					
Presenters were effective in communicating their thoughts					
Presentation materials were well organized					
Presentation increased my understanding of the subject					
Time allotted for Q & A was adequate					
Comfortable meeting Room: climate, seating, etc.					
Would encourage other international students to attend next orientation					

How did you hear about this orientation?

- Information contained in admission package ☐
- Informed by OIP Staff ☐
- Informed by Residence Hall Staff/flier in residence hall ☐
- Informed by a friend/relative/international student ☐

**Please suggest how we may improve upon this orientation next time:**

# CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS (OIP)

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR LEGAL STATUS AS AN F-1 STUDENT

1. Remain enrolled as a full-time student each semester. Full time is defined as:  
Minimum 12 credit hours per semester for undergraduates  
Minimum 9 credit hours per semester for graduate students  
Minimum 6 credit hours per semester for graduate students with TA or RA  
  
**Exceptions:** 1) you are not required to enroll during your annual vacation  
2) you may enroll for less than a full courseload during the final term of your program
2. Always keep your Form I-20 current. If you are unable to complete your degree program by the date in #5 of your I-20, you must apply to the Office of International Programs (OIP) for a "program extension" at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the I-20. Note: You may remain in legal status 60 days beyond the day you complete your academic program. This period is known as your "grace period".
3. Obtain a new I-20 to reflect any change in your academic program (e.g. History to Political Science) or level of study (e.g. BA to MA).
4. Never work off-campus without authorization from the OIP and immigration authorities.
5. You may not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.
6. Make sure your passport is valid at all times.
7. If you have further questions about maintaining your status, please contact the OIP at (773) 995-2582. You may also email [oip@csu.edu](mailto:oip@csu.edu) with your inquiries.

# CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS (OIP)

### CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO DURING YOUR FIRST WEEK AT CSU

1. **EXAMS:** Take any required examination. For example, placement examination (Location LIB 119 or call the Office of Examination at ext. 2481).
2. **ADVISING:** Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your class schedule.
3. **REGISTRATION:** Make sure you have completed all forms associated with Registration.
4. **REQUIRED COURSELOAD:** Ensure that you have successfully registered for a full course of study – (NOT LESS THAN 12 credit hours as an undergraduate/ 9 credit hours as a graduate) and have paid your tuition and fees.
5. **ID CARD:** Make sure you have obtained your ID Card (Cougar One card).
6. **ON CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT:** Make sure you have obtained authorization from the OIP before you accept/begin any job.
7. **NEW ADDRESS:** Provide the registrar and the Office of International Programs with your contact address and phone number(s) each time they change.
8. **E-MAIL ADDRESS:** Make sure you have obtained a CSU e-mail address. Most correspondence from OIP will be done via your CSU e-mail address.
9. **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:** Make sure you speak with the International Student Coordinator about applying for Social Security Number.
10. **PARKING PERMITS:** If you have a car, purchase a parking permit at the cashier's office in the Cook Administration Building Room 211 (**cash and credit cards only**). If you wish to pay for your parking permit with a check, please go to the Parking Department in the O&M Building, Room 103



**— ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I hereby acknowledge that I have **read** and fully **understand** the Chicago State University Office of International Programs Policies and Procedures for Maintaining F-1 Status. I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain lawful F-1 status. I agree that I will contact an Office of International Programs Advisor if I have any questions regarding Chicago State University policies or my responsibilities as an F-1 student. I have received a copy of the Policies and Procedures for Maintaining F-1 Status for my own records.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name: (Please PRINT)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Admission Number:** \_\_\_\_\_