WHAT ARE THE COMMON STUDENT VISA TYPES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

Schools are authorized by The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue an immigration document through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) that is used by foreign nationals to apply for a student visa to study in the United States.

- **F-1 student**: F-1 is the most common immigration status for degree seeking international students. Admitted international students receive a Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility) document from DePaul University which they will then use to apply for an F-1 visa at a US consulate or embassy. F-1 students are then admitted to the United States in F-1 status to study and must attend school full time except for their vacation break.

- **J-1 student**: The J-1 student category is also used by international students. These admitted students receive a Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility) document from DePaul University and use it to apply for the J-1 visa. The J-1 exchange visitor category is regulated by the U.S. Department of State (USDOS). J-1 students are in the United States to study and can be degree or non-degree seeking and must attend school full time in their program except for their vacation break.

**BlueStar Tip:**
Did you know that you can now identify international students in F-1 visa status in BlueStar? Look on student’s “Overview” tab. If the student is an international student you will see the following: “International Student: TRUE”

WHAT IS FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

International students in F-1 or J-1 status are required to enroll in a full course of study during the academic year, as a condition of maintaining their immigration status. Students must enroll in and receive a grade (other than “W”, “WA” or “FX”) for the following number of credits each term in order to be considered full-time. Audited courses will not count towards the full course of study requirements.

| Undergraduate | 12 credit hours |
| Graduate      | 8 credit hours  |
| Graduate Music| 6 credit hours  |
| Law           | 12 credit hours |
| English Language Academy | 4 courses |

CAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TAKE ONLINE COURSES?

International students in F-1 non-immigrant visa status are restricted from counting more than one online learning (OL) course per quarter towards their “full course of study” requirement. Please note that if a student needs only 1 course to finish his or her program of study, the course cannot be taken through online/distance education. International students in J-1 non-immigrant visa status cannot count any online courses toward their full-time enrollment requirement (i.e. only physical classroom courses will count toward full-time enrollment for J-1 students).
FAQs For Academic Advisors

DOES A STUDENT NEED TO ENROLL FULL-TIME IN THE SUMMER?

The rules regarding annual vacation differ depending on visa status and academic system (whether the school is based on a semester, trimester, or quarter system). Academic Advisors should refer international students to an OISS immigration advisor to determine eligibility for annual vacation.

CAN STUDENTS EVER REGISTER BELOW FULL-TIME?

Under current federal regulations, an international student in F-1 non-immigrant visa status may be enrolled for less than the required full course load only under certain circumstances. Reduced course load exceptions may only be authorized by an OISS SEVIS Designated School Official (DSO). Students must consult with an OISS advisor before dropping or withdrawing from a class as doing so without SEVIS authorization may jeopardize their lawful status. Advisors can help by referring students to the OISS for further guidance. J-1 students should also consult with their OISS Responsible Officer.

WHAT SHOULD ADVISORS DO WHEN STUDENTS CHANGE MAJORS OR DEGREE LEVEL?

Academic advisors should make sure that the change of major or degree level is noted in PeopleSoft. The government requires that such changes be reported and reflected in the student’s immigration documents. The OISS will be notified via PeopleSoft of such changes and send the information to SEVIS so students may obtain updated immigration documents.

CAN F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS WORK ON-CAMPUS?

F-1 and J-1 students pursuing a full course of study may work on campus up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session. When classes are not in session, they may work more than 20 hours. While F-1 students do not need advance authorization to work on campus, J-1 students need advance authorization from the OISS Responsible Officer (RO) before beginning on-campus employment. Advisors can help by referring students with specific questions regarding on-campus employment eligibility to the OISS.

CAN F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS WORK OFF-CAMPUS?

Off-campus work is prohibited unless specifically authorized. Working without authorization is an immigration status violation that can make the student subject to deportation. Before accepting or engaging in any kind of employment, students should consult the OISS.

Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)
1 E. Jackson Blvd. DePaul Center Suite 9300, Chicago, IL 60604 | ☎️ (312) 362-8376 | ✉️ oiss@depaul.edu