

## Academic Faculty/Advisor Information

International Students, Scholar and Faculty Services (ISSFS)  
Office of International Programs  
3620 Varsity Drive. • Tyler, TX 75701 • (903) 565-5690 • [intladvising@uttyler.edu](mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu)



*The following information is provided to support academic faculty and advisors with common academic issues that affect international students. It is not inclusive of all F-1 requirements. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact an international student advisor:*

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Forms	<a href="http://uttyler.edu/oip/forms_library.php">uttyler.edu/oip/forms_library.php</a>
Email for student submission of forms or questions	<a href="mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu">intladvising@uttyler.edu</a>
Student walk-in advising M-F 1:00-4:30	OIP house, 3620 Varsity Dr. (Varsity/Old Omen)

## F-1 Student Requirements

U.S. visas are categorized by primary purpose. The most common visa for study is the F visa. It provides non-immigrants with the opportunity to obtain one or more university degrees and some work benefits if the student maintains compliance with the numerous regulatory requirements. Universities are tasked by the U.S. government to provide this regulatory information to students, then monitor and report their compliance each semester.

The following information addresses only the most common requirements affecting students and their academic departments. F-1 students usually self-identify during advising, but you may need to ask.

### Full-time Enrollment

- Full-time enrollment is required each fall and spring semester, at least 12 credit hours for undergraduates and 9 credit hours for graduates.
- After the enrollment minimum is met there are no immigration limits on what is taken.
- Summer enrollment is not required unless it is the student's first or last semester, then the fall/spring rules apply.
- Undergraduates must take at least 9 credit hours of courses listing "face-to-face" as the instruction mode and graduates at least 6 hours. Hours above the face-to-face minimum may be of any type.
- Hybrid courses are considered face-to-face for international enrollment purposes.
- Standard Zoom courses are considered online/distance education for international enrollment purposes.
- Zoom courses held at UT Tyler locations with attendance taken may be counted as face-to-face for international enrollment purposes. Whether a course is classified as proctored is determined by the Department Chair.

### Alternative Ways to Meet Enrollment Requirement – Forms Required

- **Concurrent Enrollment:** A student may also meet enrollment requirements by enrolling in two schools concurrently.
- **Process:** Before Census Day, the student submits a completed, signed ISSFS **Concurrent Enrollment Form** to an international student advisor in person or by email to [intladvising@uttyler.edu](mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu).

- **Authorized Reduced Course Load (RCL):** Homeland Security requires international students to make good academic progress and complete their programs in a timely manner. Full-time enrollment is required every fall and spring semester, with the following exceptions:
  1. A student can drop to part-time if it is evident that he/she is struggling with English language and/or reading requirements during the first or second semester in the U.S. The student must maintain at least six credit hours of enrollment.
  2. A student can drop to part-time if it is evident that he/she is struggling because of Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods during the first or second semester in the U.S. The student must maintain at least six credit hours of enrollment.
  3. A student may drop a course if he/she mistakenly enrolled in that course without sufficient background, e.g. Calculus II before Calculus I. This is called Improper Course Placement (available any semester).
  4. In the final semester, a student taking all remaining courses on his/her degree program is considered full-time for immigration purposes if the course is “face-to-face” or hybrid (See Note).
  5. A student may drop some or all courses because of physical or mental illness. Doctor or psychologist signature required. No enrollment minimum. Authorization lasts one semester but can be renewed. Limit of aggregate 12 months per educational level.
- **Process:** The student submits to an international student advisor a **Reduced Course Load (RCL) Form** signed by an academic advisor or medical professional (see form) BEFORE dropping below full-time enrollment. For the final semester option, in lieu of the RCL form an academic advisor may opt to send an email to [intladvicing@uttyler.edu](mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu) stating it is the student’s last semester, instead.

**NOTES:** If only one course remains it cannot be online. The only exception to this is if the student has applied for OPT and needs to re-take a course to graduate. The student’s immigration options are time-sensitive, so the student should speak with an international student advisor as soon as they know they are not graduating.

Homeland Security does not acknowledge lack of course offerings, pregnancy, or academic probation as approved reasons for a reduced course load.

### The Form I-20

- A Form I-20 should be issued at the beginning of each program, change of major, reduced course load or work authorization.
- The academic program listed on the I-20 does not always match the UT Tyler program name. The I-20 name matches the U.S. Department of Education category for the assigned CIP code.
- When the I-20 is created it reflects the time required by most students on that educational level, Bachelor’s (4 years), Master’s (2 years), PhD (5 years). This is reflected on the Form I-20 as the Program End Date. A student who continues enrollment beyond that date without updating the I-20 is out of status.

### Extending the I-20 – Form Required

- Homeland Security allows a student to extend his/her I-20 if more time is needed to complete a program IF the extension is requested prior to the current completion date and the delay occurred for an acceptable academic or medical reason. Acceptable academic reasons include: changes of major, research problems or authorized reduced course load (see earlier section). **Federal regulations explicitly state that an I-20 cannot be extended for delays connected to poor academic progress, so a student needing to retake courses should schedule them so he/she can still graduate by the I-20 end date.**

- **Process:** Student submits an **I-20 Extension Request Form** that is completed and signed by his or her academic advisor to an international student advisor in person or by email to [intladvising@uttyler.edu](mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu).

### **CPT (Curricular Practical Training) – Form Required**

- To be eligible for any off-campus work authorization, an F-1 student must have been full-time enrolled in a U.S. college or university at least one academic year (fall and spring or spring and fall) and enrolled at UT Tyler for at least one long semester.
- The internship must be tied to a course that is required to graduate, either an internship course or an elective course for which an internship can suffice.
- Enrollment in the internship course is required during the same semester as the internship experience.
- Both paid and unpaid internships are eligible for CPT.
- The work authorization lasts one semester. In order for a student to extend the CPT, he/she must have a second required course and go through the authorization process again.
- CS students have CPT only in the summer, per department policy.
- Non-CS students may have CPT in spring, fall or summer. If in spring or fall, the CPT must be part-time (20 hours per week or less). Summer CPTs can be part-time or full-time.
- A student may have CPT in their last semester if it meets all other eligibility requirements. CPT is considered a face-to-face course, so it can be a stand-alone course.
- CPTs are not limited by location. A student can have CPT at a location outside the region if the internship occurs:
  - During the summer or other official school break OR
  - During the student's last semester and is the sole course remaining
- CPT can be full-time in spring or fall if:
  - It is the student's last semester AND
  - The student is taking all remaining courses on his/her degree plan ANG
  - The only remaining course is an internship course or required elective that allows internship.
- CPTs are tied to courses but can extend into the interval before and/or after the semester. They cannot cross over into a new semester without additional authorization. Date parameters are printed on the CPT Request Form.
- **Process:** The student finds work appropriate to his/her degree program, completes paperwork required by the academic department and submits an academic advisor-signed **CPT Request Form** with a copy of the **job offer letter** to an international student advisor in person or by email to [intladvising@uttyler.edu](mailto:intladvising@uttyler.edu). If all conditions are met, the international advisor will produce a new I-20 with a CPT work authorization on page two. The student must obtain the new I-20 before beginning work.