## Leave of Absence and Visa Status of F-1/J-1 International Students at UH Manoa

**Consult Academic Advisor:** Students planning to take time off from school usually take a Leave of Absence (LOA). A student should consult with his or her academic advisor and get authorization prior to taking an LOA. There are different forms required for graduate and undergraduate students.

**Consult ISS Advisor:** The absence will affect a student's visa status, so he must notify an ISS advisor about the leave, even if a form does not require an ISS advisor signature.

**Termination of SEVIS Record and Departure**: When an international student is approved for LOA, an ISS advisor reports the LOA in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), which "terminates" his record. Students are expected to depart the U.S. within 15 days of the termination.

**Return on Same SEVIS Record:** If the semester of the student's return has a start date that is less than 5 months from the SEVIS report, then the student's SEVIS record may be reactivated, so that he may return to the U.S. on the current I-20/DS-2019, with valid visa and passport. The student should contact ISS at least within 45 days of the semester start date to request a re-activation.

**Return on New SEVIS Record:** If the start date of the return semester is more than 5 months from the SEVIS termination, the student must request a new I-20/DS-2019 from ISS. This process creates a new SEVIS record to replace the terminated record. A new SEVIS I-901 fee must be paid, and a new visa may be required (consult home country U.S. Embassy). The student should contact ISS at least within 45 days of the semester start date to request a new I-20/DS-2019.

**Return during LOA:** If the student plans to return to the U.S. during the LOA, it may be possible to return in another visa status, but he should not try to enter on the terminated record.

**Change in LOA:** If an LOA is shortened or extended, consult with an ISS advisor to determine any impacts on the process and timeframe to regain the student visa status.