



Office of International
Education

Advising Statewide International Students

Requirements for Maintaining Visa Status

The majority of Ferris international students are on a student visa (F or J visas), regulated by the divisions of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations has set requirements which students must meet in order to keep their student visa status and therefore academic advising plays an important role with our international students.

Basic Requirements to be aware of:

- **English:**

All international students must take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam, or equivalent, before they can officially transition directly into any one of our programs.

The TOEFL test is available in two formats – Internet and Paper. A minimum of a 61 score on the Internet and a minimum of a 500 score on the Paper version is required for students to transition directly into our ENGL 150 course sequence. (Our Office of International Education also accepts IELTS 5.5; MeLAB 73; and MSU-ELT 73 to establish proficiency in English.)

Any student that receives a lower score will be required to start in the IEP program until they improve and demonstrate their proficiency.

Note: Transfer credits in English are only available to international students that have taken coursework from an English speaking university in an English speaking country (such as Canada, England, and Australia).

- **Math:**

International students also must demonstrate Math competency through COMPASS exams, to ensure proper placement. Math COMPASS tests are given once the student lands in Big Rapids or upon completion of the IEP.

- **Location:**

Students must be admitted to and registered at an approved Ferris location. As of Spring 2014 those locations are:

- Big Rapids
- Grand Rapids
- Lansing
- Traverse City
- Dowagiac

- **Credits:**

Students must be enrolled full time every fall and spring semester.

- Undergraduate students: 12 credits minimum
- Graduate student with no assistantship: 9 credits minimum
- Graduate student with assistantship: 6 credits minimum

Students who are admitted for the Summer semester must enroll full time for the Summer as described above.

- **Concurrent/Dual Enrollment:**

Students are allowed to enroll concurrently at FSU and other Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) approved schools. However, in order for the student to count non-FSU courses towards the full-time enrollment requirement, the courses must be accepted by FSU as transfer credits as contributing to the student's program of study. To count the courses towards full-time enrollment, a student must gain approval from his or her academic advisor and the Office of International Education prior to the start of the semester.

- **Online:**

Student can only be registered for 1 online course (3 credits) to count towards their full time enrollment each semester. The students must take at least 6 credits (Graduate) or 9 credits (Undergraduate) of face-to-face instruction courses each semester. Any credit amount over the 6 or 9 credits can be online.

- **Exceptions:**

Reduced Course Load (RCL) exceptions exist within immigration regulations; however a student must gain approval for an RCL through the Office of International Education before they drop below full time. If a student will not register full time for the coming semester, RCL must be approved by the Office of International Education before the semester begins.

- **Employment:**

Students with F-1 or J-1 status may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the academic year. However, J-1 students must obtain approval from the Office of International Education before beginning on campus work. Off campus employment is not allowed without special permission from USCIS and the Office of International Education in case of severe financial hardship or to accommodate an opportunity for training in a student's major field of study. Students must work with the Office of International Education as authorizations are require significant advance planning.

Contact for Questions

Toni Dye

International Student Advisor/Immigration Specialist

Office of International Education (IRC 134)

231-591-2809 or dye4@ferris.edu