

SEWANEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

FAQ for Faculty of International Students

Updated February 2019

Is the language requirement for international students different than that of domestic students?

Potentially. International students who (1) speak English as a second language and (2) did not attend high school in the U.S. can petition the Dean of the College to have ENGL 101 satisfy their foreign language requirement.

What do I do if an international student wants to drop below full time course enrollment?

As a general rule of thumb, undergraduate international students must take 12 credits each semester. Exceptions can be made if:

- 1) it's the student's first semester, and they are having significant academic difficulty
- 2) it's the student's last semester, and they do not need 12 credits to graduate
- 3) medical reasons

Can international students work while they are attending classes?

Students who are maintaining F-1/J-1 status are eligible to work on campus while they remain students at the University. Please note:

- International students are only permitted to work on campus, for no more than 20 hours/week during the fall and spring semesters. Students may work 40 hours/week during university breaks (e.g. summer, winter, fall, and spring). These hours may be met through one or more positions.
- International students are not eligible to receive federal work study money.
- "On campus employment" is work that is paid for directly by Sewanee or an approved, close educational affiliate, and it does not usually need Office of Global Citizenship approval. For immigration purposes, "on campus employment" includes:
 - o Work done on campus and paid for by the University directly
 - o Work done at an off campus location that is paid for by the University directly (such as research at Sewanee facility in a different city)
 - o Work done on school premises that provides direct service to students (such as working in the bookstore or McClurg)
 - o Work performed on or off campus at an approved, close educational affiliate of the University may also be accepted. You must meet with the Office of Global Citizenship before accepting this kind of employment.

What if an international student wants to work off campus?

International students can only work off campus at a job that corresponds with their major through a program called CPT: Curricular Practical Training. CPT can be part-time (20 hours or less a week) or full time (21+ hours a week).

If international students are caught working off campus, and they are not approved for CPT, their I-20 could be terminated, and they would be required to return to their home country.

Details of CPT:

- Students must have completed at least one academic year of full-time study (so the earliest they could do it would be summer after freshman year)
- Students must have an offer of employment from a sponsoring employer with a cooperative agreement with Sewanee (it is fairly simple to establish this cooperative agreement)
- Students must earn academic credit for the internship experience, either through an existing course, practicum, research course, independent study, or internship course. They must be enrolled in this course during their CPT.
- Students must be full-time enrolled at Sewanee.
- Students must be authorized by the International Student Advisor to participate in CPT. The student, in cooperation with their adviser, completes the CPT packet and submit it to the International Student Adviser for approval.
- Approval or denial of CPT takes two weeks to process.
- Contact the OGC for additional details.

What if an international student wants to do summer research with me on campus?

Wonderful! This qualifies as an on-campus position, and the student does not need any authorization from the OGC. It is preferable, however, that you inform the OGC about this on-campus position. We track internships/research opportunities that our students participate in.

How can international students get jobs after graduation?

International students are able to remain in the U.S. after graduation and work full time on their student F-1 visa through a program called OPT: Optional Practical Training. Details:

- The job MUST be related to their degree. A biology major cannot pursue a job in marketing.
- All graduates are eligible for one year of OPT, and students with a degree in a STEM field are eligible for an additional two years of OPT after the one year (so three years total OPT).
- Students can apply for OPT before they have received a job offer
- It takes 90 days to process the OPT application
- OPT is offered after every degree level. For example, a student can do OPT after a bachelor's degree, more OPT after a master's degree, and more OPT after a doctoral degree.
- Contact the OGC for application details.

What if I have an international student who wants to double major?

A double major is highly advised (if the student can handle it, academically), as it will open the door for additional work opportunities for an international student to remain in the U.S. after graduation. In fact, many international students are multi major and multi minor students. As a reminder, all students

receive one year of OPT (authorized work on their student visa), but those in STEM fields can receive up to three years of OPT. When a student double majors, s/he can choose which major they want to pursue for OPT based on how long they may want to remain in the U.S. and the ease of finding a job in a certain field. For example, a student double majoring in art and computer science can decide that s/he wants to pursue OPT in computer science in order to remain in the U.S. longer on their student visa.

What types of courses are more manageable for international students?

This greatly depends on the student, but typically, international students find math and physical science courses more manageable. This may be opposite of domestic students. Courses that require a lot of vocabulary, reading and writing, especially writing that requires international students to know U.S. context/culture, are usually the most challenging. For example, a written assignment asking students to compare and contrast the American Civil War to the Syrian Civil War would be extremely difficult for international students. First, they have to overcome the hurdle of writing in English; next, they have to overcome the hurdle of constructing an academic paper through the standard of U.S. academia; third, they have little to no knowledge of either of the two subjects; fourth, they have to think critically.

How do we evaluate the English of our international applicants?

Sewanee considers several standardized tests to evaluate English language proficiency. If English is not a student's native language one of the following exams are required. Below are recommended minimum scores for each exam. The Office of Admission reserves the right to require additional exams. Applicants should submit these score reports from the testing agency or ask for them to be submitted from their high school counselor. Waivers are only given out after we've received a high school transcript and application to Sewanee. We also take into consideration any subscore of these exams. ([TOEFL](#): 95+, [IELTS](#): 7.0+, [PTE Academic](#): 70+, [Duolingo English exam](#): 73+)

What English resources exist specifically for international students?

Unfortunately, we don't have any ESL-specific support for international students. We visit the Writing Center and Center for Speaking and Listening during International Student Orientation, and we go ahead and schedule a Writing Center appointment for them during orientation. If you have concerns about the English level of students, please contact the OGC and/or Tim Neil in the Office of Admission.

Can an international student take courses at another university?

Actually, yes, they can. International students can be concurrently enrolled at another SEVP-approved institution, as long as they are also enrolled at Sewanee. For example, they could be enrolled in courses at Sewanee for the fall semester and also take an online (or in person) course at UTC. During the summer, international students can take courses solely at another institution, as there's no requirement for Sewanee international students to be enrolled at Sewanee during the summer.

Can international students stay on campus over winter and summer breaks?

Yes, they can. Res Life allows international students to remain on campus (though they have to move into a different Res Hall) over both winter and summer breaks. Over the summer, international students must pay an additional cost to live in the Residence Hall. In addition, during breaks their campus meal plan does not work at McClurg.

Does the university provide emergency funds for international students?

Potentially, yes. In collaboration with the chaplain, the international student office manages an emergency fund. Students are welcome to apply for funds in the event of medical or academic need, and they can get that application from Andrea Del Balso. Please note that international students are all required to have health insurance, and they are also required to submit proof of funding for a full year of academic study at Sewanee (including tuition and fees, room and board, books, transportation, health insurance, and miscellaneous expenses). However, sometimes there are expenses that they are unable to pay, and we do our best to assist them with these.

Additional Considerations

- A high percentage of international students take course overloads (more than 19 hrs.) per term. It's helpful for advisors to be familiar with the process and timing of requesting an overload so that they can have that conversation during the advisement session. Form available here: [http://registrar.sewanee.edu/downloads/forms/Request for Credit Overload Form.pdf](http://registrar.sewanee.edu/downloads/forms/Request%20for%20Credit%20Overload%20Form.pdf).
- It means a lot to international students if advisors/faculty participate in any of the international activities - potlucks, language karaoke, etc.
- Slang vernacular (Southern and Sewanee slang) is something that international students are unfamiliar with and want to learn about.
- International students need help familiarizing themselves with SODA. It's a tremendous help if advisors show them how to run and interpret SODA.
- Invite questions from students; many students are reluctant to ask on their own, so it's helpful to prompt them.
- Timely response to their email inquiries are very much appreciated.
- Many international students have more introverted personalities than their US counterparts; they are quiet, soft-spoken, intellectual, reserved, and strategic. Advisers (and professors) should be aware of this. International students excel more in individual work, or in small group work of 2-3 students.
- While many international students WANT to get to know US students, they shy away from joining clubs/organizations. It is helpful when advisors give students gentle nudges toward joining specific organizations they think would benefit the student(s), and it's even more helpful when advisors connect these students with another student member of that group.
- Chinese students frequently have a more challenging time of applying class concepts to real life situations. Practical application is not usually a part of their educational system in China. Advisors and professors may need to help them navigate this process.

Who do I contact with more questions?

- Andrea Del Balso - x1884, asdelbal@sewanee.edu
International student needs, concerns, compliments, or questions
- Tim Neil - x1986, tim.neil@sewanee.edu | international.sewanee.edu
Office of Admission/enrollment questions