Throughout the duration of their educational programs at SIU Carbondale, international students must adhere to numerous rules and policies that their domestic student counterparts are not required to uphold. Academic advisers are key with helping students understand these complicated regulations. The following guidelines are the primary requirements that international students are expected to comply with in order to maintain their non-immigrant status while residing in the States. For additional information or clarification, contact the staff at the Center for International Education, 618-453-5774.

How to Maintain Your Immigration Status

1. Maintain a full course of study.
   - Undergraduate students: Enroll in at least 12 credit hours in Fall or Spring (or 6 in Summer if it is your first or final term)
   - Masters or doctoral students without an assistantship: Enroll in at least 9 credit hours in Fall or Spring (or 3 in Summer if it is your first or final term)
   - Masters or doctoral students with an assistantship: Enroll in at least 8 credit hours in Fall or Spring (or 3 in Summer if it is your first or final term)
   - Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy and have a graduate assistantship: Enroll in at least 6 credit hours in Fall or Spring (or 3 in Summer if it is your final term)
   - Online coursework – International students are not allowed to register for more than one online course each semester. This online course cannot exceed 3 credit hours. If a student only needs one course to complete their program of study, the course cannot be completed through online or distance education.

2. Complete the course of study by the date posted in section five (5) of your I-20.
   - The I-20 has an expiration date established by the time necessary to complete a degree. The I-20 expires on that date or when the student completes the course of study, whichever comes first.

3. Report to the Center for International Education Office (CIE) to make changes to your I-20 including change of major, funding, level of study, or legal name.

4. Limit campus employment to a maximum of twenty (20) hours per week while school is in session. You may work full time (37.5 hours per week) when school is not in session.

5. Never work off campus. Off campus internships are an exception. Contact CIE for guidelines.

6. Begin the process to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) ninety (90) days before you intend to work or complete your academic program.

7. Depart the United States no later than sixty (60) days after completing your academic program or OPT. If you wish to start a new academic program at SIU or another U.S. school, you must receive a new I-20 no later than sixty (60) days after completing your academic program or OPT.

8. Have a valid passport the entire time you are in the United States.
9. Report your local Carbondale address within ten (10) days of the time that you establish your residence. Report any future address changes to CIE within ten (10) days including while you are on any authorized practical training.
   • The USCIS requires that you maintain a current address with the University at all times. You can either email us at ipsupdates@siu.edu or complete an Alien’s Change of Address form in the front office of CIE.

10. Secure a signature for travel outside the United States from a Designated School Official at the CIE office at least two weeks prior to your departure.

11. Report to CIE when you intend to leave SIU, especially if you are graduating earlier than the program end date on your I-20.

The Center for International Education staff is required to strictly enforce all of these rules and regulations. In case of a violation we are required to report any irregularities to the USCIS.

Center for International Education, Mailcode 4333, 860 Lincoln Drive, Carbondale, Illinois, 62901, phone 618-453-5774, fax 618-453-7660

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