

J-1 Student Requirements: At A Glance

Immigration rules are very important to understand. We have prepared this quick guide to help you understand how to maintain your J-1 immigration status. You should always consult with OISS if you have any questions about maintaining status.

Maintaining J-1 Status: At a Glance

By U.S. immigration law, you must do several things to maintain your J-1 student status. **You must always:**

- 1) **Be a full-time student**
- 2) **Report changes in contact information within 10 days**
- 3) **Keep immigration documents valid**
- 4) **Abide by immigration deadlines**
- 5) **Understand and follow regulations concerning school breaks, work, and travel**

Let's explore how to accomplish each of these things in the following sections.

Being a Full-Time Student

To maintain full-time student status, you must do three things. The first thing you must do is **enroll for a full-time course load**. Full-time for Ph.D. students is defined as 10.5 units per semester. Students of all other programs must always be registered in 12 units. It is most important that you satisfy the immigration rule of being a full-time student.

Full-time enrollment alone is not enough! You must also **attend class**. This is very important. All J-1 students have a physical presence requirement – this means that they must physically be in class. In addition, you must always **make satisfactory academic progress** towards the completion of your program. This means that you must pass your classes and earn your completion certificate or degree within the expected timeline. You may be placed on academic probation if you are not succeeding academically. Immigration rules will allow for you to be placed on academic probation once, but if you are dismissed from the program you will lose your J-1 status.

Please also note that incomplete grades are not appropriate for international students. Incomplete grades are regarded by immigration officials to represent a voluntary inability or unwillingness to attend class and/or complete assignments. Immigration regulations do not permit international students to stop attending class or not complete coursework.

The Office of International Students and Scholars

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Reporting Changes in Contact Information

By U.S. immigration law, you must always notify us of any **change of address, phone number, or email address within 10 days** of the change. You may make your changes directly in Empower or email the international student advisor with your changes.

This information is reported to the US government. Both the US government and our office staff must always be able to contact you.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: Most communications are sent via email. You are responsible for checking your KGI email. It is recommended that you check your email at least a few times a week.

Keeping Immigration Documents Valid

You **must** always have a current DS-2019 and unexpired passport in your possession. Please take good care of these documents. Keep them in one safe location at home so you do not lose them.

YOUR DS-2019

Your DS-2019 cannot expire while you are in the US. Your DS-2019 will be issued for a specific program and for a specific length of time. This is the length of time we expect it will take you to complete your program. If you need more time to complete your program, please contact the International Student Services office *at least 2 weeks before your current DS-2019 expires*.

You may only extend your DS-2019 if you are continuing in the same program. If you need to change programs (i.e. you have completed the MBS and will continue in the Ph.D. program,), you will need to contact the International Student Services office *at least 2 weeks before you change programs OR your current DS-2019 expires* (whichever comes first).

By the end of your studies, you may have several DS-2019s issued to you. It is very important that you keep all DS-2019s issued to you in a safe place at home – **never throw any away**. These may be needed in the future.

YOUR PASSPORT

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months. Please contact your country's embassy or consulate in the US to ask for an extension 6 months before your passport expires to begin the renewal process.

YOUR VISA

Your visa may expire while you are in the US. This is not a problem. However, if you will be traveling outside of the US after your visa expires, you will need to return to your home country and apply for an J-1 visa extension. You may not enter the US on an expired visa.

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Abiding by Immigration Deadlines

After you complete your studies at KGI, you may stay in the US up to 30 calendar days (including weekends) after your last day of class. This is called your 30-day Grace Period. In most cases, your last day of class will differ from the end date on your DS-2019. You will need to calculate your 30-day grace period manually to be sure you do not overstay (you may find this website helpful: <http://www.timeanddate.com/date/duration.html>). Your 30-day grace period is designed to allow you time to make arrangements to leave the US.

You are only eligible for a 30-day grace period if you complete a term (semester). If you withdraw or are dismissed from the program, you do not qualify for a grace period and must leave the country or start a program at a new school immediately.

Alternatively, you may pursue one of the following options **before the end date listed on your DS-2019**:

- 1) You may request a transfer to a new school to start a new program that completes the **original objective** for which you came to the US. If you are changing your field of study you are not eligible for a transfer and must return home to apply for a new visa.
 - a. You must be accepted into the next available program at your new school and your new program must start immediately (the day following the expiration of your current DS-2019). Discuss this timing with both your new school and me.
 - i. **NOTE:** You are not allowed to stop studying once accepted to a new school. You need to complete the semester to be eligible for a transfer.
- 2) Engage in Academic Training (see the Working in the US section). You must make the request for AT before the last day of your courses.

Understanding Other Regulations

WORKING IN THE US

Working on Campus

You may work on campus (including the Claremont Consortium campuses) up to 20 hours a week without any permission. J-1 students do not qualify for workstudy, which is a federally-funded program, so make sure you search for non-workstudy positions.

Social Security Numbers

You do not need a social security number (SSN) unless you get a job. If you get a job, please visit the International Student Services office with your job offer letter. The job offer letter must contain specific information. We have created a template for the offer letter that you may give to your employer as a guide. You will find this template at <https://www.kgi.edu/student-life/international-students-and-scholars/current-students/>. The international student advisor will then give you a second letter to take to the Social Security Office (<https://secure.ssa.gov/>) to apply for a Social Security Number. Both letters will be needed for your appointment.

In the meantime, inform any agency that requests a SSN that you are a J-1 student and do not qualify for a social security number. They will help you in another way.

Academic Training

Academic Training (AT) allows you to gain experience in specific jobs, internships, or employment-related activities, relevant to your field of study, during or after your program. If your program requires an internship, AT will be authorized. You will only qualify for AT after spending at least one month in J-1 status (this includes time spent in J-1 status at another school). It is important to note that AT may be authorized on a one-to-one basis (meaning that if you are in J-1 status for two months you are eligible for two months of AT authorization) for a maximum of 18 months. Ph.D. students may qualify for an additional 18 months. Please visit <https://www.kgi.edu/student-life/international-students-and-scholars/current-students/> to learn more about AT and how to apply.

TRAVEL

Travel Within the US

You do not need authorization to travel within the US, but be sure that you are not missing class. Plan your trips for the weekend or during school breaks only. When visiting San Diego or crossing state border lines by car, it is recommended that you take your original DS-2019 and passport with you. You may need to produce these documents if stopped by an immigration officer. Otherwise, carry a *copy* of your passport and DS-2019 when traveling within California but leave the originals at home in a safe place. Always take originals when traveling by plane/boat or when visiting another state.

Travel Outside the US

Please visit the International Student Services office for a travel signature on your DS-2019 at least 2 weeks before you will travel. This signature is good for 5 months. You will not be able to reenter the US without a valid signature.

NOTE: You can only obtain a travel signature if you will be returning to the program. You cannot travel outside the US during your 60-day grace period and reenter on your KGI DS-2019. If you are transferring to a new school, and plan on traveling outside of the US before starting your new program, you must inform your new school so they can give you a new DS-2019.

Make sure you have your current DS-2019 and a valid passport and visa. Most visas are issued with a multiple entry allowance (designated with an "M"). If your visa is not a multiple entry visa, you will not be able to return to the US unless you get a new visa in your home country.

If you are planning on visiting another country, you may also need a visa to travel there. Check this website to be sure: <https://www.visahq.com/citizens/>. Make sure you have obtained any needed travel authorizations before you make travel arrangements.

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Questions?

If you have any questions about the information found here please do not hesitate to contact our international student advisor, Nusha Shishegar, at nshishegar@kgi.edu or 909-607-8586.