

## Final Semester Checklist (Summarized)

- ☐ **Meet with your academic advisor** – Discuss your final term registration and review your DegreeWorks plan in CougarNet to ensure all requirements are either completed or in progress.
- ☐ **Apply for a Reduced Course Load (RCL), if eligible** – For your final semester, you may qualify for a reduced course load. Submit the request in advance.
- ☐ **Check your I-20 or DS-2019 end date** – If it does not cover your final semester, apply for an extension of stay before it expires.
- ☐ **Complete your degree exit requirements/ Senior Assignment** – Exit requirements differ from coursework completion and are required for all degrees. Depending on your program, this may include a thesis, research project, exit exam, or other requirements. Take notice of and comply with the Graduate School's thesis [submission process](#) and [deadlines](#).
- ☐ **Plan your next step after graduation** – Options include:
  - Applying for OPT (apply early!)
  - Apply for Academic Training (J-1 students)
  - Transferring to another SEVP-approved school
  - Starting a new program at SIUE
  - Returning home
- ☐ **Apply for graduation (Mandatory)** – Submit your graduation application by the published deadline.
- ☐ **Apply for the commencement ceremony (Optional)** – Register to participate in the ceremony.
- ☐ **Update your address in CougarNet** – Keep your U.S. and permanent addresses current.
- ☐ **Resolve all financial obligations** – Pay any outstanding bills, tuition, or fees before graduation.
- ☐ **Request official documents** – Order your diploma, transcript, or proof of degree verification (needed for OPT applications).
- ☐ **Learn about UNIV 500 (Graduate students only)** – If applicable, confirm whether you must enroll in UNIV 500 (continuing enrollment).
- ☐ **Keep the 60-day grace period in mind** – Students must take action (apply for OPT, transfer, change status, or depart) within 60 days of program completion.
- ☐ **Check the end date of your health insurance** – SIUE student health insurance ends shortly after graduation. Arrange new coverage if staying in the U.S.
- ☐ **Track important documents and expiration dates** – This includes your I-20/DS-2019, EAD card (if on OPT), I-94, driver's license, SSN, and passport.