INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR OFFICE

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The International Student and Scholar Office (https://www.towson.edu/academics/international/issso) (ISSO) provides services and programs for approximately 500 international students and international scholars/faculty from about 85 nations. Approximately 75 percent of international students are here for two to five years, working on undergraduate or graduate degrees. The ISSO provides the following programs and services:

- Issuance of documents and guidance on legal matters, which make possible the enrollment of non-immigrant students.
- Advising services necessary for international students to maintain legal status while in the United States, ensuring they understand applicable federal government regulations and university policies.
- Design and presentation of programs to assist international students in their transition to life in the United States and the American academic environment.
- Advising for students regarding personal, academic, legal, career, intercultural communication and cross-cultural adjustment issues.
- Serving as liaison to government agencies and TU offices.
- Coordination of programs and ongoing services to enhance international students’ social lives, encourages their interaction with American peers, and promote ways for them to become involved and appreciated for their unique cultural perspectives.

Summary of Special Immigration Regulations for Students in F-1 Visa Status

Please note that the ISSO can provide the necessary immigration-related information and assistance to students, but it is the student, not TU, who is ultimately responsible for maintaining legal F-1 student status. F-1 students should contact an ISSO advisor if they have difficulty meeting any of these requirements before they have a problem. The ISSO is here to assist students in reviewing options and making wise decisions. The ISSO staff does not work for the Department of Homeland Security or the federal government, but are employees of TU who want international students to be successful. Students must:

- Receive a grade of “FX” means that the student never attended class or stopped attending during the term without officially withdrawing, so an “FX” grade cannot count toward the full course of study.
- Credits taken on an “Audit” basis do not count toward the full course of study.
- Under extremely limited circumstances, an international student may obtain an exception to the full course of study requirement. Any possible exceptions must be discussed and approved in advance by a Designated School Official (DSO), per federal Immigration regulations. TU’s DSOs are the international student advisors in the ISSO.
- Make satisfactory academic progress.
- Complete the degree or program by the date indicated on the Form I-20; if a student is not able to complete the program by that date due to valid academic or medical reasons, he or she must apply at the ISSO for an F-1 program extension before the Form I-20 expires.
- Follow special immigration status transfer regulations when transferring to another academic institution.
- Have an unexpired passport at all times, with a validity date at least six months into the future.
- Limit employment to a total (all jobs) of 20 hours per week while school is in session; F-1 students are allowed to work full-time in authorized employment at times when school is not in session, i.e., during the summer, Minimester and spring breaks.
- Receive written authorization for any and all off-campus employment via the ISSO.
- Complete special U.S. tax forms and submit to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service even if no U.S. income was received.
- When nearing the end of the degree or program, or within 60 days of completing all degree requirements either:
  a. obtain a new Form I-20 for a new institution or program and attend the new school or program's next available term within 5 months of the current program completion date
  b. apply to change to another immigration status or
  c. apply for optional practical training work permission, if eligible.

If the degree or academic program is not completed and the student withdraws or takes a leave of absence, the student must depart the U.S. within 15 days.

The ISSO staff is available Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Any student who has an emergency outside of normal business hours may contact the University Police at 410-704-2134. The police may assist the student or may contact an ISSO staff member at home.