

## **Student and Exchange Visitor Information Services (SEVIS) Retention and Reporting of Information for F and J Visa Holders**

### **Summary of Guidelines for Faculty and Students Effective January 1, 2003**

One component of the U.S. PATRIOT ACT developed October 2001 was a student reporting system that would provide on-line/real-time information to the U. S. Government – Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). This handout is a summary of key elements for currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students and their faculty or general advisors. **Note: if EMU is found in violation of these guidelines, the University may lose its right to have international students on campus.**

These guidelines affect enrolled international students holding F (student in a degree program) and J (exchange student visitor/scholar) visas. The impact is on **immediate** reporting of significant events and rules pertaining to enrollment, employment, and program completion. Detailed information and the full Federal Register, Department of Justice document dated December 11, 2002 may be viewed from the Office of International Students' Web site @ [www.dsa.emich.edu/ois](http://www.dsa.emich.edu/ois).

Information regarding admissions, obtaining a visa, ports of entry, and reporting to the Office of International Students (OIS) upon arrival have not been addressed in this handout due to the volume of detail. Note that to assure the timely admission and receipt of an I-20 form from EMU for getting a visa, students must have a complete application package submitted by the admission deadline date. Graduate programs need to determine realistic program time-to-degree for Admissions to include on the initial I-20. Materials sent to newly recruited students and admittees covers this content.

#### **Significant Events**

Within 10 days of a significant event students **MUST** inform the Office of International Students of any of the following changes. The OIS has 21 days to enter the information into the on-line SEVIS database. Any of the events listed below trigger the issuance of an updated I-20AB to be prepared by the OIS; therefore, communicating this to students is critical.

- Students who have failed to maintain status (e.g., failing to enroll or switching from full-time to part-time enrollment for fall/winter)
- Students who have completed their programs on or before the date noted as time-to-degree on the I-20 form (so INS can track departure from the U.S.)
- Name change
- Address change – OIS must have both a mailing address and location of residence (e.g., just having a P.O. box number is not sufficient should the INS need to find a student)
- Graduation prior to date of degree completion per I-20
- Disciplinary action due to criminal conduct
- Change of major or graduate program of study
- Transfer request to leave the University and attend another SEVIS-approved university
- Change in funding source including employment that may impact full-time enrollment (e.g., graduate assistantship)
- Need for program extension

Within 30 days of the end of a semester's registration period, the University must report students who have not enrolled or who enrolled and have not attended classes. Similarly, if a student stops attending the class, this should be reported to the OIS.

## **First Time on Campus**

Students may not be in the country more than **30 days** prior to the beginning of their first semester or beginning of an employment award such as an assistantship. Therefore **orientation activities** must not take place prior to the 30 days.

## **Enrollment Guidelines**

F-1 and J-1 students **MUST** be enrolled **full-time** (12 credits undergraduate and 8 credits graduate) for fall and winter. Full-time enrollment is required during a spring or summer term if it is the student's first enrollment period.

Part-time enrollment is **ONLY** allowed upon OIS approval when a student submits the *Reduced Hour* form based on one of the following:

- last semester in student's program of study
- academic deficiencies -- one semester of low enrollment may be granted during a degree program
- medical documentation -- up to 12 months of low enrollment may be granted
- documented graduate assistantship award

Previously, students were allowed to continue working on course work due to an **incomplete grade** and didn't need to be enrolled because they had completed all other program course work. These students must earn academic credit to remain in the country.

Similarly, students had been allowed to have low-enrollment for a year while working on a **thesis or dissertation**. They can still continue that work, but will need to enroll in more research hours until their last semester on campus.

Students may enroll in **ONLY** one **on-line** course (maximum of 3 credit hours) during a semester. That is a course where the faculty and students never come face to face. Hybrid courses where on-line work is used but class/ meeting time exists, do not count in this category.

Students, who do not make satisfactory progress toward program completion, run the risk of not being allowed to remain in the country.

F-2 visa holders (spouse or dependent of F-1 student) are **part-time** students who may not hold employment such as a graduate assistantship or student help.

F-3 visa holders are full or part-time students from Canada (or Mexico) who commute to campus or CE campus for courses. These students may not hold employment.

J-2 visa holders (spouse or dependent of the J-1) may be full or part-time students but may not be employed or hold a graduate assistantship.

## **Course Withdrawal**

If a student needs to withdraw from a course, he/she must receive **PRIOR** approval from the OIS. A *Reduced Hour* form must be completed and approved. If the withdrawal is due to a family issue back home, the student has 15 days to leave the country.

## **Employment**

F-1 and J-1 students may hold employment on-campus. Due to economic hardship, students may request approval to work off-campus. Evidence of employment **MUST** be submitted to the Office of International

Students. And if due to that employment (e.g., graduate assistantship) one is enrolled below 8 credit hours, the Reduced Hour form must be completed to document low enrollment.

The OIS will verify I-9 work approval forms for all campus employment.

**Curricular (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Students may elect CPT during their program of study after one full year of enrollment or OPT for the year following course/program completion. Requests for CPT and OPT must be made in advance of the next enrollment period. Last-minute requests will not be allowed by SEVIS.

**Direct questions to:**

Gregory Peoples, Dean of Students and chair of SEVIS Implementation Committee: 487- 3118

Paul Dean Webb, Director of the Office of International Students 487-3116

Deb deLaski-Smith, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Graduate School: 487-0048

Claudia Bean, Manager of International Admissions: 487- 2518