

Global Engagement

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F-1 & J-1 Visa Immigration, Exchange Programs, Education Abroad Contact

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Advising International Students

These immigration rules only apply to the following [visa types](#):

- F-1 visa (degree-seeking for Undergraduate and Graduate programs)
- J-1 visa (non-degree seeking, usually exchange student, scholar, and faculty)

These federal regulations do NOT apply to students who are legal permanent residents, asylum, refugees, documented protected status (DACA), or who have other visa types.

Full-time enrollment: International students must be enrolled in a "full course of study" in the fall and spring semesters (students are not required to take summer classes).

- A "full course of study" for undergraduate students is a minimum of 12 credit hours.
- A "full course of study" for graduate students is 8 or 9 hours.
 - Please check "[Full Course of Study Exceptions](#)." for any reasons international students can enroll less than full time

Online Course vs. Hybrid/Blended Course

- Online Course: A course does not have a physical presence requirement
 - On Banner: 40, MWSU Course Search: Online 100% or Distance Education (Online)
- Hybrid/Blended Course: A course has a physical presence requirement
 - Hybrid/Blended courses can count towards meeting the full course of study requirement (Count as in-Person)
 - On Banner: 41/42, MWSU Course Search: Classroom w/Online Component

COVID-19 Guidance (the 2021-22 Academic Year)

- F-1 students who continue their attendance with MWSU and the same program without interruption can remain in the United States to engage in a full course of study online if they have not otherwise violated the terms of their nonimmigrant status.
- F-1 students in New or Initial status (including Transfer and Change of education level) will not be able to enter the United States to enroll in a U.S. school as a nonimmigrant student for their first term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online. They are required to take at least an in-person course.

Travel Restrictions and/or Requirements for F-1 and J-1 Students (Please check Website for any updates)

- [A Proclamation on Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) (Updated Nov. 26.2021)
- [Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the United States](#) (Updated Nov. 27.2021)

- [Non-U.S. citizen, Non-U.S. immigrants: Air Travel to the United States](#) (Update Dec.2. 2021)
- [Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19](#) (Update Dec.2.2021)

Initial Academic Advising Process:

Students with F-1 visa: The Center coordinates an International Orientation session for all new students to the University. It usually offers 4-5 working days before the semester begins. Student participation is mandatory. Among other scheduled activities, students take any required placement tests and meet with an academic advisor as assigned. Freshman will attend Griffon Edge starting Thursday, a week before Fall semester starts

COVID-19 Guidance

- Mandatory International Student Orientation starts January 12, 2022
- F-1 students in New or Initial status (including Transfer and Change of education level) will not be able to enter the United States to enroll in a U.S. school as a nonimmigrant student for the fall term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online

Students with J-1 visa: These are college students from Missouri Western's exchange partner institutions. Typically, students are sophomores/Junior standing at their respective home institutions, though some could be graduate students. Upon acceptance to the University, students provide a list of courses they wish to take to Global Engagement. These courses must reverse transfer to their home institution. The center staff contacts individual departments and instructors to seek academic advising and approval to enroll in the classes. With the appropriate written permission or override, Center staff contact the Registrar's Office for full-time course registration before the student's arrival for International Orientation week. These students have the exact English language proficiency requirements with other F-1 international students. They are not seeking a degree from Missouri Western and are typically here for 1 or 2 semesters only. On the other hand, they are not required for Placement exams. In addition, professors are often willing to waive prerequisites when the students' transcript or letters of recommendation indicate that this is appropriate. An exception is a dual degree exchange graduate program from Xidian University, China.

COVID-19 Guidance (the 2021-22 Academic Year)

- Department of States continue to accept online coursework for college and university J-1 nonimmigrant exchange visitors that remain in active SEVIS status
- They are required to participate in cultural activities as a part of Department Of States requirements.

Dropping or withdrawing from classes: If a student drops or withdraws from classes at any point during the semester and falls below full time (i.e., no longer meets the "full course of study" requirement), that student is automatic "out of status" and risks losing their student visa. Therefore, contact or notify Global Engagement immediately if this is under discussion.

Annual vacation exemption: F-1 regulations recognize that traditional school years include a session (usually summer) during which students are considered to be on school break. They are not required to enroll in classes. The regulations address this as an "annual vacation" and view the student to be maintaining status even though they are not registered for classes.

Exception: If F-1 students are admitted in Summer, they need to enroll Full Time (9 credit hours) in summer as their first semester-including transfer students. However, University is currently NOT accepting F-1 international students to start in Summer semester.

Concurrent enrollment in two different SEVIS-approved F-1 schools: "An F-1 student may be enrolled in two different Service-approved schools at one time as long as the combined enrollment amounts to a full-time course of study." It is "concurrent enrollment." F-1 students need to submit a Dynamic Form "[Concurrent Enrollment Request Form](#)" signed by the Student and the Academic Advisor before enrolling concurrently. Students should contact the Center for the appropriate procedure.

Limitations to Enroll in Online Courses:

Students with F-1 visa:

- Only **O.N.E.** online course may be taken per semester towards the "full course of study" requirement. For example, if a student takes 12 undergraduate credits, only one three-credit online class may be taken per semester.
- However, if an undergraduate student takes more classes than the required "full course of study" requirement, that student may enroll in more than one online class. For example, if a student takes 15 credit hours, that student can enroll in two 3-credit hour online courses.
- Please note that government scholarship students from Saudi Arabia also have rules regarding online classes through the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) that are more stringent than the U.S. Federal Government requirements. Those students are individually responsible for following SACM requirements. We also have several government-sponsored students from other countries who are individually responsible for meeting their scholarship requirements. The International Center is the University's point of contact for government sponsoring agencies.

COVID-19 Guidance (the 2021-22 Academic Year)

- F-1 students may remain in the United States to engage in a full course of study online if they have not otherwise violated the terms of their nonimmigrant status since March 9, 2020. It includes students who have remained in the U.S. in active status and are starting a new program of study that is 100 percent online.
- F-1 students in New or Initial status after March 9 will not be able to enter the United States to enroll in a U.S. school as a nonimmigrant student for the fall term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online

Students on J-1 visa:

- Students must take a full course of study in "classroom" participation/instruction. Refer to the full-time enrollment definition above.
- Classes delivered through **online and distance education modalities cannot be used to satisfy the full course of study or full-time prescribed course of study** requirements determined in the Federal guidelines on exchange visitors and student category.
- Students who have fully met the in-person classroom study requirement (that is, they are enrolled in 12 credit hours of in-person classroom study as an undergraduate) may enroll in one 3-credit online course for a maximum of 15 credit hours/semester.

COVID-19 Guidance

- Department of States continue to accept online coursework for college and university J-1 nonimmigrant exchange visitors that remain in active SEVIS status

Curricular Practical Training (C.P.T.): Students who have been invalid F1 status in the U.S.

for at least nine months or two academic semesters and are in good academic standing may be eligible to apply for C.P.T. *Please check. "[C.P.T. Alternative Work Study or Internship](#)"*

- Per 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(10)(i) "*Curricular practical training*: An F-1 student may be authorized by the Designated School Official (D.S.O.) to participate in a curricular practical training program that **is an integral part of an established curriculum.**"
 - directly related to your major field of study
 - Be enrolled and receiving credit for this Alternative work/study internship.
- The student must continue to be enrolled for a **full-time course of study** during the internships or cooperative education UNLESS they are in their last semester and have been approved for less than full-time enrollment.
- C.P.T. or optional internships (not required for degree completion) cannot interfere with the normal progress toward graduation.
- Internships during fall/spring semesters may be taken on a part-time basis (up to 20 hours/week); internships may be part-time or full-time during summer or university breaks.
- There is a risk a student will have their O.P.T. application (post-completion employment authorization) denied if they cannot prove to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that the C.P.T. was an *integral* and required part of their program necessary to graduate with the chosen degree.
- F-1 Students need to complete Dynamic Form "[Curricular Practical Training \(C.P.T.\) Academic Advisor Authorization Form](#)" signed by a student and the academic advisor. The form will automatically alert the DSO/PDSO at the Center. Therefore, DSO/PDSO can update C.P.T. or internships information on student I-20.
 - A student may begin C.P.T. after receiving updated Form I-20 with the Center's endorsement.

Optional Practical Training (O.P.T.): This is an opportunity for F-1 visa students to work off-campus and gain relevant work experience in the major field of study for a limited period after graduation. The Center offers regularly scheduled workshops each fall or spring semester to provide information and guidance on the timely O.P.T. filing process.

Work on-campus: F-1 and J-1 students can apply and accept employment on-campus for up to 20 hours/week during the fall and spring semesters. During school breaks and summer, students may work up to 37.5 hours.

Helpful Communication tips with International Students or Second Language Learners:

When working with international students, communication is critical. Here are some essential things to remember:

- Actively listen, and understand the questions, concerns, or issues for a cultural context or perspective. Find out the underlying situation. Students talk/learn from other students, and unfortunately, the information may be wrong, a myth, or not applicable at Missouri Western.
- Do ask questions or ask for clarification. Simple miscommunication is always possible, and at times it may be helpful to write out the advisor's recommendation. It is acceptable to tell the student you are trying to understand them and ask if they could provide additional information, provide examples, or explain.

- University internal processes, "the way we do things," critical thinking, or even, the "way we think" may not be the norm around the world. Understand that international students are total strangers to the American culture and norms. Often, international parents or guardians are also strangers to the U.S. education system and cannot provide any guidance to the student. International students appreciate hand-outs, printed materials, to-do lists, etc., to read or absorb in a less stressful time (yes, meeting an advisor or faculty can be stressful for them).
- The U.S. immigration regulation and policies may limit an international student's activities, actions, or future career. For example, students are expected to maintain "good academic standing" at all times, cannot work off-campus without written authorization, and cannot drop enrollment below full time without prior approval.
- International students are not all the same! Many studies and research articles are available regarding effective cross-cultural communication.
- Additional communication tips are available at this link:
<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/international/communication-tips/>

**Important notice: U.S. immigration regulations of international students are ever-changing.
This document is a work in progress.**

Education Abroad Students

Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program

According to [University Coronavirus COVID-19 Response](#), "Due to a large number of foreign and U.S. restrictions on inbound/outbound international travel and associated uncertainties associated with global travel, the University is taking a wait-and-see approach with university-sponsored study away programs."

Education Abroad Committee meets, discusses, and determines Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program matters. Committee assess travel risks including related to the COVID-19

- [US DOS country-specific travel advisory](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination](#)
- [COVID Vaccination rate by country](#)
- [WHO Efficiency of Care Rating \(static resource\)](#)
- [WHO current COVID infection rates/spread](#)

Exchange Programs

Again, we are following University Coronavirus COVID-19 Response: Student Travel-Travel Guideline.

Last updated 12/06/2021