

UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMMIGRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

While you are in the United States, you must follow US Immigration regulations. To be “in status” means that you are following all of the guidelines that pertain to your particular status (F-1, H-1B, J-1, etc.). The following guidelines will provide you with a general understanding of some immigration rules. You will not, however, gain an understanding of the actual procedures which must be followed in order to fulfill your obligations. Consultation with and assistance from the staff of OISS is necessary to comply with all of your immigration responsibilities.

Please be aware that the Department of Homeland Security ultimately holds you responsible for maintaining your immigration status. Therefore, please consult with CIIP staff prior to making any major decisions.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Immigration Documents

Be sure that your passport, I-20, DS-2019 and/or your I-94 remain valid at all times. In other words, you should periodically check the expiration dates on all of your immigration documents.

Your passport should remain valid at least 6 months into the future. If you need to apply for an extension of your permission to remain in the US, please do so at least 3 to 6 months in advance of the expiration date on your I-20, DS 2019 or I-94 card.

Traveling

In the US. For travel within the US, always take your passport and other immigration documents. If for any reason you are stopped by the authorities, you may be required to show proof of your permission to temporarily reside in the US. While in the New Orleans area, keep your documents in a safe place and carry copies.

Outside the US. Visit the CIIP at least two to three weeks prior to leaving so that staff may inspect your immigration documents and provide you with any support documents needed to re-enter the US. If you have a pending immigration petition, may want to consult with CIIP staff several months in advance of any planned travel.

National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). Some students, faculty and staff may have additional immigration obligations during entry and departure. For more information, please contact CIIP Staff.

Medical Insurance Compliance

Federal regulations require all J-1 exchange visitors and their dependents to carry appropriate medical insurance for the duration of their exchange program. However, the university requires all students in F or J status to carry medical insurance. Thus, insurance charges are automatically placed on student fee

bills.

Changes in Job Duties

Please notify CIIP prior to any changes in your job duties, research program, salary, title or work location. Any significant changes in the terms and conditions under which you were invited to XULA, may affect your immigration status.

Changes in Your Academic Program

Please notify CIIP prior to changing your major, program level, transferring to another university, taking courses at another university, engaging in employment, or reducing your course load. Such changes will need to be properly annotated in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Attendance and Course load Requirements

Attendance. You must register and attend classes for all normal school terms except summer term or mini session. If the summer term is your first semester, then you must also register and attend classes.

Course load Requirements for F-1 Students

Full Course load. You must be registered for 12 hours if you are an undergraduate student or 9 hours if you are a graduate student. You must maintain full-time enrollment **for the entire semester.**

Exceptions. You must register for a "full course load," as defined by immigration, unless: (1) you are a graduate student who has completed all your coursework, except thesis or dissertation hours or (2) an CIIP staff member approves, in advance, a reduction in course load for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. Difficulties with the English language (initial semester in US)
- b. Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods or reading requirements (initial semester in US)
- c. Improper course level placement
- d. Illness or other medical condition which compels you to interrupt or reduce your course of study
- e. You will complete all degree requirements by the end of that school term.

You must resume a full course of study when the difficulties or conditions listed in items a-d above have been resolved.