Immigration regulations of special note for international graduate students

Conditional Admission (academic requirement) – International students must meet all of the academic requirements for admission before they can be issued an immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) to begin graduate studies.

Conditional Admission (English requirement) - An international student must meet the English proficiency requirement before being issued an immigration document to begin graduate studies. The Center for International Education (CIE) will issue an immigration document for admission into the Program in Intensive English (PIE). Once the student completes PIE, CIE will issue the immigration document for academic studies.

On-line course limits – At the graduate level, international students are required to take six credit-hours of in-person course-work each academic term. Hybrid classes are counted as in-person for immigration purposes. The number of on-line courses required to meet degree requirements should be taken into account when a student is being advised regarding his/her degree plan. Degree programs that cannot offer the majority of their requirements for each semester in a normal degree plan are not eligible to grant admission to international students.

Dissertation/Thesis hours – Many students enroll for 1 credit hour after completing all degree program coursework and credit requirements, while working on their dissertations or thesis. For international students this requires authorization for a Reduced Course Load (RCL).

Change of Level – New immigration documents must be issued when students move from one academic level to another. The presumption is that students will move up when they change levels, e.g. from Bachelors to Masters. Downward changes of level have been necessary for some graduate students who were not allowed to continue in their graduate programs. Although this is allowed by the regulations, it could raise some concern.

Change of Major – New immigration documents must be issued when international students change majors. All international students must have CIE approval prior to changing their majors. An alert has been added to PeopleSoft, and an approval line has been added to the Registrar’s Change of Major form.

Employment, on-campus – International students are eligible to work on-campus. For J-1 students, this requires advance permission from ISSS. For F-1 students, no advance permission is required.
Employment is strictly limited to no more than 20 hours a week during academic terms, but may be full-time in the summer break and other academic breaks (spring break, for example). Arrangements where students receive an ‘honorarium’ and do ‘voluntary’ work beyond 20 hours a week are not allowed.

**Employment, off-campus** – all off-campus employment, including any internship whether paid or unpaid, must be authorized in advance by ISSS for international student.

**For additional information or if you have questions, please contact:**
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