Topics We Will Cover Today:
- Basic definitions and documents
- Student’s reporting requirements
- Full time status/registration
- Employment Regulations
- Health Insurance Requirements
- Travelling
- Dependents
- Program Extensions
- Departing the U.S. (including Transfers and Grace Periods)
Maintaining Status as an F-1/J-1 Student

- As an international student, you are responsible for maintaining your status.
- Maintaining status means that you are abiding by regulations and reporting requirements. Failure to maintain status will result in a loss of status.
- The following slides tell you what you need to do to maintain your status as an international student.
What does ISSS do?

- We are international student advisors.
- We are also referred to as “Designated School Officials” (DSOs) and “Responsible Officers” (AROs).
- We are not federal or law enforcement officials, however we are required to report information about your status to the federal government.
- We are here to help you! This means we are here to help with your questions about immigration, academics, cultural adjustment, and other issues. We are also here to help answer your questions about maintaining your status.
Important Definitions

- **Status:** You are in F-1 or J-1 status. This refers to your legal standing to be in the United States as a student. Your status must be valid in order for you to remain in the United States.

- **Visa:** The visa in your passport is an entry document. It allows you to enter the United States in a certain status.

- **SEVIS:** SEVIS is an online database, belonging to DHS, that houses real-time information about your status. ISSS does reporting in SEVIS.

- **I-20/DS-2019:** These documents prove your current F-1 or J-1 status. The documents are printed from SEVIS.
Keep your passport valid at all times.

- You must have a valid passport in your possession.
- Check your passport’s validity by checking the expiration date.
- For information on renewing your passport, visit the web site of your country’s embassy or consulate in the United States.
Keeping your visa valid

- Your visa is an entry document. It allows you to enter the United States.

- You must enter the United States using the appropriate visa. As students, you must enter the United States using your F-1 or J-1 visa.

- You may stay in the United States on an expired visa, as long as your F-1 or J-1 status is still valid.

- If you leave the United States, you must have a valid F-1 or J-1 visa, or renew that visa, before returning.

- ISSS recommends renewing a visa in your home country.
Sample Visa

“M” means the visa is good for multiple re-entries

The “N” number under Annotation should match the N number on your current I-20 or DS-2019

This should say F-1 or J-1

Pay attention to the expiration date!
Sample I-94

- For most of you, your I-94 will be electronic. You can access it online at [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov). You will need to enter your information exactly as it appears on your passport.

- The I-94 updates each time you re-enter the country.

- Check your I-94 to make sure that all of the information is correct. If there is an error, contact ISSS.

- Pay special attention to the “Class of Admission,” which should be F-1 or J-1, and the “Admit Until Date,” which should be “D/S” for Duration of Status.
Report changes to your contact information within 10 days to ISSS

- US federal regulations require all F-1 and J-1 students to report a change of address, e-mail or phone number to ISSS within 10 days of the change.
- Students can do this in MyUAlbany under “Demographics” by updating their “SEVIS USA” and/or “SEVIS Foreign” address fields, phone number and/or e-mail.
Report changes in your academic program to the ISSS.

- Students must notify the ISSS whenever there is a change in their academic program (i.e. major, degree level, etc...), program dates, or source of funding.
Attend the school that you are authorized to attend, as indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019.

- Because you’re sitting here today, you must have a valid I-20 or DS-2019 issued by the University at Albany.
- With departmental approval, students may be able to take additional courses at other institutions, however at least 50% of your courses must be taken at UAlbany.
Maintain a full-time course of study.

- U.S. federal regulations require you to be enrolled in a full-time course of study for each Fall and Spring semester until completion of your program.
  - This does not include summer. You are not required to register during the summer term, though you may choose to take courses.
- Full time at the University at Albany is:
  - At least 12 credits for undergraduate students
  - At least 9 credits for graduate students
Obtain PRIOR authorization from ISSS before dropping below a full-time course load.

- There are very limited exceptions to the full-time course load rule.
- These include academic difficulty (in specific circumstances), a documented medical condition, and your final semester of coursework if you need less than full-time credits to complete the degree.
International Students and On-Line Courses

- International students may only take ONE fully online (100% online), 3 credit course to reach their full-time requirements.
- This cannot be the only course you take.
- Example: If you are an undergraduate taking 12 credits, 3 credits may be online. If you are an undergraduate taking 15 credits, an additional online course may be possible.
Abide by U.S. federal employment regulations.

- On-Campus:
  - F-1 and J-1 students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester
  - More hours may be possible during break periods (winter and summer break)
  - J-1 students must obtain work authorization in writing from their sponsoring agency before beginning any employment
Abide by U.S. federal employment regulations.

- **Off-Campus**
  - F-1 and J-1 students are not authorized to work off campus.
  - F-1 and J-1 students must consult ISSS and obtain proper work authorization **before** beginning any work off campus, whether it is **paid or unpaid**.
  - F-1 students may be eligible for “CPT” or “OPT” off-campus work authorization after completion of one academic year. All work must be related to your field of study. ISSS hosts workshops on how to obtain these authorizations.
  - J-1 students may be eligible for “Academic Training” off-campus work authorization. All work must be related to your field of study.
Maintain required health and accident insurance.

- F-1 and J-1 students must have approved health and accident insurance for themselves and any F-2 or J-2 dependents throughout their stay in the U.S.
Bring your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 to ISSS PRIOR to travelling outside the U.S.

- Students are recommended to bring their I-20 or DS-2019 to ISSS for endorsement once every semester that they plan on travelling outside the U.S.

- If you will be applying for a new visa, consult ISSS about a status letter.

- Please allow us 5-7 business days to sign travel documents – we cannot do it the same day!
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N0004705512 (F-1)  
NAME: John Doe Smith

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CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

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TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

This page when properly endorsed, may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.

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F-1 Students: This is where the I-20 is signed for travel by an ISSS advisor (page 2)
J-1 Students: This is where the DS-2019 is signed for travel by an ISSS advisor.
Re-entering the United States after Travel

- While a full-time student, to re-enter the United States after travelling outside you must have:
  - Valid passport (valid 6 months into the future)
  - Valid F-1 or J-1 visa
  - Valid I-20 or DS-2019 that has been signed for travel within the past year (recommended: 6 months)

- Also recommended: copy of transcript, I-94, student ID, proof of I-901 SEVIS fee payment, proof of finances

- You must have these documents in your carry-on, not your checked luggage

- Only present required documents (passport, visa, and I-20/DS-2019) first.
Make sure you are documented while travelling

- Anytime you are travelling, whether inside or outside of the United States, you should be documented.
- This means having your passport, visa, I-20 or DS-2019, and I-94, and/or photocopies/scans of these documents.
- Always keep photocopies/scans of these documents in case you lose them.
- Never throw out an old passport, I-20/DS-2019, or visa! Always keep them!
Notify ISSS of any dependents who are or will be in the U.S. with you.

- ISSS prepares visa documents for F-2 and J-2 dependents.
- ISSS is required to report the biographical data on these dependents to the U.S. federal government.
- Dependents refers to a spouse or child under the age of 21.
Apply for an extension PRIOR to the expiration date on your I-20 or DS-2019.

- Requests for extensions may be submitted at any time up to 30 days prior to the expiration date on the forms.
- You will need to obtain the “Academic Advisor’s Recommendation Form for Extension of Stay” and recertify your finances.
F-1 Students: This is your I-20 program end date.
J-1

Students: This is your DS-2019 program end date
If you end your studies at the University at Albany, report your departure date to ISSS.

- Complete the ISSS Departure Form.
- You may also need to inform other offices on campus about your intent to leave.
Obtain transfer authorization prior to leaving Albany.

- Students who plan to transfer to another U.S. college or university must inform ISSS of their final choice so that ISSS can transfer your SEVIS record to the new school.
- You must provide ISSS with a copy of the acceptance letter.
Depart the U.S. within the 60 day (F-1) grace period.

- F-1 students must leave the U.S. within 60 days of the I-20 end date OR their program end date, whichever is earlier.
- The only exceptions to this are people applying for post-completion Optional Practical Training, transferring to a new school, or applying for a change of status.
Depart the U.S. within the 30 day (J-1) grace period.

- Students in J-1 status must leave the U.S. within 30 days of the DS-2019 expiration date OR their program end date, whichever is earlier.
- The only exception to this is people transferring to a new J program or authorized for Academic Training.
While it is the responsibility of ISSS to keep UAlbany international students informed about changing federal immigration regulations, it is the responsibility of UAlbany international students to STAY INFORMED by reading the ISSS Announcements sent regularly to your albany.edu e-mail address.
This information is subject to change without notice. If you have questions or concerns regarding your legal status in the United States, it is important for you to come to ISSS and meet with an advisor.