

Maintaining J-1 Student Status

This may be the most important document you will read while you are in the U.S. Please read it carefully. It is your responsibility to know and obey J-1 regulations or face possible removal from the U.S. The regulations are presented in 5 categories from the word F-A-C-T-S.

F=FULL-TIME STUDENT

1. **Be a full-time student each main semester.** You must complete (not just register) for a full course load each main semester. To maintain your status, undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students must complete 12 hours and graduate students 9 hours each spring and fall semester. **Note:** Some degree programs may require more hours for academic reasons. Check with your department. You are not required by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to enroll in classes during the summer session, unless summer is your first semester in the U.S. or your last semester to complete your degree. If you need to drop below full-time hours, make an appointment to see an International Student Counselor **BEFORE** taking any action even if you are failing the class. *A grade of "W" does not count toward your full-time requirement.*

- I completely understand this regulation and will comply with it
 I have questions or need more information

A=AUTHORIZATION FOR EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

1. You must receive authorization of employment in advance before the employment begins. Authorization can be granted in periods of up to 12 months at a time. J student employment can be authorized by the RO/ARO for the following types of employment:
 - Employment pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship;
 - Employment that occurs on the premises of the University of Houston;
 - Employment that occurs off-campus, which is necessary because of serious, urgent, and unforeseen economic circumstances that have arisen since acquiring exchange visitor status.
 - Academic Training related the course of study.

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C=CARRY CURRENT DOCUMENTS

1. **Keep your passport valid at all times.** Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months into the future.
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2. **You are required to carry your immigration documents (passport, I-94 card, DS-2019) with you.** You can be fined \$100 and/or sent to jail for up to 30 days if you do not have your documents with you. Local law enforcement officials have unofficially stated they are not strictly enforcing this law. They still recommend that you carry photocopies of your immigration documents with you at all times in the greater Houston area. You should carry the original documents with you outside of Houston, even if you are remaining in the U.S.
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3. **Inside the U.S. you must maintain your visa status, not your visa sticker in your passport.** The visa sticker in your passport can expire while you are in the U.S. because its ONLY function is to serve as a "key" to enter or reenter the U.S. Your visa status is defined with the J-1 and D/S (Duration of Status) on your DS-2019 and I-94 card. You must maintain your status (not the sticker) in order to remain in the U.S. You maintain your visa status by obeying all U.S. regulations. You only need to renew your visa sticker if you leave the U.S. and want to reenter. Be sure to only enter with a J-1 visa if you want to have J-1 status in the U.S. The type of visa sticker you use determines your status in the U.S. If you are a J-1 student and have a specific departure date on your I-94 card (there is no D/S), make an appointment to see an advisor in our office immediately.
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4. **Only attend the school listed on your current DS-2019.** To attend another school, you must transfer to that school (obtain approval on a new DS-2019).
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5. **Apply for an extension of your DS-2019 before the expiration date.** The extension can only be granted by our office before the expiration date listed on item 3 of your DS-2019. Valid reasons include change in major, research difficulties, or a medical excuse.

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6. **Obtain required health insurance.** All exchange visitors (both J-1 principals and J-2 dependents) are required to have sickness and accident insurance, and medical evacuation and repatriation insurance in effect for the duration of your status.

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T=TRANSITIONS

1. **Report any change of address to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within 10 days of the change using DHS Form AR-11 and using self-service to update People Soft "SEVIS" address type .** You may be fined \$200 and/or placed in jail for up to 30 days if DHS does not have your current address. You are responsible for submitting Form AR-11 to the DHS within 10 days every time you move. The AR-11 is available in our office and the DHS website: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>. Form AR-11SR needs to be used if you are required to participate in Special Registration. You should also report within 10 days the new address, phone number and email to ISSSO and Registration & Academic Records in the Welcome Center. **Never blank out "SEVIS" address type in People Soft.**

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2. **Obtain a new DS-2019 whenever you make a change in degree levels.** You can only change degree level from lower to higher. (e.g., bachelor's to master's degree, or master's to PhD degree.)

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3. **Obtain a travel endorsement on your DS-2019 before leaving the U.S. if you plan to reenter.** This will be needed if you want to reenter the U.S. It is not necessary if you are returning home permanently. A DS-2019 is no longer valid for reentry once you complete the degree listed on your DS-2019, even if the DS-2019 has not expired.

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4. **Make a transition plan before completing your degree if you would like to do Academic Training.** You can only apply for Academic Training prior to your completion of degree. You must have a job (directly related to your major area of study) offer in order to apply for academic training.

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5. **Complete your degree/academic training earlier than DS-2019 program ending date.** You must notify ISSSO in order to end your DS-2019 properly in the SEVIS system to avoid any complications of your status or future re-entry the U.S.

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S=STAY IN TOUCH

1. Realize that the SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System) requires ISSSO to report all events in the life of a student via the internet on a regular basis. Due to this close tracking, it is vital that you stay in status by following all the items on this sheet and stay in touch with our office so that you can avoid unintentional violations. The government may change or add to J-1 regulations at any time. It is your responsibility to know them by attending public information meetings when offered, visiting our website (www.issso.uh.edu), and **by using your UH email account (or by placing a "pointer" from it to your personal email account) so that we can send you automatic alerts.**

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"I have read all of the above statements and understand that I am required to know and obey all J-1 regulations."

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____