Understanding U.S. Immigration Rules
Office for International Students and Scholars
Student Immigration Rules Impact:

- Enrollment requirements
- Employment in the U.S.
- Traveling to the U.S.

Learn more: https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/
Visa Stamp

- It is an “entry ticket” used to enter the U.S.
- It must be unexpired when entering the U.S. There are some exceptions to this that will talk about later.
- Students can stay in the U.S. after their visa stamp expires.
Passport

- Issued by a student’s home country government.
- Must be unexpired when entering the U.S.
- Students must keep their passport valid and unexpired when they are in the U.S.
F-1 I-20 and J-1 DS-2019

- Issued by MSU Office for International Students and Scholars or, for some J-1 students, by their sponsor.
- Used to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa stamp and to enter the U.S.
- Must be accurate and unexpired while in the U.S.
F-1 I-20 and J-1 DS-2019

- End date can be extended.
- Must have unexpired travel signature to enter the U.S.
- After graduation, students can stay in the U.S. for:
  - F-1 Students: up to 60 days after the program end date on their I-20.
  - J-1 Students: up to 60 days after the program end date on their DS-2019.
Maintaining Immigration Status

These immigration rules will be explained on the next slides:

- Full-Time Enrollment
- On-Campus Employment
- Off-Campus Employment in the U.S.

Learn more: https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/status/
Enrollment Requirements

Fall and Spring Semesters:

- F-1 and J-1 students must be enrolled full-time. Full-time for undergraduate students is 12 credits.

- Students can take more than 12 credits.

- F-1 and J-1 students can take online classes during the fall and spring semesters. But, only one online class will count towards full-time enrollment.
Enrollment Requirements

Summer Term:

- Enrollment is not required during the summer.
- Students can stay in the U.S. without enrolling during the summer.
- Students who want to earn more credits during the summer can choose to enroll in online and live classes.
- Students who want to go home for the summer and earn credits can choose to enroll in online classes.

Learn more: https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/status/
Employment – On Campus

- On-campus employment includes working for MSU and getting paid by MSU.
- On-campus employment also includes working for a business that has contracts with MSU to operate on campus, like Starbucks Coffee in Wells Hall.
- Students can work up to 20 hours a week during the fall and spring semesters.
- Students can work more than 20 hours a week during school breaks like winter break, spring break, and summer.
Employment - Not Allowed

- Students cannot work on-campus more than 20 hours a week during the fall and spring semesters.
- Students cannot start their own businesses or sell things for a profit online or in person.
- Students cannot tutor or do other short term activities, like providing childcare, for payment by other students.
- Students cannot work for MSU faculty or staff members in their homes or at their privately owned businesses.
- Students cannot work off-campus without first getting permission from the Office for International Students and Scholars and the Department of Homeland Security.
Employment and Status Violations

- Unauthorized employment will cause a student to lose their F-1 or J-1 status in the United States.
- Very serious and negative reason to fall out of status.
- Will have to leave the U.S. immediately.
- May not be able to get another F-1 or J-1 visa.
- May not be able to return to studies at MSU.
Curricular Practical Training for F-1 Students

- Use for internships & cooperative education programs – required or optional.
- Gives students permission to work off-campus.
- Student must enroll for **two** semesters before becoming eligible.
- Student must get academic credit for CPT.
- Must work in major field of study **only**.
- Employer specific. Student must apply for new authorization if changing jobs.
- Part-Time (20 hours/week or less) during semesters and Full-Time (20 hours/week or more) during summer and winter breaks.
- Apply with OISS. Application process takes 2 weeks.
- Must be approved by OISS BEFORE student starts working.

Learn More: [https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/workintheus/](https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/workintheus/)
Optional Practical Training for F-1 Students

• Use for internships and jobs after graduation. Student remains in F-1 status.
• Gives students permission to work off-campus.
• 12 months of OPT for all majors.
• Additional 24 months of OPT for Science, Engineering, Technology and Math (STEM) majors. Called “STEM OPT Extension” or “STEM OPT”.
• Must work in major field of study only.
• Not employer specific. Student can change jobs while on OPT.
• Two-step application process. Takes 3-5 months for approval. Start application 90 days before graduation.
  • Student applies with OISS and gets updated I-20
  • Student applies with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services using updated I-20

Learn more: https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/workintheus/
Academic Training for J-1 Students

- Use for internships and jobs before and after graduation.
- Up to 18 months, including before and after graduation.
- If student’s program of study is less than 18 months, only approved for a period of time equal to the length of the program of study.
- Must work in major field of study only.
- Employer specific. Student must apply for new authorization if changing jobs.
- Students must be approved within 30 days of completion of studies. If not, they are no longer eligible for AT.
- Apply with OISS before graduation or program completion date. Takes 1-2 weeks for approval. Sponsored students must apply with their sponsor, not OISS.
- Student remains in J-1 status while on AT after graduation or program completion date.

Learn more: https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/workintheus/
Retuning to the U.S. after International Travel

Required:

- Travel signature from OISS on I-20 or DS-2019
- Unexpired Passport
- Unexpired I-20 or DS-2019
- Unexpired F-1 or J-1 Visa
- Students who have graduated and are applying or are approved for OPT have additional travel documentation requirements.
Travel to Canada, Mexico, and Adjacent Islands

If travel is for less than 30 days:

- May need a visa from Canadian, Mexican, and Island governments
- Travel signature from OISS on I-20 or DS-2019
- Unexpired Passport
- Unexpired I-20 or DS-2019
- Students from Iran, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba must have an unexpired F-1 or J-1 visa
- All other students can return to the U.S. with an expired F-1 or J-1 visa

Adjacent Islands

Traveling to Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico is the same as traveling within the U.S. as long as the student does not transit through another country or adjacent island to get there.

- Saint Pierre
- Miquelon
- The Dominican Republic
- Haiti
- Bermuda
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Jamaica
- The Windward and Leeward Islands
- Trinidad
- Martinique
- Other British, French, and Netherlands territory or possessions in or bordering on the Caribbean Sea

Questions?
Enrollment Requirements

Here is one example that meets immigration enrollment rules. This student is enrolled in 12 credits. One class is online.

Example – 12 credits, one online class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>In-Person Credits</th>
<th>Online Credits</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry Laboratory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Immigration</strong></td>
<td><strong>One online class</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enrollment Requirements

Here are two more examples that meet immigration enrollment rules. First, count the credits for all in-person classes. Next, count the credits for one online class. Tip: count the online class with the most credits. If this adds up to 12 credits, then the student is maintaining immigration status.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry Laboratory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Immigration</strong></td>
<td><strong>One online class</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Immigration</strong></td>
<td><strong>One online class</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology – This online class does not count for immigration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics – This online class does not count for immigration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example – 15 credits, two online classes

Example – 18 credits, three online classes
Enrollment Requirements

Here is an example that does not meet immigration enrollment rules. First, count the credits for all in-person classes. Next, count the credits for one online class. This only adds up to 9 credits. They are not maintaining immigration status. This student can fix this immigration enrollment problem by enrolling in another 3 credit, in-person class. Or, they can find out if they can enroll in an in-person section of their Biology class. Academic advisors can help!

Example – 12 credits, two online classes

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for Immigration</td>
<td></td>
<td>One online class</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology – This online class does not count for immigration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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