

Effective January 1, 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) implemented a "tracking system" for student visa holders, known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

SEVIS is an Internet-based system that maintains current information on F, J, and M visa holders, as well as any accompanying dependents. Through SEVIS, Indiana University South Bend (IUSB) will be required to transmit electronic information about the enrollment status of all our F-1 and J-1 students.

The following is an update on SEVIS implementation at IUSB and of the key provisions that will impact you in advising F-1 and J-1 student visa holders:

Beginning in late January, the Office of International Student Services (OISS) will begin a gradual process of entering all F-1 and J-1 students into SEVIS, beginning with new admits for Summer and Fall 2003.

August 1, 2003, is the deadline for entering all continuing students into SEVIS, but all students are subject to the new enrollment and reporting rules effective January 1, 2003.

Under SEVIS, students on F-1 or J-1 student visas who fail to obtain advance approval from the international office for any withdrawal below full-time will have their student visa status terminated by the INS. Options for regaining legal student visa status are more restrictive than in the past.

Advisors can verify whether a student is subject to these restrictions from the IUIS rq89 screen. If "Visa Stat" shows as F or J, the student most likely is subject to these restrictions. Please refer students to OISS for approval prior to withdrawal to less than full-time status. Full-time is defined as 12 credit hours for undergraduates and 8 credit hours for graduate students. Some exceptions exist for professional certificate students.

The allowable conditions for granting approval for reduction to less than full-time enrollment are as follows:

1. Initial difficulty with English language, adjustment issues, or improper course placement (such as a student that is not prepared for the course he/she is in). Only one semester reduction for one of these reasons is allowed per degree level of study.
2. A medical condition documented by a medical professional (aggregate of 12 months allowed).
3. A final semester when less than full-time status will meet graduation requirements. This may be approved for one semester only.

OISS is pro-actively monitoring less than full-time enrollment situations in order to advise students with apparent compliance issues of enrollment requirements wherever possible. *However, it is ultimately the individual student's responsibility to ensure compliance with all INS enrollment requirements.*

We will be offering the following series of information sessions for international students to provide a comprehensive review of the new rules. Although students are the primary audience, any interested faculty or staff member is welcome to attend:

Friday, January 31	9:00 a.m.	DW 1001
Tuesday, February 4	3:00 p.m.	DW 1001
Wednesday, February 5	11:30 a.m.	DW 1125
Friday, February 7	2:00 p.m.	DW 1001

We will continue to send out updates to this list as we work through additional policies and procedures for streamlining SEVIS implementation and compliance. If there are other people in your department that should be included in our updates, please have them contact me at jwilliam@iusb.edu and I will add them to the list. Your continued assistance and support for international students at IUSB is greatly appreciated.

Julie M. Williams
Office of International Student Services (OISS)
237-4591

January 16, 2003

SEVIS Update – Guidelines for full-time enrollment for international students

The following charts provide guidelines for advising international students subject to INS full-time enrollment requirements under the new Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) rules, now effective for the January 2003 semester. We appreciate your continuing feedback and questions so that we can further develop and enhance our advisory information.

Level of Study	Required Credit Hours
Undergraduate students	12
Graduate students	8
Professional certificate students	As defined by program

Enrollment options for meeting full-time standard	Allowed by INS rules?
Distance education courses not requiring physical attendance (e.g. TV, audio, on-line courses) tied to semester enrollment	Only one course (3 credit hours) per semester
Correspondence courses	No
Courses taken as audit or not-for-credit	No
Courses taken as Pass/Fail	Yes
IUSB ESL courses	Yes
Concurrent enrollment at another campus or school (e.g. Ivy Tech)	Yes—requires OISS notification
Registration as candidate for graduation without concurrent course enrollment	No
Summer enrollment	Not monitored except to confirm enrollment of students admitted to a summer session

Reductions in enrollment requiring advance OISS approval	Documentation Required	INS Limitation
Academic difficulties	Certification from advisor to confirm initial difficulty with language requirements, unfamiliarity with US teaching methods, improper course level placement, imminent course failure, or similar academic justification	Only one less-than-full-time reduction based on this category per degree level of study; undergraduates must maintain 6 credit hours, graduate students must maintain 4 credit hours
Medical reasons	Statement from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist.	12 months aggregate; no minimum credit hour enrollment requirement
Final semester of study	Certification from academic advisor that remaining credit hours will satisfy all degree requirements	Only one less-than-full-time reduction based on this category per degree level of study
Complete course withdrawal due to compelling personal or academic reasons	Request from student	Must depart the US within 15 days, may return 30 days in advance of next semester

Related Information

- ❖ **Under SEVIS, students on F-1 or J-1 student visas who fail to obtain advance approval from the international office for any reduction or withdrawal below full-time will have their student visa status terminated by the INS. Options for regaining legal status are more restrictive than in the past.**
- ❖ Advisors can verify whether a student is subject to these rules from the **IUIS rq89** screen. If “**Visa Stat**” shows as **F** or **J**, the student most likely is subject.
- ❖ OISS is pro-actively monitoring less-than-full-time enrollment situations in order to advise students with apparent compliance issues of enrollment requirements wherever possible. *However, it is ultimately the individual student’s responsibility to ensure compliance with all INS enrollment requirements.*
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Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have. I can be reached at 237-4591 or jwilliam@iusb.edu. Your continued assistance and support for international students at IUSB is greatly appreciated.

Julie M. Williams
 Office of International Student Services (OISS)
 January 16, 2003