

Students often want to know if they are able to take a break in their studies to remain in the United States or to return home to visit. There are some important regulations to keep in mind in determining whether you can take a break from studies or not.

Can I take a break and return to my home country?

There are two answers to this depending on how long your visit to your home country is.

- **Returning home for a short period during your classes.** A student is permitted by immigration to return home for a short period during classes. You will need to let the Office of International Admissions know you are doing this and you will need to let your professors know you won't be in class and receive their permission.
- **Returning home for the whole quarter/semester.** A student is permitted to take any quarter/semester off that they want as long as they are out of the United States for the entire term even if they have just completed an official break in the U.S. You should leave at the beginning of the term and return at the end of the term. Just remember not to be out of the country for more than five months or you will have to reapply to the university, get a new I20 and a new visa.

Can I take a break and remain in the United States?

If you are on a semester system, the only break you can take is the official summer break. If you are on the quarter system, you must meet the following requirements.

Immigration regulations permit a student on the quarter system to have one break during an academic year. That means a student is permitted one break for every nine months of continuous full time study. This means if you have studied for three or more consecutive quarters with no break, you can choose to take the next quarter off and remain in the United States **but you can not take another break until you study for at least another nine months including the official summer break.**

Example:

If you have studied full time for Spring 1, Spring 2 and Summer, you can then take the Fall quarter off and remain in the United States. This means when the fall break is over you must then study full time the following Spring 1, Spring 2 AND Summer. You could not take the Summer off because you can only have one break for every nine months of consecutive study. Remember too that if you are required to take Summer as full time, you can not take all of your classes online.