

# FAQ's FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## **How do I extend my visa?**

Visas can only be “extended” or “renewed” outside of the United States. Since visas are only used as a pass that allows you to come to the border of the U.S. and your I-20 or DS-2019 is what allows you to actually enter and remain here legally, a valid visa is not needed to maintain your status. Renewal, when needed, is best done at the US Embassy in your home country. It is always a good idea to meet with an international student advisor prior to making plans to renew your visa. An advisor can help you be prepared and minimize any difficulties in the process.

## **Do I have to be enrolled in the summer? Can I work full time?**

As a student in F1 or J1 status does not always have to be enrolled during the summer semester (vacation semester). If you have been enrolled full-time in the fall and spring semesters then the summer is considered your official vacation time from school. During the vacation semester you may remain in the U.S. and are not required to enroll in any classes. If you do decide to enroll you can and there is no minimum or maximum enrollment requirement. During the vacation/summer you can also work on campus full-time (32 max. at UAH) as long as you will be attending UAH again in the fall. Students who have been doing Co-op or who start their first semester at UAH in the summer are not eligible to take the summer as the vacation semester and should talk to an advisor about full-time enrollment and on-campus work options.

## **What if I want a family member to visit me?**

The international student advisor will assist students to obtain the I-20 that is required to bring their spouses and children to the U.S. to visit or live with them. Please complete an I-20 request form along with financial documentation so that a new I-20 can be issued for you and your dependent. This new I-20 should be mailed to your spouse or child so that they can take it to the U.S. Embassy in their country to apply for the F2 visa. This process is very similar to when you obtained your visa to enter the U.S. If you want to invite your parents or friends to visit you then you will need to prepare an invitation letter and copies of some of your immigration documents. You can pick up the “Inviting a Visitor” handout in the ISSO .

## **Am I allowed to work or do an internship while at UAH?**

As an F1 student you are allowed to work 20 hours a week on campus during fall and spring semesters and full time during the summer semester. If you want to work off-campus you will have to apply for permission. F-1's that have been in status for 9 months or more should attend a CPT/OPT session to find out more information.

## **What if I'm not taking enough hours?**

If you are not registering for and completing a full course load each semester then you will be considered “out of status.” Graduate students must complete 9 hours and undergraduates (& IEP) 12 hours each fall and spring semester to maintain their status and to be eligible for benefits such as working and travel signatures. If you are not taking enough hours then you will not be allowed to work (this includes assistantships) or obtain travel signatures for re-entry into the U.S. You will be illegally in the U.S. and you will need to file a reinstatement application with USCIS to get your status back. If this is the case you will need to see the international advisor to help you with this. Please remember to talk to an advisor BEFORE you drop a class.

## **What kind of financial aid can international students get?**

There are some loans and scholarships available at UAH that international students are eligible for. Students should refer to the Financial Aid office or their web site. Graduate students should contact the graduate admissions office. In addition, the international student advisors can provide you with information about private scholarships and loans that may be available to you. Please send them an email and they will attach the information.

## **Do I need to pay taxes? Where do I go about taxes?**

All international students must file tax forms with IRS. Even students that do not work must complete a form. The international student advisors will provide assistance for F and J students in February-March of each year to help file the required tax forms. Please read your UAH email for more details and announcements.