Advisors Notes for International Students and Program Extension Recommendations

An F-1 student who is unable to meet the program completion date on the Form I-20 may be granted an extension by the DSO\(^1\) if the DSO certifies that the student has continually maintained status and that the delays are caused by *compelling academic or medical reasons*, such as changes of major or research topics, unexpected research problems, or documented illnesses. Making normal progress is defined as pursuing a full course of study each fall and spring semester and completing degree requirements prior to the program end date on the student’s immigration record.\(^2\)

Discussion on poor academic performance:

Some immigration officers have interpreted poor academic performance, such as failing a class, as an indication that the student is not making normal progress. However, the Department of Homeland Security has confirmed that poor performance alone, as long as the student is registered and attending classes, should not be viewed as failure to make progress.\(^3\)

The regulations require students to be enrolled in full time studies and working toward an educational goal. A failing grade is not inconsistent with these requirements unless it results in academic suspension or a mandatory reduction in course load.

At Purdue, for purposes of maintaining status, a student's failure to make *any* progress toward an educational goal for one semester is considered suspect and carefully monitored, a failure to make *any* progress toward an educational goal for two or more semesters is considered a violation of status, unless there were compelling medical reasons that contributed to the student's inability to make academic progress.

Intentionally failing or dropping a required class with the intent to delay graduation is not a valid reason for extension.

---

\(^1\) Designated School Official. At Purdue all DSO’s are located within the Office of International Students and Scholars

\(^2\) Source: Title 8 Code of Federal Regulations Part 214.2(F)(7)(iii)

\(^3\) Source: NAFSA Adviser’s Manual 360 published by NAFSA Association of International Educators