

Leave of Absence (LOA)

There is no true “leave of absence” for Immigration purposes. Your F-1 record is based on your full-time registration. If there is a change in your registration or you are not going to be enrolled, some immigration action or process will need to occur. Important Considerations: If your record is terminated, you cannot remain in the U.S. during your leave. You must leave the U.S. If your leave is for a documentable medical reason, you can be authorized for a reduced course load based on medical conditions, and your SEVIS record will remain active. You cannot be authorized for work authorization while you are on official school leave.

Returning from a Leave of Absence 5 months or less:

Your SEVIS record will be terminated for “Authorized Early Withdrawal” (AEW), which will not adversely affect your immigration record. If your gap in your enrollment will be fewer than five months, ISS can usually request that your F-1 status is “reactivated” by USCIS. Reactivation allows you to use the same I-20 and visa (if not expired). Students must have their SEVIS record reactivated before returning to the U.S. ISS can only request that your record is reactivated. USCIS approves the actual reactivation and often requires additional documentation from the school and the student to make the change. This process typically takes about 4-6 weeks. We cannot request reactivation more than 60 days before the next semester begins. Confirm with our Academics Affairs department that you are eligible to return to the College as you must be enrolled full-time.

Remaining outside the U.S. for 5 months or more:

Your SEVIS record will be terminated, and your current I-20 is no longer valid. You will have to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee and receive a new Form I-20 and SEVIS ID#.

UG students will not be eligible to apply for any off-campus employment such as OPT, CPT, and Economic Hardship for one academic year upon your return. For some graduate students, CPT may be authorized from the first semester of enrollment because the programs require immediate participation in academic training. However, Graduate students must be enrolled full time for one academic year before they are eligible for certain benefits such as OPT. You will be required to provide current supporting financial documentation to ISS. (Bank statements no older than 12 months and [Affidavit of Support](#)).

To request a LOA, please contact your academic advisor first to request LOA, then notify the International Student Services Department. Discuss options as soon as possible – plan ahead! You must leave the U.S. within 15 days after LOA has been approved. LOA’s must be requested prior to the start of the semester.

Medical Leave of Absence

Medical Leave:

Should you need to request medical leave, follow outlined steps below. Note, you will need to contact your academic advisor as well as seek immigration approval on your SEVIS Form I-20.

IMMIGRATION PROCESS:

- Cannot exceed 12 months aggregate per program level.
- Student must provide medical documentation from a licensed:
 - Medical Doctor
 - Doctor of Osteopathy
 - Clinical Psychologist
- DSO must renew the RCL each term, based on the new or continuing medical information.
- Start date should be the date DSO approved the RCL and anticipated end date.
- May stay in the U.S.
- If the interruption in studies caused by illness or medical conditions will delay the student's completion of the course of study to a date beyond the completion period in SEVIS, students must apply for a program extension at least 2 months before the listed program end date on their SEVIS Form I-20. Failure to do so will result in termination of your SEVIS Form I-20.