

As a student at TAMUK, your primary purpose is to study full-time. F-1 and J-1 students must comply with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) regulations while in the U.S. Be sure to read the *Instructions to Students* on page 2 of your I-20 if you are in F-1 status or DS-2019 if you are in J-1 status. By following those instructions and the information below, you will maintain legal status in the U.S. and be able to take full advantage of student status benefits such as work and travel. If you have any questions, please visit Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) to discuss your situation.

I. Maintain Full-Time Enrollment and Progress

1. **Undergraduate Students:** must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits each semester. This does not include audits or incompletes.
2. **Graduate Students:** must be enrolled for a minimum of nine credits each semester. This does not include audits or incompletes.
Once you have completed your coursework and are working on your thesis or dissertation, you must maintain your full-time status by registering for master's thesis or doctoral dissertation classes. If the class credit is less than nine credits, you will have to complete Request to Reduce Course Load each semester. You can download for the Request to Reduce Course Load form at <http://www.tamuk.edu/oissis/forms.html>.
3. **All Students:**
 - a) No more than three credits of Distance Education/online/Hybrid classes per semester may count toward full-time enrollment for F-1 students. (You could take additional online courses beyond your minimum enrollment as well if you like.)
 - b) You are also required to make normal progress towards completing your course of study. The measure of **normal progress** is the rate at which the average full-time student in your school or department advances toward his or her degree or program objective. Working to complete courses designated from previous semesters is not maintaining normal progress. If you find yourself in this situation please consult with an ISSS advisor at the earliest opportunity.
 - c) If you are considering, for whatever reason, dropping a course that will cause your enrollment to drop below full-time, you must consult with an ISSS advisor before doing so. Dropping below a full-time enrollment without proper prior authorization will jeopardize your permission to legally remain in the U.S.
 - d) Even if you need less than a full course load in your last semester of coursework, you must notify ISSS before the end of the first week of classes.

II. Obtain Employment Authorization Prior to Work

1. Working without proper authorization is one of the most serious violations of your student status. Keep in mind that it is illegal to begin work before obtaining written permission first (except in the case of work defined as *on campus*), even if you have applied for work authorization and are anticipating approval. If you have any doubts, please talk to an ISSS advisor prior to beginning work.
2. As a student, you may have only limited employment rights, both on-campus and off-campus, to a total of 20 hours per week while school is in session, unless otherwise authorized.

III. Keep Your SEVIS Record Updated

Federal regulations require each F-1 and J-1 student to report any changes of U.S. address, legal name, or major to his or her sponsoring institution within 10 days of the change. If your major, legal name, address, financial sources, and/or employment information changes, you must inform ISSS within 10 days of the change. ****Updating your address in Blue & Gold system does NOT update your address with ISSS.** You must submit [Form OISSS-10](#), Address and Name Change Report to update your address with ISSS.

IV. Obtain Program Extension If You Will Continue Study beyond End Date on I-20 or DS-2019

If you need to remain in the U.S. to complete your program of study beyond the date authorized on your I-20 or DS-2019, you must request a program extension through ISSS. Apply at least 30 days **before** the completion date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019. A student who fails to have his or her I-20 or DS-2019 extended prior to the expiration date of the document is considered *out of status* and may need to apply for reinstatement to regain student status or to travel abroad to re-apply for a new visa.

V. Obtain a New Form I-20 or DS-2019 if You Start a New Degree Program

To continue in a different academic level (e.g., bachelors to masters or masters to PhD) or, in some cases, when you change to a new degree program at the same level after completing a degree, you must apply for a change of program, which will extend your study at TAMUK. ISSS will issue a new I-20 or DS-2019 indicating your new program once we have received your request and verified your documents.

VI. Obtain a Travel Signature before Traveling outside the U.S.

If you will travel outside the U.S., you must have a valid F-1 or J-1 visa (stamp) and a valid travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 Form. Each signature is valid for one year (if you are an F-1) or six months (if you have a J-1 status) while you are a full-time student. F-1 students on post-completion OPT should seek advice from ISSS before traveling.

VII. Maintain Valid, Adequate Medical Insurance and Meet the Immunization Requirements

Federal regulations require those in J-1 status to have comprehensive medical insurance covering themselves and all their dependents. Failure to maintain adequate medical insurance is a violation of J-1 status. While the F-1 student regulations do not have the same requirement, TAMUK requires all students and their dependents to have comprehensive medical insurance. As a full-time student, you will be automatically enrolled in the TAMUK Student Insurance Plan, and you will be assessed a Health Fee each semester. Information on this required fee can be found at: https://www.tamuk.edu/academicaffairssupport/oisss/current_students/Insurance.html.

VIII. Transfer Procedures

If you are transferring into TAMUK from another school, ask ISSS to complete the transfer procedures for you. It is your responsibility to notify your previous school of your intent to study at TAMUK. The transfer of your SEVIS record must be completed by the 15th class day. If you plan to transfer out to another school, make sure you notify IS of your intention so we may begin the transfer process.

IX. Keep Your Passport Valid

If your passport will expire within 6 months, or you need to replace a lost or stolen passport, contact your embassy or consulate in the U.S. for instructions on obtaining an extension or new passport.

X. Depart the U.S. within the time allowed

If you are in F-1 student status, you are allowed a 60-day grace period to stay in U.S. after the completion date of your studies or your post-completion OPT. If you are in J-1 status, you are allowed a 30-day grace period after the completion of your program or post-completion Academic Training. During this time, you may not work. Do not remain in the U.S. beyond your grace period without permission from USICS. Students taking a leave of absence or withdrawing have a grace period of only 15 days to leave the U.S. Students planning to withdraw from TAMUK or take a leave of absence must consult an advisor prior to taking the action.

XI. OISSS Resources

For detailed information or questions about your status, please visit the OISSS web site at <http://www.tamuk.edu/oisss/> or meet with an International Student & Scholar Advisor. *OISSS Instructions and Forms can be found:* <http://www.tamuk.edu/oisss/forms.html>.

XII. Signature

I have read and understand the above information regarding maintaining my lawful status. I understand that USCIS rules and regulations are subject to change, and it is my responsibility to be aware of any changes. If I have any questions in the future, I will contact the OISSS or visit the OISSS website for clarification.

Name _____ KID No. _____

SEVIS ID No N00 _____ Email Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____