International Student and Scholar Services

The International Center is an advocate for the international community at the University of Missouri. International student advisers are available to answer your questions, especially those involving immigration issues. However, please remember that it is your responsibility to maintain your legal status in the U.S.

Maintaining your J-1 status

Below are some of the most common J-1 regulations. Failure to follow these regulations may result in the termination of your J-1 status. This handout is written for J-1 students on MU DS-2019s. If your DS-2019 was issued by MU, please contact international student services for additional information. If another institution or agency issued your DS-2019, please consult that institution or agency for additional information.

Pursue your objective

You must pursue the objective listed on your DS-2019. Do not change your objective (major, degree level, etc.) or category (e.g., student to researcher) prior to getting special authorization from your financial sponsor and an international student adviser.

Keep your documents up to date

- **DS-2019**: Do not let this document expire. If you need an extension of the completion date on the DS-2019, please contact international student services at least 10 days before your DS-2019 expires. If your DS-2019 was issued by an institution or agency other than MU, please consult it concerning your extension. It is important to keep every DS-2019 issued to you for your records.

- **Passport**: Do not let your passport expire. It should always be valid for at least six months into the future. You can renew your passport at your country’s embassy in the United States or while on a trip home.

- **I-94 card**: Keep your I-94 card. It must state “J-1” and “D/S” (duration of status). If you have dependents, their I-94s must state “J-2” and “D/S.” If you have an expiration date or another visa status on your I-94 card, you should speak to an international student adviser immediately.

- **Visa stamp**: It is OK for your visa stamp to expire while you are in the United States; however, you may need to renew the visa if you travel abroad or plan to re-enter the United States. Pay attention to the number of entries into the U.S. you are allowed on your visa. If you transfer between schools in the U.S., it is acceptable for your visa to have another school’s name on it. Please contact international student services for information concerning going to Mexico or Canada with an expired visa. Also, do not enter the U.S. on a tourist (B) visa, the visa waiver program or on a border-crossing card. If you do, you will no longer be on a student visa and will lose all student visa benefits, including work authorization.

- **Address**: Update international student services of any physical address changes (post office boxes are not acceptable for reporting purposes). Reporting changes of address through myZou (your local address) will fulfill this requirement as the university will forward the updated addresses electronically to the International Center. We will then report your new address to immigration. Please be sure to update your local address within 10 days of moving. You should also maintain a permanent address outside the U.S. to which you intend to return.
Maintain full-time enrollment

You must pursue a full course of study by enrolling in the following minimum numbers of credit hours:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall or spring semesters</th>
<th>Summer semester*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students (no assistantship)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students (with assistantship)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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*If summer is your first semester at MU, first semester in a new academic program or last semester in your academic program, you must register full time. **If it is not your first or last semester, summer is considered vacation time and you are not required to take classes for immigration purposes.**

If you need to fall below the required hours, please contact international student services **before** you drop any classes. You may or may not be eligible to drop below full time. In order to maintain legal immigration status, a reduced course load form must be approved prior to dropping below the required minimum hours.

If you want to take classes at another school in conjunction with your MU classes, you will also need to complete the reduced course load form. Concurrent enrollment must be authorized by an international student adviser. During the spring and fall semesters, you should be taking at least half of your courses at MU.

Only three hours of distance learning or online courses may count toward the fulfillment of your full-time enrollment requirement for each semester.

Obtain work authorization

- **On-campus work**: As long as you are in legal J-1 status, you are eligible to work on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the spring and fall semesters if your sponsor approves. You need to obtain a letter from your sponsor or international student adviser before accepting on-campus employment. You are eligible to work full time on campus during vacation periods and during the summer semester.

- **Off-campus work**: You must get proper work authorization prior to working off campus. You will be out of status and eligible for deportation if you work without authorization. **Do not risk it.** Work is considered anything for which you are compensated, such as being given money, food and room/board. Volunteering may be considered as employment, please check with international student services before accepting.

Consult international student services regarding academic training options.

Maintain adequate health insurance

You are required to maintain adequate health, accident and repatriation insurance at all times for you and all your dependents. You will lose your J-1 status if you willfully do not maintain the required insurance. You must also maintain money for airfare home.

Obtain travel signatures

If you travel outside the country, your DS-2019 will need a current travel signature in order for you to re-enter the United States. Make sure your DS-2019 was signed by an international student adviser (or your program sponsor) within the past six months.

Dependents

You may bring your dependents (spouse and/or unmarried children under age 21) to the United States. Please consult an international student adviser about the procedure. Dependents on a J-2 visa may apply for work authorization. Dependents may attend MU classes full or part time. Dependents must travel with the proper paperwork, such as the DS-2019 signed for travel.