

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Outline of Regulations and Procedures

The purpose of this section is to help you become aware and follow the regulations. International Student & Scholar Services' personnel are prepared to answer your questions or check with the proper authorities. Please be aware, however, *it is your responsibility to abide by the laws and regulations affecting your status and not International Student & Scholar Services' job to keep your status in good standing.* Your status is clearly your responsibility and no one else's. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of State (DOS), are responsible for enforcing the immigration regulations and not International Student Services & Scholar (ISSS). ISSS is available to assist you, when we can. You may visit the DHS website at <http://www.uscis.gov> to check the latest regulations and/or download many of the DHS forms.

DHS's system *Student and Exchange Visitor Information System* (known as SEVIS), is an internet-based system that gives DHS a real-time student tracking system. This means that DHS will know, in a very real and timely way, where students are and what academic activities they are engaged in. What this also means, is that this system will be making status determinations and not allowing ISSSS staff to determine nor intervene in your status.

As an international student, scholar, or visiting professor in F-1 or J-1 visa status, you have certain obligations to maintain your status. The regulations are outlined as follows:

1. **Newly arriving students and scholars are required to come to ISSS office upon arrival at Loma Linda University.** To be legally present in the United States (U.S.), DHS requires that all students, scholars, visiting professors, and their families to check in with the international student/scholar office and show their visa-related documents (i.e. passport, visa, I-94, I-20, etc.) and have their arrival reported in the SEVIS system.
2. **Report changes of address and phone number to ISSS within ten days of a change.** A change of address should be reported to DHS by completing the AR-11 Change of Address form and submitting it to ISSS for university record keeping.
3. **Keep your passport valid at all times.** You may request a "verification of status" letter from ISSS to help in extending your passport. You need to provide ISSS with a photo copy of the new passport or extension stamp.
4. **Other documents that ISSS is required to have photocopies of, if you have them, are your U.S. Social Security Card, U.S. Driver's License, change of marital status (i.e. you get married), change of status (e.g. from F-1 student to U.S. Permanent Resident).**
5. **Attend the school and program you are authorized to attend (as listed on your current I-20 or DS-2019 form) at LLU.** Your I-20 or DS-2019 only authorizes you to attend LLU. If you need some courses from a school other than LLU, you must obtain a letter of permission called "Concurrent Enrollment Authorization" from ISSS **before** enrolling at any other school.
6. **Maintain a full-time academic load for at least three of four quarters a year (summer quarter maybe taken off, if your program allows such).**

- a. **Undergraduate students** should satisfactorily complete a minimum of twelve quarter-units per quarter to fulfill DHS visa requirements. Normally, however, your program will require more than twelve units per quarter to complete your program in the recommended time frame.
 - b. **Graduate students** should satisfactorily complete a minimum of eight quarter-units per quarter to fulfill DHS requirements or complete a load validation form for their research, thesis or dissertation units, when applicable, to bring a quarter's registration load to a full-time equivalent.
 - c. **Exceptions to a full-time course load *must be cleared through ISSS in advance of registering.*** Some academic, family, or health reasons may allow a load variance but will require proper documentation. Failure to enroll for full-time study may jeopardize your status with the DHS, including the loss of benefits (e.g. on-campus work and/or practical training) to which you are normally entitled.
- *** **Please note** that each quarter you may have an ISSS registration hold. This helps ISSS to track number of units you are registering for because the units will be reported to DHS through the SEVIS system. The hold may also inform us if you are registered for a class that requires off-campus clinical training or field practicum.
7. **Apply for a program extension prior to the completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019.** An extension requires a written request for the extension from your academic advisor and a new financial declaration form with the appropriate documentation for the period being requested.
 8. **Apply for a new I-20 or DS-2019 when changing from one academic level to another (e.g. from masters to doctorate) or when changing programs (e.g. microbiology to medicine).**
 9. **Apply for a transfer from LLU to another school prior to completion of your LLU program.**
 - a. **F-1 students:** You must notify ISSS of your intent to transfer by showing your acceptance letter from the new school prior to the expiration of your LLU I-20 or prior to the completion of your LLU program (at least 15 days prior to your program completion date is recommended). ISSS will report a release date to SEVIS so the new school can complete your transfer and issue you their I-20.
 - b. **J-1 students:** Transferring from one exchange sponsor to another is usually discouraged by the DOS. However, if you want to transfer, you need to notify ISSS of your intent by showing your acceptance letter from the new school prior to the expiration of your current DS-2019 or prior to the completion of your LLU program (at least 15 days prior to your program completion date is recommended). The current sponsor must agree to release you to the transfer sponsor. The transfer sponsor has to determine your eligibility and status. The current sponsor will report your release date to SEVIS so the transfer sponsor can complete your transfer and issue you their DS-2019.
 10. **Obtain authorization for ANY on- and/or off-campus employment for ISSS *BEFORE* accepting employment (i.e. you need ISSS authorization first).** Special note: If you have an active Optical Practical Training work permit, from a previous school, it is automatically voided and you cannot use it once you start your new program at LLU.
 11. **Limit employment to 20 hours, or less, per week while registering for courses and classes are in session during three of four quarters of a school year.** However, regulations allow you to work full time (up to 40 hours per week) during school breaks and summer vacations when school is not in session.

- 12. Obtain a re-entry signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 from an International Student Advisor BEFORE traveling outside of the U.S.** Re-entry into the U.S. requires a valid passport, valid entry visa, and an ISSS re-entry authorization signature on your I-20 or DS-2019. Each dated signature is valid for 6 months (I-20) or 1 year (DS-2019) unless the I-20 or DS-2019 is expiring before the 6 month validity. If your entry visa expires before your return to the U.S., you will need to obtain a new I-20 or DS-2019 and apply for the new visa in your home country. (Note: if your visa is still valid but lists a previous school, you should apply for a new entry visa when you return to your home country).
- 13. Keep all your visa-related documents in a secure place.** You are expected to keep all certificates of eligibility (all I-20's or DS-2019's, your I-94, and your passport) secure and together. You should immediately inform ISSS if you lose any of these documents.
- 14. F-1 post-completion Optional Practical Training (i.e. 12 months of work in field of study, after completion of studies):**
- a. You have to have been in good F-1 status for one full academic year to be eligible for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).
 - b. You are required to apply for OPT *before* completion of all your course requirements. You are, however, allowed to apply up to 90 days before completion but never after the completion of all your course requirements.
 - c. You have to complete 12 months of post-completion OPT within 14 months of completion of your program. Therefore, if you apply less than 90 days prior to completion or if DHS takes more than 90 days to process, you may lose some of your 12 months of OPT.
 - d. You cannot start work or travel outside the U.S. until you have received the OPT work permit. Once you have your OPT work permit, you need to continue getting re-entry authorization signatures on your I-20 and have the permit with you when you travel.
 - e. You are allowed a period (up to 12 months) of OPT after each level of study (e.g. associate, bachelor's, master's, doctorate), as long as you apply before each program ends.
 - f. You are allowed 60-day grace period to stay in the U.S. after completion of your program and your last OPT. However, if you are going to continue studying at a higher degree level, you must make arrangements for the "old school" to release you before the end date of your OPT so that the new school can issue you a new I-20 *before* the expiration of your status.
 - g. All employment, phone and address changes are to continue to be reported to ISSS as long as you are on OPT or on LLU's I-20. The same 10-day address change reporting regulation is in effect as long as you are in the U.S.
- 15. J-1 Student (not Scholars or Visiting Professors) have Academic Training DHS instead of F-1 Optional Practical Training.** Many of the rules are similar or the same but check with ISSS for details on Academic Training.
- 16. You must notify the ISSS of your final departure plans (or changes in status) just prior to your leaving or the change. This way, your SEVIS file will be properly closed.**