DEPARTING THE U.S. UPON COMPLETION OF STUDY

You are required to notify International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) of the completion of your studies or practical training and of the date of your final departure from the United States by submitting the Departure Information Form to the ISSS Office.

If you graduate prior to the end date on your I-20 or DS-2019, please see an ISSS advisor in order to have the date shortened to reflect the correct end date of your program. F-1 visa holders will have 60 days, and J-1 visa holders will have 30 days, from the program completion date in which to depart the U.S., transfer to another university, or change your immigration status. Failure to inform ISSS that you have graduated may result in your status being terminated for “Failure to Enroll” for the next semester. If you have applied for OPT, then you need not inform us as we have already processed the necessary paperwork, including shortening the end date for your program of study.

As you prepare to graduate, be sure that your account is paid in full (including any holds, such as library or parking fines) and that you have updated your address in MyUAlbany. Your diploma will be sent to the location that you have listed as your “Degree Address” or, by default, to your permanent address.

DEPARTING THE U.S. BEFORE COMPLETION OF STUDY

There may be reasons that a student chooses to leave UAlbany prior to completing his or her degree program. International students should meet with an ISSS advisor prior to withdrawing or departing to discuss options such as eligibility for a leave of absence, plans for returning, or transferring to another U.S. university. This will ensure appropriate handling and referral for processing of UAlbany paperwork and possibly terminating your I-20 or DS-2019. After meeting with an ISSS advisor, you must submit the Departure Information Form to the ISSS Office.

Exchange Students:

If you plan to leave UAlbany before your original program end date, please contact your advisor in the Study Abroad and Exchanges office (518-591-8170) and submit a Departure Information Form to the ISSS Office.

Undergraduate Students - Degree Seeking:

If you leave UAlbany and plan to return to graduate at a later date, you need to contact both ISSS and the Office of Withdrawal and Readmission (www.albany.edu/withdrawalreadmission) regarding this process. Meeting with an ISSS advisor will help to ensure proper handling of your immigration paperwork, determining the time frame for departure, and, if necessary, referral to appropriate offices for your later return.
• If you voluntarily withdraw, you are given 15 days to leave the country.

• If you are suspended or dismissed, you have no grace period and are required to leave the United States, transfer to another university or change your non-immigrant status immediately.

• If you intend to transfer to another U.S. university, please see information below.

• If you withdraw from the UAlbany due to illness/medical reasons, please see the information about this process in the following section on medical leave.

• If you withdraw voluntarily or are suspended or dismissed, your current F-1 or J-1 status will be "terminated" in the SEVIS database. In order to return to the U.S., you will need to be readmitted and request a new “initial” I-20 or DS-2019 form from ISSS approximately 4-5 months prior to a new program start date. A new SEVIS ID will be assigned, and you will also need to pay a new SEVIS-901 fee, at: www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/. You also must have a valid F-1 or J-1 entry visa to return to the U.S. If you are outside the U.S. for more than five months, you must apply for a new entry visa even if your current entry visa is still valid. Please see Returning to the University at Albany below for additional information.

**Graduate Students – Masters:**

If you plan to withdraw from UAlbany and depart the U.S., please submit the Departure Information Form to ISSS. If you plan to return to UAlbany and graduate at a later date, please schedule a meeting with an ISSS advisor who will assist you in ensuring proper handling of your immigration paperwork, determining the time frame for departure, and if necessary, referral to appropriate offices for your later return.

• If you voluntarily withdraw and have no plans to transfer to another U.S. university, you must leave the country within 15 days.

• If you are suspended or dismissed, you have no grace period and are required to leave the United States, transfer to another school or change your non-immigrant status immediately.

• If you intend to transfer to another U.S. university, please see information below.

• If you withdraw from the UAlbany due to illness/medical reasons, please see the information about this process in the following section on medical leave.

• If you withdraw voluntarily or are suspended or dismissed, your current F-1 or J-1 status will be "terminated" in the SEVIS database. In order to return to the U.S., you will need to be readmitted and request a new “initial” I-20 or DS-2019 form from ISSS approximately 4-5 months prior to a new program start date. A new SEVIS ID will be assigned, and you will also need to pay a new SEVIS-901 fee, at: www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/. You also must have a valid F-1 or J-1 entry visa to return to the U.S. If you are outside the U.S. for more than five
months, you must apply for a new entry visa even if your current entry visa is still valid. Please see Returning to the University at Albany below for additional information.

**Graduate Students – Ph.D.:**

If you plan to withdraw and either depart the U.S. or transfer to another institution, please submit the Departure Information Form to ISSS.

- If you voluntarily withdraw and have no plans to transfer to another U.S. university, you must leave the country within 15 days.

- If you intend to transfer to another U.S. university, please see information below.

- If you withdraw from the UAlbany due to illness/medical reasons, please see the information about this process in the following section on medical leave.

- If you withdraw voluntarily or are suspended or dismissed, your current F-1 or J-1 status will be "terminated" in the SEVIS database. In order to return to the U.S., you will need to be readmitted and request a new “initial” I-20 or DS-2019 form from ISSS approximately 4-5 months prior to a new program start date. A new SEVIS ID will be assigned, and you will also need to pay a new SEVIS-901 fee, at: www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/. You also must have a valid F-1 or J-1 entry visa to return to the U.S. If you are outside the U.S. for more than five months, you must apply for a new entry visa even if your current entry visa is still valid. Please see Returning to the University at Albany below for additional information.

**Leave of Absence:** If you wish to suspend your studies for any reason but intend to return to UAlbany to complete your degree, you must discuss your plans with your academic advisor and request a Leave of Absence. Complete the Leave of Absence application form located at: www.albany.edu/gradstudies/forms_requestabsence.shtml, and obtain required signatures from the Director of ISSS, your Department Chair, and the Dean of your school or college. You should then submit the form to the Graduate Studies Office for approval. Medical leaves require documentation (see below) and medical clearance before you are allowed to return to study. Please schedule a meeting with an ISSS advisor who will assist you in ensuring proper handling of your immigration paperwork, determining the time frame for departure, and if necessary, referral to appropriate offices for your return at a later date.

**Research and/or Dissertation to be Conducted Outside U.S.** Graduate students who have completed all required coursework and who plan to conduct research or do field study outside the U.S. should see an ISSS advisor before departing to discuss your plans and enrollment requirements to maintain your F-1 or J-1 status, and any impact the travel may have on your visa status. Whether to remain enrolled as a full-time or part-time student while outside the U.S. will be discussed so that you have a complete understanding of your immigration options.
TRANSFER TO ANOTHER U.S. COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

If you intend to leave UAlbany but plan to remain in the U.S. to study at another school, please
indicate this on the Departure Information Form and make an appointment to meet with an
ISSS advisor to discuss your transfer. According to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
regulations, UAlbany must transfer your SEVIS record to your new school within 60 days of the
completion of your program at UAlbany (or end of OPT) or before beginning the new program
(if you choose not to complete your program at UAlbany).

Transfer out process: You must also submit to ISSS two items from your new school: a transfer
release form and copy of your acceptance letter. With your transfer out request, be sure to
include the date you would like to have your SEVIS record released to the new school. Once
these documents are submitted, ISSS at UAlbany will transfer your SEVIS record to the new
school. Once this occurs, your new school will be responsible for your SEVIS records.

Dropping courses: If you have preregistered for courses and then transfer to another school
before the semester begins, be sure to drop those courses before classes begin in order to have
tuition charges and fees removed from your account. See the Academic Calendar
(http://www.albany.edu/catalogs_calendars_schedules/acad_cal.html ) for deadlines for
dropping courses (with or without a W) and the Refund Policy for information about refunds for
dropped courses (http://www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/charges.htm, see “Tuition
Liability”).

MEDICAL LEAVE

Taking a medical leave of absence is the only circumstance in which you are allowed to stay in
the United States without either: being enrolled full time, transferring to another school or
changing to another non-immigrant status. If you file for leave of absence due to illness, you
may be qualified for a medical exemption (part-time or full-time) of the full-time study
requirement. Before filing for a leave of absence a student should consult with an ISSS advisor
to discuss eligibility.

Approval for medical leave of absence: You must receive approval for a medical leave of
absence from both International Student and Scholar Services and the Undergraduate Dean’s
Office (www.albany.edu/withdrawalreadmission/wd_Form.doc ) or Graduate Studies Office
(www.albany.edu/gradstudies/forms/medicalwithdrawal.pdf ). To obtain this approval, you
must submit a letter from your physician stating your medical condition and indicating that you
are unable to carry a full load of courses at the time the leave is granted. In some instances, a
letter from the Director of the University Health Center will also be required. If the doctor’s
letter meets the requirements, you are allowed to stay in the U.S. for the semester. Under
immigration regulations, only 12 months total of medical leave is allowed per degree level and
must be authorized each semester. Remember, you must register for courses the following
semester or obtain an extension of the medical leave.
Leaving the U.S. while on medical leave: If you are on a medical leave and depart the United States, you may use your current documents (valid passport, valid F-1 entry visa and recertified I-20) to return to the United States.

Dropping courses: If you pre-registered for courses and then find you need to take a medical leave before the semester begins, be sure to drop those courses before classes begin in order to have tuition and fees removed from your account. If you have to take medical leave after the start of a semester and want to drop courses before the semester ends, you also need to submit a Reduced Course Load Authorization Form to ISSS with an authorization for 0-11 credits. Be aware that if you wait too long to drop, you may not be eligible for any refund of tuition. See the Academic Calendar (www.albany.edu/catalogs_calendars_schedules/acad_cal.html) for deadlines for dropping courses (with or without a W) and the Refund Policy for information on refunds (www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/charges.htm see “Tuition Liability”).

RETURNING TO UALBANY FROM OVERSEAS

Obtain a New I-20/DS-2019: You should request a new I-20 from the ISSS office several months before the semester begins. Please include the following:

- I-20/DS-2019 Form (www.albany.edu/isss under “Forms”)
- Financial documentation to cover one year of tuition, fees and living expenses
- Letter from UAlbany Office of Withdrawal and Readmission (www.albany.edu/withdrawalreadmission/) stating that you are allowed to return to your studies (undergraduate students only)
- Letter from your physician stating that you are capable of returning to your studies (for students on medical leave only)
- Address where the new Form should be mailed

Pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee: You will need to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee in order to return to the United States. For further information, go to https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/.

Apply for a New F-1 Visa: State Department regulations require that you must apply for a new F-1 Visa, even if your current Visa has not expired, if you have been out of the U.S. for five months or more and have not been registered for courses during this period.

Have a Valid Passport: Your passport must be valid for at least six months at the time of your visa application.

Check in with ISSS: When you return to UAlbany, you must check in with ISSS and bring your new, stamped documents (passport, visa, I-94, I-20/DS-2019 form) to be copied for your file.
TRANSFERRING BACK TO UALBANY FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION
(Undergraduate Students)

Obtain Readmission permission from UAlbany Office of Withdrawal and Readmission (www.albany.edu/withdrawalreadmission/)
Request release of SEVIS record from other school to UAlbany
Obtain a New I-20/DS-2019 from ISSS: Inform ISSS that SEVIS record has been transferred to UAlbany and submit the following:

- I-20/DS-2019 Form (www.albany.edu/iss under “Forms”)
- Financial documentation to cover one year of tuition, fees and living expenses
- Letter from UAlbany Office of Withdrawal and Readmission stating that you are allowed to return to your studies
- Letter from your physician stating that you are capable of returning to your studies (for students on medical leave only)

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

If your I-20 has been terminated for any reason, you must not continue any employment beyond the termination date. If you are on OPT, this rule still applies.

- While on a medical leave in the U.S., you are not permitted to engage in any student-based employment, whether on-campus or off-campus.
- If you wish to take a leave of absence to pursue employment or any other activities in the U.S., you will have to change your immigration status accordingly and should speak with an ISSS advisor about your plans.
- A student who returns to the U.S. with a new I-20 will not be eligible for practical training (CPT/OPT) until he or she has been enrolled for two semesters after return.

TRAVEL ISSUES

If you wish to make short-term, temporary visits to the U.S. during the period that you are on leave, suspended or withdrawn from UAlbany, you should not enter in F-1 or J-1 status. You can enter the U.S. on a different visa, such as a B-2 visitor's visa or under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), if such an arrangement exists between the U.S. and your country. You may enter in Student Status using your I-20/DS-2019 form and student visa only if you are returning for the purpose of resuming your studies.

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