J-1 IMMIGRATION BASICS
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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, while you are a student. However, please remember that it is your responsibility to maintain your legal status in the United States.

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 DS-2019s issued by MU. If your DS-2019 was issued by MU, please contact the International Center 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 the International Center 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:** You will need to access your I-94 online and print it to apply for benefits within the U.S. (driver’s license, Social Security number, etc.). Electronic I-94 records can be accessed at i94.cbp.dhs.gov. If you have difficulty printing your I-94, please contact your international student adviser.
- **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 the International Center for information about going to Mexico or Canada with an expired visa. Also, do not enter the U.S. on a visitor (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:** You must update the International Center of any physical address changes (post office boxes are not acceptable for reporting purposes). Reporting your change of address through myZou (your local address) will fulfill this requirement as the university will forward the updated addresses electronically to the International Center. The center 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 numbers of credit hours:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall or spring semester</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>
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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 the International Center before you drop any classes. You may or may not be eligible to drop below full-time enrollment. In order to maintain legal immigration status, a Reduced Course Load Form must be approved by an international student adviser 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 completed 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 must submit an online document request for J-1 on-campus employment authorization before you begin working. You are eligible to work full-time (up to 40 hours per week) 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 or room/board. Volunteering may be considered as employment, please check with the International Center before accepting.

Consult the International Center regarding academic training or other work permits.

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 U.S., your DS-2019 will need a current travel signatures in order for you to re-enter the United States. Make sure your DS-2019 was signed by an international student adviser 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.