MAINTAINING LAWFUL F-1 OR J-1 STUDENT STATUS

Maintaining status means that you are lawfully present in the US and eligible for all benefits available to international students. Here are 11 easy steps to maintain your F-1 or J-1 student status.

1. Keep your passport valid at all times.

2. Attend the school you are authorized to attend. If you entered the US on a Form I-20 or DS-2019 issued by UAB, you must check in with ISSS before UAB can transfer your SEVIS record to another school.

3. Enroll in a full course of study (12 credit hours for undergraduates, 9 credit hours for graduates).

YOU CANNOT WITHDRAW FROM YOUR COURSEWORK. YOU MUST COMPLETE THESE HOURS AND RECEIVE A GRADE. ONLY VERY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOW FOR WITHDRAWAL, AND ONLY WITH ISSS APPROVAL.

4. Notify ISSS if you are unable to complete your degree program by the Program End Date specified on your Form I-20 or DS-2019. You must obtain an extension within 30 days before the date of expiration.

5. Notify ISSS if you continue from one educational level to another (i.e., bachelor’s to master’s degree).

6. Notify ISSS if you intend to transfer to another school.

7. Do not work more than 20 hours per week on campus while school is in session. During breaks and vacation you may work full-time.

8. DO NOT work off-campus without proper authorization from DHS and ISSS!

9. Update your physical address with ISSS within 10 days of moving. Do not keep a mailing address or PO Box at UAB.

10. Do not enroll in more than one online or distance learning course per semester for degree credit.

11. When on OPT (F-1) or academic training (J-1), inform ISSS of your employer’s contact information, any change of address, or any change of status.

Consequences of Falling Out of Status

- You will be ineligible for work authorization (i.e., on-campus, off-campus, CPT, OPT, etc.).
- ISSS will not be able to provide any services to you, such as certification letters of enrollment for military or tax purposes.
- If DHS finds out that you are working without authorization, you could be deported.
- If DHS determines that you are out of status for more than 180 days, you could be barred from re-entering the US.

ISSS/Maintaining Lawful F-1 or J-1 Status
08/03/2016
How to Reinstate Your Student Status

If you fall out of status due to circumstances beyond your control, you can apply for reinstatement through USCIS. You must prove to USCIS that it was beyond your ability to maintain your status. Working illegally does not count! An alternative is to leave the US, obtain a new Form I-20, and apply for a new visa to re-enter the US.