

## Quick Immigration Basics for Academic Advisors

International students have unique advising needs because they must not only meet the university academic requirements, but must also follow U.S. immigration regulations. The information provided here is to help you understand some basic visa and immigration regulations as you advise international students.

For any visa or immigration related issues that you don't understand or feel that it is beyond your expertise, please refer the student to Global Education for answers.

### Enrollment Requirements

#### Full-Time Enrollment

International students in F-1 or J-1 status are required to enroll full-time each term except during their annual vacation or if they are authorized to take less than full-time by Global Education. Full-time requirements for **immigration purposes** are Undergraduate- 12 credits, Graduate- 6 credits, and ELI- 18 hours per week.

#### Online Courses Degree Programs

International students are required to take most of their classes in classroom setting. Only 3 credits hours per semester or term will be counted towards full-time enrollment. Students who are taking overload courses may take more than 3 credits hours of online classes. If a student only needs one course to complete his or her degree program, that course **cannot** be taken online. International students on F-1 and J-1 visas are prohibited from pursuing online degree programs. International students in other visa statutes are exempt from this restriction.

#### Concurrent Enrollment

International students on F-1 or J-1 status are sometimes permitted to enroll concurrently in another school, as long as the combined enrollment amounts to full-time status. The student must get permission from you the academic advisor and Global Education before enrolling in another school.

#### Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Under certain academic or medical reasons, international students on F-1 or J-1 status may receive authorization for a Reduced Course Load (RCL), which gives them permission to enroll below full-time and still maintain valid immigration status. There are three categories of RCL are, 1) academic difficulties (during the

first term), 2) illness or medical conditions, 3) completion of studies (during the last semester)

### **Withdrawal and Leave of Absence**

If a student decides to withdraw or take a leave of absence from Millersville University please contact Global Education prior to withdrawing the student from classes. The student needs to obtain permission from our office prior to withdrawal or taking a leave of absence.

### **Annual Vacation**

International students on F-1 and J-1 students are eligible for annual vacation if they have completed one academic year prior to taking the vacation and intend to register in the next term. They are not required to enroll during their vacation term, but may do so if they wish and can be part-time or full-time.

### **Change of Major and Change of Level**

#### **CHANGE OF MAJOR**

If an international student in F-1 J-1 status changes a major or adds a major please inform Global Education as the student needs to obtain a new I-20 or DS-2019 to reflect their current degree programs.

#### **CHANGE OF LEVEL**

**Moving Up a Degree Level:** If you a student is changing a degree level the student must submit an International Admission Application online and all requirements to the Office of Admission. The student will receive immigration document that reflects his or her current level of study.

**Same-level Sequential Degree:** If a student is pursuing same-level sequential degree such as a second Bachelor's, the student is required to complete a new Application for Admission to that program. The student is also required to submit financial document to show he/she has the funds to pay for his/her education. Upon review a DSO or ARO will issue a new I-20 or DS-2019 to the student to reflect the changes in his/her program.

#### **EXTENSION OF PROGRAM**

A student who is unable to complete his or her studies by the end date indicated on his or her I-20 or DS-2019 must apply for an extension prior to the expiration of the I-20 or DS-2019. A delay caused by academic probation or suspension is not acceptable reason for extension. Students who are ineligible for extension of stay are considered out of status and must apply for reinstatement.

The student must submit a completed Program Extension Form signed by his or her academic advisor to request an extension.