

Leave of Absence Information

Students should first consider their eligibility for other options before deciding to take a Leave of Absence. Other options include: a Vacation term, a Reduced Course Load, or Pending Transfer. Make an appointment with an international student advisor to consider your options.

Leave of Absence is taken when a student is temporarily unable to attend WOU. For example, a family emergency or other situation may cause students to miss the start of a term or return home after the term has started thus require them to get leave authorization. **This option allows an international student to take a single term off courses but he/she must remain OUTSIDE the United States until returning for the next term.** The student is required to diligently communicate his/her flight schedule and return to the US with the international student advisor and have his/her immigration record reactivated **before** returning to WOU.

Important Note:

- *Students are not allowed to stay in the US during a Leave of Absence. They must exit the US.*
- *Students on leave will have their SEVIS record terminated to reflect their absence.*
- *Students returning from leave must register full time for the 3 terms immediately after their absence, including summer.*

LEAVING: After you decide you will not attend WOU for a single term:

1. **Complete and submit the OIED Departure Notice form. This must be done before the withdrawal with no grade deadline each term.** If you plan to return to WOU, write which term you plan to return on the form.
2. **Drop any classes you had already registered for as soon as possible.** You may be responsible for fees depending on when you withdraw from classes.
3. **Complete and submit the Travel Signature form.** This updates the travel signature on your I-20 which is required for reentry into the US.

After these steps are complete, your SEVIS record will be terminated for the reason of "Authorized Early Withdrawal." You will only have 15 days to leave the US after your SEVIS record is terminated.

You may not re-enter the US until 30 days before the start date of the term you plan to attend and after you have contacted OIED (see RETURNING).

RETURNING:

Procedures for returning will vary depending on how long you have been outside of the U.S. – less than 5 months OR more than 5 months. See next page for instructions.

<p>Procedure A</p> <p>Do this if you will be outside of the US for <u>LESS than 5 months</u> when you plan to return:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send an e-mail to OIED at least 30-45 days before the start of the next term to request SEVIS reactivation. It usually takes 2-3 weeks for SEVIS to approve/deny a request. • Include the following in your e-mail to global@wou.edu: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your name and student number (e.g. V00....) - Your travel situation - Which term you plan to return to WOU - Date of your visa interview (if you have one) - Date of your return flight to the US - Date of most recent I-20 travel signature • If the I-20 travel signature is <u>older than six months</u>, you will need to provide an address for OIED to mail you a new I-20. There is a \$40 express mailing fee, otherwise it may take 2-3 weeks to receive the updated I-20. • You will need to call the U.S. Embassy in your country and see if your visa is still valid or if you need to apply for a new one.
<p>Procedure B</p> <p>Do this if you will be outside of the US for <u>MORE than 5 months</u> when you plan to return:</p> <p>(This applies if you need to leave for 2 or more terms or if you take summer term off and decide you will also take fall term off.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must apply for a new I-20 with OIED. A new bank statement is required to show you have sufficient funds to pay one year of tuition and living expenses. • Pay the \$200 SEVIS I-901 fee online at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/. Be sure that you print the receipt immediately after you pay the fee online. • Contact the US Embassy in your country. Determine whether your visa is still valid or if you need to get a new visa stamp. Usually the visa is considered canceled if you have been out of the US for longer than 5 months. • Return to the US no sooner than 30 days before the Program Start Date on your new I-20. Contact OIED about your plans to return before purchasing plane tickets.

Flight Dates: Make sure that you do not purchase flight tickets with dates that will cause you to arrive in the US any earlier than 30 days prior to the first day of the term that you will return.

NOTE: Students who receive new Initial I-20s lose some F-1 student benefits when they reenter the US on new initial I-20s. For example, they must wait another year before they are eligible to apply for OPT or off-campus employment authorization,

After you arrive on campus, come to the OIED office to check-in and bring your passport so copies of your new visa and I-94 can be made.

Thank you and please contact an International Student Advisor with any questions.