

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR WITHDRAWAL: F1 STUDENTS



ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL CENTER

Updated 1/2012

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## Definitions

**Withdrawing** from IIT means you do not intend to return to your studies at IIT in the future and you will be departing the US.

**Leave of Absence** means that you intend to return to your studies at IIT. Immigration allows students to be out of the US for up to 5 months and return on the current I-20, if the leave is approved. If out of the US for more than 5 months, the student will need to obtain new immigration documents prior to returning to the US. Time is counted from date of departure. Detailed instructions about returning after a leave are below. You must be out the US for more than 3/4 (12 weeks) of the academic term. Check-in with your immigration documents is required upon return to the US.

**Completing your IIT degree outside the US** means you will not come back to the US as an international student with IIT but you will finish your degree requirements from outside the US. In this case, you will only need to complete the IC form on the backside of this handout. Your immigration status will be terminated or completed and you will only be able to re-enter the US as a student if you have a new I-20 from IIT another school. \*\*Check with Graduate/Undergraduate Academic Affairs and your academic department for permission from the university.

**Transferring** to another institution in the US is a separate procedure. Please refer to the "Transfer Out" handout on the International Center website.

## Effect of Leave of Absence on Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training

If you are outside of the United States for more than 5 months, your SEVIS record (I-20) will be Terminated. Any time you had accrued towards the one academic year enrollment requirement to be eligible for OPT or CPT will be lost. When you re-enter the United States with a new Initial Attendance SEVIS Record (I-20), you must be enrolled for one academic year after re-entering the U.S. before becoming eligible for OPT or CPT.

While on Leave of Absence, you may not re-enter the United States for the purpose of maintaining eligibility for OPT or CPT.

## Procedures:

- 1) Initiate a LOA or Withdraw online through your MyIIT portal. Look for the Academic Affairs Channel under the Academics tab.
- 2) Speak with an International Student Advisor. Bring the IC form (page 3 of this document) to your meeting with the IC advisor. For phone meetings, scan and email the form with your signatures prior to the meeting.
- 3) After IC and university approval, pay all outstanding balances due to IIT & withdraw/drop courses if enrolled.
- 4) Depart the US.
  - If not enrolling for the term, you must leave the country by the course registration deadline (add/drop date), and for a leave of absence, be out of the US for more than half of the term.
  - After the Add/Drop date you must have been enrolled in courses until receiving permission from the IC advisor. Depart the United States within 15 days of receiving approval from the IC & withdrawing from your classes.

\*\*If you are required to stay in the US for a medical emergency, you should submit an official letter from a doctor recommending your temporary withdrawal along with the completed "Less Than Full Time" request form to the International Center.

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## Re-entry after Leave of Absence:

- If your absence from the United States has been **less than 5 months**, you may enter with your current I-20 and a valid travel signature.
- If your absence from the United States will **exceed 5 months**, you will need to contact the International Center at least 3 months prior to your return to request a new I-20 for re-entry. Mail original financial documents to cover 1 academic year to the International Center in order to have the new I-20 issued. The financial document should be no more than 6 months old and translated into US dollars. The International Center will then prepare the new I-20 and mail it to you in your home country after receiving payment and shipping details from you. You may re-enter the US up to 30 days prior to the program start date printed on your new I-20. **Note:** You must pay the SEVIS fee based on your new I-20 and Department of State advises students to apply for a new visa at a US Consulate or Embassy before re-entry if returning from a leave of greater than five months with initial attendance I-20s
- **All international students returning from a leave:** You MUST check-in with the International Center after returning from a period of absence. Please bring your I-20, passport, and new I-94 card with you so that we can check the dates of your absence and update your SEVIS record. There will be an enrollment hold on your student account that will prevent enrollment in classes until after you check-in.

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## COMPLETE ALL FIELDS

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME

IIT STUDENT ID#

SEVIS ID# N

TELEPHONE

IIT E-MAIL

ALTERNATE EMAIL

DEPARTMENT

DEGREE SOUGHT

IMMIGRATION STATUS (CHOOSE ONE)

F-1

J-1

EDUCATION LEVEL (CHOOSE ONE):

GRADUATE

UNDERGRADUATE

## TRAVEL DETAILS

EXPECTED DEPARTURE DATE (REQUIRED):

EXPECTED RE-ENTRY DATE (IF APPLICABLE):

## CHOOSE ONE BELOW (SEE PREVIOUS PAGE FOR INFORMATION) :

Complete Withdrawal from IIT (Do not plan on returning to IIT to Study)

Completing Degree from outside the US (will not return to IIT as an International Student)

Leave of Absence (Medical reason: Attach Less than Full Time form and Doctor Letter)

Leave of Absence (Out of U.S. less than 5 months)

Leave of Absence (Out of U.S. more than 5 months)

Shorten Length of Program from 1 year to 1 semester (visiting students only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
International Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Note to Undergraduates:** To complete this process, you must bring a copy of this form to Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, MB101.