



## Commandments for International Students



*You are responsible for maintaining legal student status. Please contact your International Advisor as early as possible if you have any immigration questions or concerns. Make appointments well in advance of deadlines.*

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE *aka* ICE)\* has retained most pre-9/11 regulations for full-time enrollment of International Students *and has added new rules*. Please be mindful of all regulations when you make a program or degree plan, set up internships, register, etc. Also note “events” that must be reported to the International Student Office for entry into your SEVIS record.



1. **Full-time enrollment during the Academic Year:** During fall and spring semesters you must be registered for a minimum of 12 hours. Graduate students must be registered for a minimum of 9 hours. *ICE has no registration requirement for summer term(s).* \*\*

2. **“Normal Progress”:** You must be making normal progress towards a degree to be considered “in status” with ICE. Suspension has immediate and serious legal implications. Prolonged probation may also put you at risk.

**Exceptions to full-time enrollment are listed in items 3 through 10 below:**

3. **Registration Reduction of Course Load (RCL):** Under-enrollment of hours (less than full-time enrollment for medical or academic reasons) must be approved by the International Student Advisor *prior* to registration. (Academic reasons for RCL are often first-term, limited English skills or improper course level placement/prerequisite problems.)

4. **Withdrawal** from classes resulting in enrollment below the 12- and 9- hour minimums must be approved *prior* to withdrawal by the International Student Advisor.

5. **Non-UWF-credited classes:** English for Non-native Speakers (ENS) and the PJC English and Skills classes taught on the UWF campus *are* recognized by ICE as valid for the 12- and 9- hour minimums.

6. **Final Term:** You may take only the hours you need to complete your program during the last semester of coursework before graduation. If you have registered for less than full-time your last term, *make sure you graduate that term or you will be considered out of status if you register for another semester to complete your degree*. You need *prior* approval for final term under-enrollment to be considered “full-time” by ICE.

7. **Thesis and dissertation hours:** After being notified by your department or committee director, the International Student Advisor can approve thesis or dissertation hours below full-time. It must be a regular department practice and be approved by the International Advisor *prior* to registration.

8. **Concurrent enrollment:** You may enroll at another college or institution for credit to be applied to a UWF degree as long as 50% or more of the hours taken during that term are taken at UWF (institution issuing your I-20). Some variations on this are allowed. Proof of enrollment must be provided to the International Office.

9. **Graduate Research Assistantships:** Certain departmental work/research of graduate assistants may be considered part of the full-time course load. Verification for such arrangements must be documented in writing from you and the department and approved by the International Advisor before registration.

10. **Electronic courses:** No more than 3 hours from any e-course or distance learning course (usually 1 class) may be used to meet the 12- or 9- hour minimum for enrollment per term. For example, 15 hours with two e-courses (or 6 hours) is legal for undergraduates; 12 hours with two e-courses (or 6 electronic based credit hours) is not. English language students cannot take any of the above-mentioned electronic courses.

11. **Internships, a Practicum, or Field Studies** etc, that are off-campus or not paid through the auspices of UWF, must be approved by the International Student Advisor *prior to your beginning "work."* Such required programs are approved as **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**. You must present the academic advisor or internship director with a verification form to sign prior to **CPT** being approved in the **SEVIS** tracking system. Dates, company or agency name and its address and internship course number must be provided. *CPT approval applies to both paid and unpaid internships, field study experiences, a practicum, etc.*

12. **Work:** If you are working on-campus during class sessions, you are limited to 20 hours work a week. You may work at on-campus jobs full-time during "breaks," for example, the time between semesters and spring break. To work full-time on-campus in the summer, you must be changed from student to staff status and not be enrolled. International students may not work off-campus without the approval of ICE (EAD Employment Authorization Card) or unless **CPT** has been granted.

13. **Practical Training:** You need to apply for **Optional Practical Training (OPT)** *prior* to completion of studies. If you have already used 12 months of OPT, you are now eligible for another 12 months only if you are changing to a higher education level. If you have had CPT for 12 months, you may not apply for OPT.

14. **Dependents:** An F-2 dependent is now only able to register for "avocational or recreational" courses. F-2's cannot take credited academic courses.

15. **Immediate Reporting of all "events":** change of address; change of major; change of level, i.e. Bachelors to Masters; withdrawals; and RCL's (see #3) must be reported to the International Student Advisor within 10 days.

16. **Extension:** If you are not going to graduate and need more time at UWF to complete a program, you must contact the International Student Advisor immediately for an Extension of Program. Your I-20 or DS-2019 can only be extended before the completion date.

17. **Transfer:** If you are transferring to or from another school you must see the International Student Advisor to be "released" or accepted in the SEVIS tracking system.

18. **Departure from the United States:** If you are out of status or decide to leave school or not register for classes without prior approval from the International Student Advisor you must depart the U.S. immediately. You have 15 days to depart if you notified and received approval from the advisor. If you complete your program of study to the end date on your I-20, you have 60 days to depart the U.S.; 30 days if you are a J-1 exchange student completing the DS-2019 end date.

\*The Justice Department's old INS became the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as of July 2003.

\*\*NOTE: Many scholarships **do** require full-time minimums for **summer**: 9 hours undergraduate and 6 hours graduate, *i.e.* LAC. LAC holds are lifted before registration each term until the Friday before classes begin; you should be able to register at that time for full-time classes.

Health insurance must be acquired/renewed *before* registration. Your insurance is required for one full year.

Please contact the international student advisor at 850-474-2479 or [intered@uwf.edu](mailto:intered@uwf.edu) with any questions concerning registration.