

Taking a Leave of Absence

F1 students at the Intensive English Center who want to take a leave of absence must follow specific steps to ensure they maintain their status and can return to their studies without issues.

Understanding the Implications

It's important for F1 students to grasp the implications of taking a leave of absence. This decision affects your F1 status, which usually requires full-time enrollment. If you take a leave of absence, you typically need to leave the United States unless you have special approval for a medical leave. Therefore, discussing your situation with your Designated School Official (DSO) is crucial to understanding your status's specific implications.

Consulting with the IEC's DSO

The IEC DSO is your primary point of contact for managing your F1 status during a leave of absence. Before making any decisions, schedule a meeting with the IEC's DSO to discuss your reasons for requesting leave, the required documentation, and the process involved. The IEC's DSO will guide you through the necessary steps and help ensure your SEVIS record is managed correctly.

Requesting a Leave of Absence

To request a leave of absence, you must complete an official leave of absence request form provided by your institution and submit any supporting documentation, such as a doctor's note for medical leave or a letter explaining your situation. The IEC's DSO and the relevant administrative staff at the IEC will review your request.

Impact on SEVIS Record

If your leave of absence is approved, your SEVIS record will be terminated for authorized early withdrawal. You must obtain a new I-20 form to return to the United States to resume your studies. Be sure to leave the US within the DSO's grace period and keep records of your travel plans and departure dates.

Returning to Your Studies

Before returning to your studies, notify the IEC's DSO of your intent to return at least 30 days before the start of the term you plan to resume. The IEC's DSO will guide you through obtaining a new I-20, paying the SEVIS I-901 fee if required, and applying for a new F1 visa if your current visa has expired.