

# Guide for Academic Advisors of International Students

The Center for Global Education (CGE) defines international students as students whose primary purpose for being in the United States is to study and they have F-1 or J-1 student visas to do so.

All F-1 and J-1 students are required to attend International Student Orientation prior to their first semester, so they should be aware of the visa requirements. That said, it is also helpful for academic advisors to have some basic knowledge about visa regulations. Please visit the CGE website for more information <http://globaleducation.edgewood.edu/International-Students> .

## **Common areas where visa regulations intersect with academic advising:**

### **Full-Time Student Status:**

F-1 and J-1 students must enroll in a full course load each fall and spring semester (Undergraduates –12 credits; Masters students–6 credits; Doctoral students – 6 credits)

### **Reduced Course Loads [application requires academic advisor's signature]**

Students in the situations listed below can apply for a reduced course load by submitting an Application for a Reduced Course Load to the CGE:

- Students encountering academic or language difficulty (only for one semester of the entire degree program; typically, during a student's first semester at the College)
- Students who have encountered a medical problem (maximum of 12 months; requires documentation from a medical professional or a licensed psychologist)
- Students who are in their final term of study and do not need a full course of study to complete the degree.

\*The CGE must approve the Application for Reduced Course Load BEFORE the student drops below a full course load.

### **Dual Enrollment [application requires academic advisor's signature]**

- If a student plans to take a class at another college or university and would like those credits to count towards their full-time enrollment, they must submit the Dual Enrollment Approval Form to the CGE by the last day to add a class at Edgewood for the relevant semester. Students are required to maintain full-time enrollment between their attendance at Edgewood College and the other institution.
- With dual enrollment situations, undergraduates must enroll in at least 6 credits at Edgewood College. Graduate students must also take at least half of their full-time credits at Edgewood College.

### **Online Course Enrollment**

- F-1 Students can only take *one* online class (or 3 credits) per term that counts towards the full-time student status requirement.
- Students in academic programs in which the semester is divided into two sessions must have enrollment in at least one face-to face course during each session and must meet the minimum credit requirement for the semester when adding the credits for session 1 and session 2.
- Students sponsored by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission should receive written permission before enrolling in an online class.
- J-1 students cannot take online classes to count towards the full-time status requirement.
- If a student only needs to take one class to complete their academic program, that one class cannot be in an online format because students need to have a physical presence requirement in the US. Note: See also "Reduced Course Loads" section.

Aug 2019

# Guide for Academic Advisors of International Students

## Change of Major and/or Minor

- At the time of admission to the College, the College issues an immigration document I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students) that must include the student's intended major.
- If the student changes their major or adds a minor after their initial admission to the College, they need to request from the CGE to have the major/minor updated on the form I-20 or DS-2019. Students can submit to the CGE a copy of their major/minor declaration form. All majors and minors should be listed on the form I-20 or DS-2019.

## Employment/Internships **[application requires academic advisor's signature]**

- Students may work *on campus* up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session and up to 40 hours per week during official school breaks.
- F-1 and J-1 students need to apply for special authorization to: 1) work off campus and 2) engage in any off-campus practical training/internships related to their major (paid or unpaid).
  - F-1 student authorizations: Optional Practical Training (OPT); Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
  - J-1 student authorization: Academic Training (AT).
  - Students must apply for one of these special authorizations through the CGE *prior* to beginning any off-campus internship/practical training/employment.

## Graduation Date **[application requires academic advisor's signature]**

- At the time of admission to the College, the College issues an immigration document I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students) that must include a program beginning and ending date.
- If the program end date changes from what is on the student's initial document, the student will need to apply to the CGE to have the program shortened or extended.
- Note: To be eligible for an extension, students need to be making "normal progress" towards completing their academic program. Delays caused by academic probation/suspension are not acceptable reasons for program extensions.

## Tips for Advising International Students:

1. **Write it out.** It can be helpful to write out important policies or advice to ensure comprehension, especially for non-native English speakers.
2. **Avoid acronyms and slang or be prepared to explain specific acronyms and slang.**
3. **Check for comprehension.** Avoid asking, "Do you understand?" (The answer will usually be "Yes.") Instead, ask students a question that will require them to demonstrate understanding. Give the students adequate time to respond.
4. **Emphasize the importance of regular class attendance.** Some international students may come from an educational background that has not prepared them for regular quizzes, class participation and attendance, and intensive reading and writing assignments throughout the semester.
5. **When in doubt, contact the Center for Global Education (CGE).** If you have concerns about an international student in terms of academic performance and/or cultural adjustment, it is helpful to contact Sara Friar in the CGE ([sfriar@edgewood.edu](mailto:sfriar@edgewood.edu) ; 663-2277) so that we can provide support in terms of visa regulations and cultural adjustment. Academics and the F-1/J-1 visa regulations intersect on many issues, so when in doubt, ask the student to make an appointment with Sara Friar in the CGE to ensure that their actions do not put their visa status in jeopardy.

Aug 2019