

## **Statement of Understanding for F-1 and J-1 International Students**

*Welcome! Below is a brief statement describing your responsibilities as an F-1 or J-1 student in the United States. It is your responsibility to know, understand, and follow the rules of your immigration status. If you have any questions, please consult with the Office of International Students (OIS).*

### **Maintaining My Status**

- I must complete the check-in process at the OIS after I have arrived in the U.S. and before beginning my program of study at The Graduate Center. I must bring my passport, Form I-20 or DS-2019, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, visa (if applicable) and I-94 record to complete the check-in process. I must complete the check-in process for any dependents in F-2 or J-2 status by bringing the same documents listed above for each.
- I must make sure that my I-20 or DS-2019 does not expire before I complete my program of study. If I need more time to complete my program of study due to academic or medical circumstances, I must apply to the OIS for an extension before the I-20 or DS-2019 expires.
- If I change majors or educational levels, I must apply for a new I-20 or DS-2019 before the start of the new program of study.
- I must register full-time each semester.
  - I must obtain permission from the OIS before dropping below full-time enrollment in any semester.
  - I may only count one on-line course (3 credits) toward full-time enrollment in each semester. I may not enroll in only one online course (3 credits) in any semester, even if I only require 3 credits to complete my required coursework credits or am in my final semester.
- My passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future at all times. If I renew my passport, I will provide the OIS with a copy of the new passport biographical page.
- I must maintain a permanent address outside the U.S.
- I must report changes in both my U.S. address and my address outside of the U.S. within 10 days of the address change. To report a change of address, I will complete a SEVIS Data Verification Form and submit it to the OIS.
- If I am a J-1 student, I understand that I must have a health insurance plan for myself (J-1) and any J-2 dependents that meets the minimum coverage requirements as outlined in the J-1 regulations for the entire period I am in the U.S. in J-1 status. If I receive NYSHIP health coverage, I understand that I must purchase a supplemental policy to meet the J-1 coverage requirements. I agree to submit the Health Insurance Verification Form to the OIS before my health insurance plan expires.
- I must file U.S. tax forms for each year that I am present in the U.S., even if I have had no U.S. income.
- I must obey all U.S. laws and will contact the OIS promptly if I fail to do so.

### **Travel Outside the United States**

- At least 2 weeks before traveling outside the U.S., I will bring my I-20 or DS-2019, visa (if applicable) and passport to the OIS to inform them of my or my dependents' travel plans and obtain a valid travel signature on my I-20 or DS-2019. When I or my dependents travel outside of the U.S., we need to take an enrollment verification letter from the Registrar's Office and proof of my financial support.
- If my F-1 or J-1 visa is expired or will expire, at least 4 weeks in advance of my travel date, I will work with the OIS to update my financial information on the I-20 or DS-2019 form.
- Within 10 days of returning to the U.S., I will submit a copy of my or my dependents' I-94 admission record to the OIS.

### **Employment**

- As an F-1 or J-1 international student in the U.S., I understand that my employment options are limited.
  - I may work on-campus (within the CUNY system) up to 20 hours per week during the academic semesters and full-time during the official vacation periods.
  - I may not work off-campus (outside of the CUNY system) in the U.S. without receiving employment authorization from the OIS or the USCIS. I will contact the OIS and obtain the proper employment authorization before beginning or participating in any paid or unpaid employment in the U.S.
  - If I am a J-1 student, I understand that I must receive an on-campus employment authorization from the OIS before I may begin any on-campus employment. On-campus employment authorization is required for each on-campus job and is valid for a maximum of one year.

### **Leave of Absence, Withdraw and Completion of Program**

- If I am taking a leave of absence, I must contact the OIS before applying for the leave of absence. I understand that I must also follow Graduate Center policies for applying for a leave of absence by the deadline provided on the academic calendar.
- I understand that taking a leave of absence for any reason other than medical reasons requires termination of my SEVIS record, my F-1 or J-1 status to end, and I may not remain in the U.S. during the leave of absence. I understand that if I am applying for a medical leave of absence, I must submit a letter from a licensed physician (M.D.), Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O) or a Licensed Clinical Psychologist to the OIS before taking the leave. If approved by the OIS for a medical leave of absence, my SEVIS record will remain active and I may remain in the U.S. if I choose.
- If I will withdraw from my program of study for any reason, I agree to contact the OIS before withdrawing from my program of study. I understand that I must also follow Graduate Center policies for applying for a withdrawal from the program of study by the deadline provided on the academic calendar.
- If I change educational institutions, I must complete the official immigration transfer process, submit a request to transfer out to the OIS, and work with the international student services office at the new school to obtain a transfer pending I-20 or DS-2019 form.
- If I plan to stay in the U.S. after completing my program of study, I will contact the OIS. Before finishing my program I should do one of the following:
  - Apply for Optional Practical Training (F-1) or Academic Training (J-1), if eligible.
  - Gain admission to another academic program with the intent to enroll in the next available term.
  - Apply for a Change of Status to another non-immigrant status using Form I-539.
- After I complete my program of study, I understand that I have a 60-day (F-1) or 30-day (J-1) grace period of status. During the grace period, I may apply for Optional Practical Training (F-1), transfer to a new school, apply for a change of status, apply for a change of educational level at The Graduate Center, or prepare for my departure from the U.S. I understand that J-1 students are not eligible to apply for Academic Training during the 30-day grace period.

*I have read this statement and received a copy of it. I agree to maintain my immigration status at all times and understand that it is my responsibility to do so. If I have any questions about my F-1 or J-1 status or the benefits of my status, I will contact the Office of International Students.*

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Name (Given Name):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_