

## Maintaining F-1 Student Status

Maintaining immigration status is just as important as maintaining good academic status.

Please read and understand the following tips on how to maintain student non-immigrant status below.

### Tips on How to Maintain Your Status:

1. Enroll for a full course of study and attend classes every semester.
2. Submit Registration Form every semester.
3. Register for only 3 credits of online courses per semester
4. If needing a Reduced Course Load (RCL), apply BEFORE dropping any classes.
5. Make academic progress and keep your grade point average at 2.00 for undergrads and 3.00 for graduate students or higher each semester.
6. Tell your campus PDSO/DSO before you leave SIU or the U.S. (such as, travel, study abroad, withdrawal, or transfer).
7. Do not start any type of job until you have gained the proper authorization. Check with SIU PDSO/DSO first.
8. Update SIU PDSO/DSO on any changes in your address (within 10 days of moving), major, or financial situation.
9. Keep your immigration documents correct and up-to-date (I-20 or DS-2019, passport, visa, I-94)
10. Check your SIU e-mail often for important information.

## Course Registration

Immigration regulations state that all international students must register for a full course load.

- Undergraduate F-1 and J-1 students must register for at least 12 credits per semester to be at a full course load.
- Graduate students must register for at least 9 credits per semester or as otherwise approved by an international student coordinator.
- International students may count only 3 credits per semester towards their full course load. Another way to make sure you meet this requirement is to register for 9/6 on campus credits.

Example: If a student registers for a 5 credit online course they must also register for at least 9 credits of regular on-campus classes. This way they will register for a total of 14 credits but only 3 credits of the online course will count for immigration purposes.

- Add or Drop Classes: To add or drop classes after online registration closes students use the Add/Drop form from the registrar's office. If you are dropping below full time you must get approval from an international student advisor first.
  - \*Note: J-1 exchange students may not register for more than 16 credits a semester. As non-degree seeking students they are allowed to register for courses without meeting prerequisites.

## Reduced Course Load or RCL

A student may be eligible to register for less than a full course load if they meet one of the following eligibility requirements. Request the relevant PDF form from SIU DSO. Verify with registrar, DSO or the student services coordinator, regarding the deadline for submitting an RCL form.

| <b>RCL REASON</b>  | <b>ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS &amp; LIMITATIONS</b>   | <b>APPLICATION FORM (PDF)</b>          |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1st Semester Only:<br/>Academic or English<br/>Difficulties</b> | Student is in the first semester of their degree program and is having initial difficulties with English or American teaching methods. One semester limit.  | Requires Academic Advisor signature    |
| <b>Improper Course Placement</b>                                   | Student is having difficulties with a course because they were improperly placed in it and they need to drop the class in order to make constructive academic progress. One semester limit.                                     | Requires Academic Advisor signature    |
| <b>Medical Condition</b>   | Student is having difficulties because they are experiencing physical or psychological issues. One year limit.<br><br>Note: Form must be accompanied by a letter from the doctor, explaining in detail the student's situation. | Requires a medical physician signature |

### **Concurrent Enrollment**

A student may enroll at SIU and at another SEVIS approved college or university as long as the total number of credits being taken adds up to a full course load (12 for undergraduates, 9 for graduates). A student must enroll in at least 6 credits at SIU to be considered a SIU student and be valid under their SIU I-20.

Students must first obtain authorization from an international student coordinator to be concurrently enrolled. After they have completed registration for classes at the other school, they must provide a printout of their course schedule. This print out must clearly show the students full name, semester of attendance, classes being taken, and their number of credits. Once the semester is finished, they must submit an official transcript showing the course(s) completed over the semester.

### **Hybrid/Online Course Agreement**

A hybrid course is one in which the student takes most of the course online but also agrees to meet with the professor a specified number of hours at specified times so that physical presence requirements are established.

### **Letter Requests**

Students may request that the PDSO/DSO write various types of letters for them, such as: recommendation for a visa renewal, verification of academic status, verification of current address, or verification of immigration status. To make a request submit a letter request form to the office of Registrar, make sure to note any details you want included.

Please allow 3-5 business days for letters to be prepared by the director of academic.

International student coordinator cannot write letters stating when a student will graduate, or if a course is required for their major. Such letters should be requested from the Registrar's office.

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## CONTACT US | Registrar's office/ International student coordinator

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**Location:** Business office.