

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS IN F-1 STATUS

### Purpose

This handout is for students in F-1 status. Upon reading this information, you should have a basic understanding of some of the most important responsibilities you have in relation to regulations of the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). You will not, however, gain an understanding of the actual procedures which must be followed in order to fulfill your responsibilities. Consultation with and assistance from staff of the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) is necessary to comply with all of your responsibilities. **Failure to comply may result in loss of your status and deportation.**

### Immigration Documents

**Passport.** You must maintain the validity of your passport at all times (unless you are exempt from passport requirements). If you lose your passport, you should contact OISS and immediately take steps to have it replaced.

**Form I-20.** You should read and clearly understand the material on page 2 of Form I-20. If you lose your I-20, you should immediately request a new form from OISS.

**Form I-94.** Keep a printed copy of your I94 Form for your records at all times. This is a very important document as it indicates the immigration status you are given upon entry to the United States and the length of time you may stay.

**Note:** You must keep your passport (unless you are exempt from passport requirements), Forms I-20 and I-94 in a safe place at all times. If you are traveling outside of the New Orleans metropolitan area, you should carry your passport, your I-20 and I-94 form with you.

### Registration, Attendance and Courseload Requirements

**Registration and Attendance.** You must register for classes and attend the school which USCIS has authorized you to attend. You must register for all normal school terms except summer terms or mini-sessions (usually four weeks or less in duration).

**Courseload.** You must register for a "full courseload," as defined by the USCIS, unless: (1) you will complete all degree requirements by the end of that school term or (2) an OISS staff member approves, in advance, a reduction in courseload for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. Difficulties with the English language (initial semester in U.S.)
- b. Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods or reading requirements (initial semester in U.S.)
- c. Improper course level placement
- d. Illness or other medical condition which compels you to interrupt or reduce your course of study.

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

**Undergraduate Students.** You must register for at least 12 semester hours of instruction per academic term.

**Graduate Students.** You must register for at least 9 semester hours of instruction per academic term with or without an assistantship or fellowship.

**Graduate Students Who Have Completed All Required Coursework.** If a thesis or dissertation is required for your program and if you have completed all required coursework, you should register for the number of hours recommended by your academic adviser or the graduate school.

### Address and Name Change Notification

Within 10 days of moving or changing your name, you are required to notify USCIS. You may satisfy this requirement by notifying the OISS through submission of the "Address, Name and Information Change Form."

## Employment

**On-Campus Employment.** While you may be employed in most on-campus jobs, you must limit all employment (both on campus and off) to a total of 20 hours per week while school is in session. Full-time on-campus employment is allowed only when school is not in session (holidays - i.e. spring break), during summer vacations and during "short" terms (usually four weeks or less in duration).

**Off-Campus Employment.** You must not work off-campus employment without prior written authorization. While you may be eligible to apply for work permission based upon practical training or economic necessity, you must limit employment (both on campus and off) to a total of 20 hours per week while school is in session.

**Practical Training Employment.** "Practical training" is work which is directly related to your major field of study. You may be eligible for two types of training: (1) "curricular practical training" during your studies and (2) "optional practical training" before or after completion of your studies. Such work may be performed anywhere in the U. S. You must make application and be granted written authorization for practical training before beginning employment.

## Travel Outside the U. S.

**Returning to UNO.** You should take the following documents to OISS at least three weeks before departing the U.S. to request travel authorization: (1) your valid passport, (2) I-20 form.

**Returning to a Different School.** You must obtain a new Form I-20 from your new school before you attempt to reenter the U. S. Entering this country using an I-20 from a school you do not plan to immediately attend can cause serious Immigration problems.

## Coursework at or Transfer to a Different School

If you wish to obtain a degree or certificate from UNO but want to temporarily take courses at a different school, you should consult with OISS to determine if any special procedures must be followed to authorize this study. If, instead, you wish to cease study at UNO and transfer to a different school, you must also consult with OISS before you transfer and follow proper transfer procedures.

## Change of Study Program

If you change your major or complete one program and wish to continue study for another program at UNO, you should immediately contact OISS to request a new I-20 which will reflect your new program of study. If the admissions office has issued your new I-20, you must present it to OISS within 15 days of beginning your new program of study.

## Length of Time You May Remain in the United States

You must request an extension of your permission to remain in the U. S. if you will require more time than allowed by the completion date on your I-20 form. Your request must be made to OISS before the completion date on your I-20 form.