F-1 and J-1 Non-Immigrant Students

INFORMATION FOR FACULTY AND ACADEMIC ADVISORS

One of the most important aspects of being an international student is maintaining status and complying with the regulations established by the Department of Homeland Security through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). There are many types of visas issued to non-immigrant visitors to the U.S.; however, the international students at UNK, with a few exceptions, are F-1 and J-1 visa holders. For the purpose of academic advising, there is little difference in the regulations for F and J students.

Below is a chart with some of the important regulations regarding academic advising for F and J non-immigrant students. Page three is a summary of considerations for academic advising for international students.

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<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Exceptions</th>
<th>Role of academic advisor</th>
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<td>Physically report to the DSO at the beginning of each semester</td>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td>If a student wants to do any of the following, he/she must meet with a DSO before any action is taken:</td>
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| Pursue a “full course of study” every academic session or semester except during official school breaks, or unless approved under a specific exception, in advance, by the DSO. | • Undergraduate—12 credit hours  
  • Graduate—9 credit hours  
  • Graduate with GA—6 credit hours  
  • Only 3 credit hours in all of these cases can be taken online  
  • Summer Session—no enrollment requirements | • Illness or medical condition  
  • Initial difficulty with English Language or American teaching methods  
  • Student in last semester  
  • Any student who needs to drop below a full course of study for any of the above reasons must have prior approval from a DSO | If a student wants to do any of the following, he/she must meet with a DSO before any action is taken:  
  • Dropping a class  
  • Enrolling in an on-line class  
  • Co-enrolling in CCC  
  • Students with an Instructional Technology Major must consult with a DSO prior to each registration period for a waiver related to online classes. |
| Make “normal progress” towards completion of their course of study or graduation | If a student cannot complete their planned end date, they must request an extension from a DSO  
  • A common reason for this is change of major | Academic probation or suspension are not acceptable reasons for an extension of program end date.  
  If a student remains in the US after the expiration of their program end date are considered out of status and are subject to deportation. | Students will bring a program extension request to an academic advisor for a signature. |
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| Work is not allowed, either on or off campus, unless specifically authorized by a DSO. | Working for the purpose of earning money:  
- Job must be on campus  
- Student cannot work more than 20 hours per week  
Working for the purpose of completing program requirements (internships).  
For international students, this is referred to as **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**.  
- This can be on or off campus  
- Must have documentation from academic advisor and employer designating that the job directly relates to student’s field of study  
- Work can be approved on a part-time or a full-time basis  
  o Students should always talk with a DSO when planning for CPT. | If a student can prove “severe economic hardship” to USCIS, they can be approved for off campus work for the purpose of earning money.  
- This is a difficult, time consuming, and costly option. However, in some situations, it is necessary. | The academic advisor will need to supply a letter documenting the fact that the CPT directly relates to the students course of study. |

F-1 students may qualify for practical training upon completion of their degree which allows them to engage in **temporary** employment to gain practical experience in his or her field of study. This is called **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. OPT must be approved by USCIS. | After graduating, a student can apply for employment (anywhere within the US) for a period of up to 1 year.  
The employment must be directly related to the student’s major area of study. | The academic advisor will need to provide a letter verifying completion date.  
  o Undergraduate students must have the signature of the academic advisor  
  o Graduate students must have the signature of the department chair. |  |

As long as international students pay attention to USCIS regulation, it is not difficult to remain in status while in the U.S. If a student does fall out of status, they can apply for reinstatement through USCIS. However, this process is costly, long, and difficult. And, there is no guarantee they will receive approval for reinstatement. Therefore, one of the main purposes of International Student Services (ISS) is to help the students comply with USCIS regulations and maintain status. The ISS office provides the necessary information and assistance to comply with current immigration regulations as mandated by the Department of Homeland Security. In addition, ISS counsels and advises students on cultural, banking, university system policies, and much more.

Please encourage your students to seek out our services when necessary and also feel free to contact us when you have questions about international students that you advise or are in your classes.

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Considerations when advising International Students:

“W” withdrawal from class: reducing their course load to below FT registration is not an option for international students. If you have an international student who is failing a class, rather than advising to drop the class, have the student contact either the Office of Academic Advising or the Office of Academic Success, as well as our office. Other options might be available to the student. They might be able to pick up other hours to maintain status and then drop your class. If options are not available, they will need to stay registered in the class and receive a poor grade rather than go out of status.

“I” grade: You may be considering giving an international student an incomplete in one of your classes. Before you do that, please visit with one of the DSOs listed on the attachment. International students must be enrolled FT each semester; therefore, if they accept and incomplete contract they will need to complete this in addition to a full-time load next semester.

On-line classes: international students can only be enrolled in 1 on-line course that adds to full-time; i.e., 3 UNK classroom courses, 1 on-line. If they are enrolled in 4 or more classroom courses, they can take more than 1 on-line course. For students with an Instructional Technology major, we have paperwork to allow for several on-line courses and require the co-operation of the instructor.

Co-enrollment: international students may co-enroll with Central Community College; once again they need to have one co-enrolled class that adds to FT: i.e., 3 UNK classroom courses and 1 CCC course.

Work: international students cannot work without the permission of this office and/or USCIS; in addition, they are allowed 20 hours or less per week of on-campus work only.

Internships or Curricular Practical Training (CPT): there are only two ways in which an international student can participate in an internship (work): the internship must be an “integral part of their program,” i.e., listed in the catalog; or they must be enrolled for credit hours for the internship/work.

Optional Practical Training (OPT): graduating students may apply for the benefit of a one year work permit.