

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International Student Services (ISS) provides immigration advising and cultural adjustment services to F-1 and J-1 visa holders.

## Maintaining the F-1 Visa status

Graduate international students with an F-1 visa status must maintain a full-time academic load (minimum of 6 credits) each fall and spring semester according to federal immigration regulations. They must be enrolled in a degree seeking program to maintain status.

F-1 students can only enroll in one 3-credit online course toward their minimum credit hours during each fall and spring semester.

F-1 students are not required to maintain a full-time academic load in their final semester. If only one course is needed to complete the program of study, the course cannot be taken online.

F-1 and J-1 visa holders must contact ISS for approval and assistance with a social security card, work authorization, transfer outs, reduced course loads, early withdrawals, etc. International students must receive approval before withdrawing from courses during a semester for any reason. International students should only receive immigration advice from a Designated School Official and/or Alternate Responsible Officer.

## F-2 Visa holders

F-2 visa holders can engage in study at an SEVP-certified school in the United States as long as they are enrolled in less than a full course of study.

## Employment

F-1 visa holders are allowed to work on campus for a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session. Only during CUC approved holidays can international students work full time on campus. F-1 International students are not allowed to work off campus without prior authorization. For information on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT), please schedule an appointment with ISS. For more information regarding employment benefits, please also refer to Study in the States: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/work/working-in-the-united-states> (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/work/working-in-the-united-states/>)

F-2 visa holders are not allowed to work on or off campus.

## Health Insurance

F-1 and J-1 International students must be enrolled in CUC's health insurance plan during their program of study.

Contact International Student Services with any questions by emailing [iss@cuchicago.edu](mailto:iss@cuchicago.edu).

## Early Authorized Withdrawal Policy (for F-1 International Students)

F-1 graduate international students must be enrolled full time (6 credit hours or more each semester) year-round including summer, fall, and spring semesters. No more than one class per semester may be taken online. If a student chooses not to enroll during a semester, they will need to speak with International Student Services (ISS) to request an Early Authorized Withdrawal (EAW) and complete the university Leave

of Absence ([https://webserv.cuchicago.edu/files/forms-repository/registrar/Withdrawal\\_LeaveofAbsenceGR.pdf](https://webserv.cuchicago.edu/files/forms-repository/registrar/Withdrawal_LeaveofAbsenceGR.pdf)) form. The EAW will allow and require an F-1 international student to leave the country when not enrolled in classes full time.

An international student's SEVIS record will be terminated when requesting an EAW. If the student returns within 5 months (150 days from the day their SEVIS record was terminated in SEVIS), their SEVIS record will be re-activated at the request of the student. Before the student reaches out to ISS, they need to contact the Office of the Dean of Students at [dos@cuchicago.edu](mailto:dos@cuchicago.edu), to reactivate their attendance and enroll in classes. Then the student must contact ISS 30 days before their desired return, show proof of enrollment for the term they are seeking to return for, and have no financial balance with the university. A Designated School Official (DSO) will request a Corrections Request on the SEVIS system. Once it has been approved, the student will be able to return to the United States under the same SEVIS record and I-20, no earlier than 30 days before the semester start date.

If a student does not return within 5 months (150 days after their SEVIS record was terminated), the record will stay terminated. If the student would like to return after 5 months have passed and resume their studies, they will first need to contact their academic advisor to apply for readmission and register for classes. Then the student should contact ISS to request a new SEVIS record and I-20. To receive the I-20, the student will need to provide ISS with the requested required documentation. For more information on what documentation will be required, please email ISS at [iss@cuchicago.edu](mailto:iss@cuchicago.edu).

If a student is planning on leaving the United States and missing more than two weeks (fourteen days) of classes throughout the semester, the student must show documentation that the instructor(s) and ISS were notified in advance of their pending absence. Missing more than two weeks and leaving the United States will require a student to apply for Early Authorized Withdrawal.

For any questions related to an Early Authorized Withdrawal (EAW), please contact [iss@cuchicago.edu](mailto:iss@cuchicago.edu). For questions related to the university Leave of Absence or Withdrawal processes, contact your academic advisor or view the university catalog.

## Early Authorized Withdrawal Policy (for J-1 International Students)

Undergraduate or Graduate students on a J-1 visa seeking a leave of any kind must contact the DSO for specific instructions. Please email us at [iss@cuchicago.edu](mailto:iss@cuchicago.edu).

## EDU-6015 - Seminar in Higher Education

International students on an F-1 visa pursuing any graduate degree at Concordia University Chicago are required to take EDU-6015 Seminar in Higher Education. This course serves as an introduction to the U.S.-based higher education learning environment. Students will work to develop academic language, graduate-level study skills and gain essential support with cultural and institutional acculturation. EDU-6015 Seminar in Higher Education is taken during the student's first semester as an enrolled student. If it is not taken during the student's first semester, it must be successfully completed to satisfy graduation requirements.

This course may be waived **ONLY** if at least one of the following is met:

- The student earned a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from an English-speaking, regionally accredited institution of higher learning in the U.S.
- The transfer student earned a minimum of six (6) content-relevant graduate level semester hours from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning in the United States, other than CUC, prior to admission to their CUC graduate program with grades of B or higher and 3.0 cumulative graduate GPA. Official transcripts must be submitted for review.
- The student initiates a written request in the student portal for waiver consideration to the CUC Director of International Student Services or designated representative within 24 hours of the end of the first class meeting of EDU-6015 in the student's first semester. The student shall remain in the course while waiting for a decision.
- The student is enrolled in a CUC program offered through an approved international partnership (e.g. BSBI).

Note: If a student intends to drop or drops EDU-6015, they must provide written notification to the CUC Director of International Student Services within 24 hours of the course drop.