

Leave of Absence and Immigration Status

A leave of absence has a direct impact on F-1 student status. It is advisable to schedule an appointment to meet your IPO advisor before you plan your leave of absence.

Leave of Absence and SEVIS:

F-1 students must be pursuing a full course of studies each semester to maintain status. Students on leave do not register, and therefore are not pursuing a full course of studies. We report to immigration via SEVIS that you are taking an authorized leave and the date the leave begins. Your F-1 record and I-20 will be terminated in SEVIS. *You have a 15-day grace period to depart the U.S.*

Immigration Implications on Taking a Leave of Absence:

- International students taking a leave of absence may not remain in the U.S. in F-1 status. Once your SEVIS record is terminated, you have a 15-day grace period to depart the U.S.
- Your original I-20 will no longer be valid. You **MUST** obtain a new I-20 if you wish to return to YSU.
- Work permission: In order to be eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT) on a new I-20 after returning from a leave of absence, an F-1 student must be in valid status for at least one academic year (2 semesters). If you return from the leave of absence and have only one semester remaining to complete your program, you would **not be eligible** for CPT or OPT.

Return from Leave of Absence:

If you decide to return from the leave of absence, you must do the following:

- 1) If you have been away from YSU for one year or more, you must reapply to the University. For next steps, contact intadm@ysu.edu.
- 2) If you have been away from YSU for less than one year, you do not need to reapply. Contact your academic advisor to register for classes.
- 3) Contact IPO (ipo@ysu.edu) to request the International Student Information Form and Affidavit of Financial Support. Return these forms to IPO with the required financial documents for processing of a new Certificate of Eligibility (I-20).
 - a) Your I-20 will be issued for a “new” program, so you must pay the \$200 SEVIS I-901 fee prior to returning to the U.S. (<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>). Contact IPO 3-4 months in advance so that you have enough time to receive your new document, apply for a new visa (if necessary), and re-enter the U.S. prior to rejoining your program.
 - b) You may only enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the start date on your new I-20.
 - c) You must enroll full-time for the semester of your return to YSU. Note: if you plan to return for summer, you **MUST** be enrolled full-time for the summer (12 credits) to maintain your status.
- 4) **Mandatory check-in with IPO**
You will be required to report to IPO upon your return. Failure to complete the immigration check-in requirement will result in the loss of your legal immigration status.

If you have any questions about how the leave of absence will affect your immigration status, please contact IPO.