Leave of Absence  
(less than 5 months)

Leave of absence means that you intend to return to your studies at Southeastern. 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. There is a separate information sheet and form for a leave of absence for more than 5 months. The 5-months period is counted from date of departure. However, from the time you request the absence, you are allowed only 15 days to depart the U.S. as a student.

Requesting a Leave of Absence
1. Speak with your academic advisor and ISS about your plans.
2. Make sure your I-20 has a valid travel signature and check that other documentation will be valid beyond your return date (passport, visa).
3. Complete the Leave of Absence or Withdrawal Form
4. Pay all outstanding balances due to SE & withdraw/drop courses if enrolled.

During your absence
• You MAY NOT use your student visa to enter the U.S. during your absence
• You MAY NOT be registered in classes in the U.S.
• You MAY return to the U.S. within 30 days of the next semester
• You MUST return to the U.S. within 5 months and begin classes at the next available session
  o If you studied at SE in the spring semester, are planning to be outside the U.S. just for the summer, and you will return to SE in the fall semester, you do not need to request a temporary absence for the summer term.
  o If you take the fall semester off, you must return and enroll for the spring semester.
  o If you take the spring semester off, you must return and enroll during the summer.
Undergraduates: you must enroll in 6 credit hours during the summer. Graduate students: you must enroll in at least 3 credit hours during the summer

ISS Actions
1. Your SEVIS record will be temporarily terminated for "authorized early withdrawal."
2. Within 60 days of the start of the next semester ISS will contact the SEVIS Help Desk to request that your SEVIS record be returned to active status.
3. ISS will contact you to let you know when your SEVIS record is activated.
   *You should not return to the U.S. until your record is active again.*

When you return to Southeastern
1. Report to ISS within 21 days of the start of the new semester.
2. Bring the following documents to the appointment:
   - Copy of stamped I-20
   - Print out of I-94 Arrival/Departure record