Helpful Immigration Terms

DHS—The United States Department of Homeland Security is one of the new agencies that replaced the INS (Immigration & Naturalization Service). This agency creates and administers many of the federal immigration regulations that pertain to international student visa holders.

SEVIS & SEVP—The Student & Exchange Visitor Information System is the federal government’s electronic record keeping and reporting system which all schools must use to report enrollment information, immigration status violations, and other F-1 international student data within a limited time frame. SEVIS is monitored by the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), which falls under Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) & DHS.

F-1 Student—This is typically a full-time degree-seeking international student who was issued an I-20 from Regent for the F-1 nonimmigrant student immigration status. F-1 students must abide by all F-1 immigration rules, regulations, and procedures. In order to qualify for an F-1 nonimmigrant student visa, all applicants are required by law to prove to the U.S. consulate/embassy that they have no intention of remaining in the United States after their studies. F-1 visa applicants must also show proof of finances.

Employment—Employment is considered to be the rendering of services for compensation—financial or other (housing, reimbursement for travel, etc.). Teaching/Research/Graduate Stipends or Assistantships are all examples of “on-campus” employment from an immigration perspective. For F-1 nonimmigrants, employment is a “benefit” for which the visa holder must qualify and where certain rules and restrictions apply. Working without proper authorization (more hours than permitted, etc.) in the United States is considered to be a serious violation of the F-1 student immigration status which may result in deportation.

The Office of International Student Services (OISS)—The OISS educates and advises F-1 students and other offices on F-1 immigration regulations, procedures, and benefits (including employment). This office also handles the mandatory government/SEVIS reporting for the University. In addition, the OISS provides support services for the international student population (cultural advising, adjustment assistance and materials, and the processing of student immigration requests).
-Employment-

▲ On-Campus Employment Hours Restricted to 20 Per Week/Authorization Ends with Term End Date: Federal regulations permit currently enrolled F-1 student visa holders, who have a valid I-20 and have maintained lawful immigration status, to work on-campus (for Regent University) for no more than a total of 20 hours per week while school is in session. The 20 hour limit includes work done for Teaching/Research/Graduate Assistantships as well as any work done in other Regent University offices, such as the Library. Because “On-Campus Employment” is an immigration benefit for currently enrolled students, this employment authorization expires on the “Term End” date of the semester the student is graduating (see Academic Calendar for details).

▲ Off-Campus Employment Authorization Required: There are a few types of off-campus employment benefits available to F-1 student visa holders, but the students are required to obtain prior written authorization from the OISS or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by the USCIS before engaging in any type of off-campus employment.

▲ Employment Violations, SEVIS Reporting, & Impact to the Students: The University is required to report any employment related violations to the government through SEVIS, which will result in the termination of the student’s lawful F-1 immigration status and serious consequences, such as possible deportation.

▲ Additional Information about employment options available to F-1 student visa holders can be obtained on this page of the OISS website: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/employment.cfm

-Admission & Enrollment-

▲ International Admissions Coordinator & I-20 Issuance: The International Admissions Coordinator works in the Enrollment Support Services (ESS) Office (Library 102). The Coordinator handles all international student admission related questions and issues the I-20s for incoming students. By law, the University cannot issue an I-20 for a student to study on-campus unless the school can guarantee that a full-time course load of on-campus classes/credits will be available for the entire duration of the student’s degree program. International student admission and I-20 issuance deadlines are provided by ESS and are important for the various admission offices to note.

▲ Full-Time Status Required/On-line & Distance Education Restrictions: F-1 students who are admitted to on-campus degree programs are required to be enrolled full-time each semester with only a few exceptions. Any students who cannot enroll full-time must apply for prior approval from the Office of International Student Services before dropping below full-time status. F-1 students may count no more than one online/distance education course or three online/distance education credits toward the full-time status requirement per semester. The University is required by federal regulation to report in SEVIS any students who drop below full-time status without receiving prior approval from the OISS. This will result in the termination of the student’s lawful F-1 immigration status. (NOTE: For immigration purposes, distance education is that which “does not require the student’s physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class.”)

▲ Enrollment at Other U.S. Institutions: The enrollment of Regent sponsored F-1 students at other U.S. institutions is generally not permitted except in certain situations and only after the student receives prior approval from the OISS.

-Advising-

▲ DSOs & International Student Advising: Each university has a number of Designated School Officials (DSOs) who have been approved by the government to access SEVIS, issue I-20s, and assist F-1 student visa holders with their employment, travel, and immigration related questions, problems, or requests. Anyone who is not a DSO should not attempt to speak to or answer these types of questions and should direct the students to the Office of International Student Services for advising and assistance. Failure to do so could not only result in problems for the students, but problems for the faculty or staff members as well as the University. Your kind attention to this important matter is greatly appreciated.

▲ Academic Probation & OISS Notification: Because Academic Probation can lead to Academic Dismissal, which is considered to be a violation of the F-1 student immigration status, it is important for all schools/academic departments to notify the OISS immediately when an F-1 student visa holder is placed on Academic Probation or Dismissal.

▲ Other F-1 Student Immigration Rules & Responsibilities: This brochure does not include a complete list of all rules the F-1 students must follow in order to maintain their lawful immigration status in the United States, nor does it include details on employment benefits and restrictions. Additional information on these matters can be obtained from the Office of International Student Services (SC201) or from the office website at: www.regent.edu/oiss

▲ OISS Faculty/Staff List Serve: Please contact the OISS if you would like to be added to our email list serve for faculty and staff.