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# Pre-Arrival: Getting Ready for Stetson

## Introduction

Welcome to the Stetson University family. The decision to leave your home country to pursue your university studies takes courage and determination. It also requires thorough thought and preparation. The information in this manual is meant to help you prepare and adjust for the changes and challenges that come with studying in the United States and at Stetson University.

Although we have done our best to create a detailed and comprehensive manual, one can never be completely prepared for the “unknowns” of your first year studying a new land. Be aware that some information may only be available to you upon arrival at Stetson. This may include the address and phone number of your residence, the courses in which you will enroll, etc.

Please read the information contained in this booklet carefully before you make your trip to Stetson University. Also take this packet with you in your carry-on baggage, as it has much of the necessary information and contact information in case of an emergency. Please do not hesitate to contact the Center for International Education. We are excited that you are choosing to attend Stetson, and wish you the best of luck as you embark in your future studies.

## Paying the SEVIS Fee

As Of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 All International Students Must Pay A \$100 SEVIS Fee Before Applying For A Visa. This is a mandatory payment required by the government and not associated with Stetson’s costs. The SEVIS Fee Is Not Associated With Your Visa Application Fee. They Are Separate Fees. You Must Have A Receipt Of Payment For The SEVIS Fee Before Applying For Your Visa. **Without A Receipt You Will Not Be Allowed To Schedule A Visa Interview.** Stetson’s School Code Number Is: MIA214F00111000

### Online SEVIS FEE Instructions

1. Go To [Www.Fmjfee.Com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
2. Scroll To The Bottom Of The Page, Choose Either the I-20 If You Will Be An F-1 Student Or DS2019 If You Will Be A J-1 Student.
3. Fill Out Next Page On Personal Information

4. The Form Requires The "School Code" Which Is On Your I-20/DS2019.
  - The Code Is: MIA214F00111000
5. The Form Requires The SEVIS Identification Number On The I-20/DS2019.
  - This # Is In The Upper Right Hand Corner Of The Form And Begins With An N And Has 10 Digits.
6. Check That The Information Is Correct On The Next Page.
7. Choose First Class Mail Or Expedited Delivery. First Class Mail Is Recommended Because You Will Print The Receipt At The End And This Will Serve For The U.S. Embassy.
8. The Credit Card Form Has A Place For Cardholder Address. You Do Not Need To Fill This In. It Is Not A Required Field. The Space Is Too Small For Most International Addresses.
9. PRINT AT LEAST 2 COPIES OF THE RECEIPT!!!!

### Applying For Your Visa

1. Call the American Consulate for information on procedures for applying for a student visa. You may also visit the Consulate's web site. For links to the various consular websites visit <http://travel.state.gov/links.html>
2. Start early. All consulates are now requiring interviews. It may take several weeks to get an appointment. New security measures may also take additional time.
3. All visa applicants must pay a visa fee. This is usually paid at a bank in the city where the consulate is located.
4. Complete the visa application form which is available on-line at <http://evisaforms.state.gov>
5. Prepare your application materials carefully to prove your visa eligibility. See <http://travel.state.gov/nonimmigrantvisas.html> for tips on student visa applications. You will need the following:
  - Valid Passport
  - I-20 or DS-2019
  - Verification of Finances to pay for your education
  - Stetson University materials (admission letter, etc)
  - Verification of having paid SEVIS fee
  - Educational Documents including transcripts, diplomas, exam scores, etc.
  - Proof of close ties to your home country
    - ⊙ Proof of a home in your country which you will not abandon

- ⦿ Proof of a job or job offer to return home to
- ⦿ Proof of close family to return to and to provide for
- ⦿ All types of visa support letters
- ⦿ Evidence of intention to return to your home country after you complete your education

### Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa

-Courtesy of NAFSA: Association of International Educators

1. **TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY.** Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc.

If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter that can guarantee visa issuance.

If you have applied for the U.S. Green Card Lottery, you may be asked if you are intending to immigrate. A simple answer would be that you applied for the lottery since it was available but not with a specific intent to immigrate. If you overstayed your authorized stay in the U.S. previously, be prepared to explain what happened clearly and concisely, with documentation if available.

2. **ENGLISH.** Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do NOT prepare speeches! If you are coming to the United States solely to study intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.
3. **SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.** Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor applying for a high school program and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.

4. **KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS.** If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career when you return home.
5. **BE BRIEF.** Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.
6. **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION.** It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.
7. **NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL.** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States.
8. **EMPLOYMENT.** Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse (husband or wife) is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the United States. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the United States. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.
9. **DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME.** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost

certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

### Traveling to Stetson

There are numerous ways to travel to Deland, Florida. A detailed list of these options is provided in the “Transportation Concerns” under the *Practical Information* section of this handbook. Below are directions to Stetson if you choose to rent a car and drive to Stetson.

#### 1. **From Orlando:**

- Take I-4 **North** (East) to exit 114
- Go **Left** on 472
- Stay in **Right lane** and follow signs to DeLand
- Go **North** on 17/92 (Woodland Blvd.) approximately 5 miles
- Stay in **Left lane** until road narrows to one lane and keep going straight on Woodland Blvd. for about one mile
- Turn **Right** onto E. Pennsylvania Ave. (you will see the Holiday House and the Best Inn University on your Left). Now you are on the Stetson University campus.
- About 100 meters down the road, turn **Right** onto Burt Fish Drive
- About 50 meters down the road, turn **Left** onto E. University Ave. (you will see the Counseling Center and the Health Center at this corner)
- The Center for International Education is the second house on your right. Park in the driveway.

#### 2. **From Daytona:**

- If you are coming from Daytona Beach International Airport, turn **Left** onto Highway 92 **West** (International Speedway Blvd.)
- Go approximately 22 miles on 92
- Turn **Left** onto Amelia Avenue (you will see a Publix and a K-Mart on your right as you approach Amelia)
- Go approximately 1.5 miles and turn **Right** onto E. University Avenue (this is a small side street)
- The Center for International Education is the second house on your left. Park in the driveway.

### Required Vaccinations

Stetson University requires documentation of immunization before being able to register for classes your second semester at Stetson. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your International Student Advisor.

1. **Rubeola (Red or 10-day measles):** All undergraduate students born after December 21, 1956 must provide proof of immunity to measles.
  - Documentation is needed of two Rubeola immunizations with live measles virus vaccine, the first being on or after your first birthday
2. **Rubella (German measles):** All undergraduate students under the age of 40 must provide proof of immunity to Rubella
  - Documentation is needed of immunization with live rubella virus vaccine on or after your first birthday
3. **Proof of Immunization may be documented by:**
  - An original document citing immunizations or illness/tier dates bearing a Health Care Provider's signature which is legible, OR
  - Official stamp of clinic or health center, OR
  - Photocopy of official health record with a health care provider's signature
4. **Exemptions:** Exemptions to the Measles and Rubella immunization policy may be granted in the event of valid medical contraindications or for religious reasons. Medical and/or religious affiliation as a basis for exemption must be documented.

### Packing for Your Time at Stetson

1. **Climate:** The climate in Florida is highly variable. During the summer (June through August) temperatures range from 80°F to 100°F (26.7°C to 37.7°C) and average about 90°F (32.2°C). During the winter months (December through March) temperatures range from 20°F (with wind chill) to 80°F (26.7° and average about 50°F (10°C). July, August and September are warm; the cold season begins in November and continues through to February. Warmth and rain will return in April and will continue until July.
2. **Typical Clothing:** Students at Stetson dress very informally: jeans, shorts, t-shirts, casual shirts, etc. Nevertheless, there will be some occasions for you to dress up, such as semi-formal and formal dances. You will need some of warm clothing for the winter: sweaters, fleeces and/or sweatshirts, and a winter jacket are recommended for colder days. Be advised that a high-quality winter jacket, which we recommend you purchase after arrival, can be quite expensive. Bring comfortable shoes/sandals with you from home. We also highly encourage you to bring native dress from your country for special events that highlight our international population, such as our International Food Festival.
3. **Before You Pack:**
  - Call 1-800-555-1212 for the 800 number of the airline on which you will be traveling, or look up your airline's web page.

- Your airline will provide you with information regarding the number of checked and carry-on bags allowed by that carrier. Check exact dimensions and weight limits. Do not assume that it is the same for two different airlines or that things have not changed since you last flew. Make sure that the person you talk to understand that you are taking an international flight.
  - Do not pack anything sharp in your carry-on. It will be confiscated.
  - Things of great value should be left at home. Things of value that you must take (i.e. camera) should never be packed in your checked baggage.
  - Do not bring electrical appliances since the electrical current is different in the U.S. than in other countries and converters are expensive.
  - Remember: When in doubt, leave it out.
4. **Prescription Drugs:** If you require prescription medication, find out from your doctor if he/she can prescribe enough for 3-4 months until you can find a physician in the US who can fill this prescription. Also, take the doctor's written prescription with you and a letter from your doctor explaining your condition and why you have the medicine. The letter should state the medication's scientific/chemical/generic name as well as the brand name.

### Miscellaneous Issues

1. **Housing:** If you are an undergraduate, the office of admissions should be coordinating your housing arrangements; however, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Center for International Education so they can facilitate through that process.
  - If you are a graduate student and would like to live on campus, please email the International Student Advisor at marodrig@stetson.edu, so she can properly arrange on-campus housing. If you choose to live off campus, the Center for International Education does not help students find housing; however, they can provide you a list with some of the local apartment complexes near Stetson Campus.
2. **Registration:** Both the undergraduate and graduate office of admissions should be taking care of your registration needs. If you are an exchange student the ISA will be in direct contact with you regarding the courses available for you to take. Nonetheless, if you have any questions about registration and course availability before your arrival at Stetson, the International Student Advisor will do her best to try to answer whatever questions you may have.

# The Center for International Education

## The C.I.E.

The Center for International Education, (CIE) located behind Health Services, is one of your first stops upon your arrival at Stetson University and will continue to be a resource to you for several things:

- Orientation for All New International Students
- Assistance with F-1 & J-1 Visa Matters
- Advice and Counseling on Personal and Academic Concerns
- Assistance with Cultural Adjustment
- Immigration workshops
- Cultural Events
- Study Abroad Programs
- Communications (International Fax and other resources)
- Liaison with other Stetson Departments and professors

The C.I.E. is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please stop in and visit us. The office number is (386) 822-8165 (or from ON campus, extension 8165). The fax number is (386)822-8167. We look forward to helping you get the most from your academic experience at Stetson University.

## People at the C.I.E.

1. At the C.I.E. you will find your International Student Advisor (ISA), \_\_\_\_\_ . She is also the Designated School Official (DSO). The U.S. government grants DSO status to people in order to assist in immigration matters and filing immigration forms as well as making them responsible for reporting compliance of status issues. Thus, Mariana will provide you with assistance with the following:

- Obtaining, maintaining, changing, and extending student status
- Understanding how immigration laws, regulations, and benefits apply to you
- Assistance with immigration forms, applications, and procedures

The ISA is your resource for any information regarding your student/exchange status. Please be advised that your ISA validates your immigration status, and

should be your primary resource if you have any questions, issues, or problems to discuss.

2. The Director for the Center of International Education is Nancy Leonard. She is responsible for overseeing all activities of the C.I.E. and works most in planning and coordinating the study abroad programs here at Stetson. Nancy is also knowledgeable in topics pertaining to immigration and can assist you in times of emergency when the ISA is not available.
3. You will also find our administrative assistant, \_\_\_\_\_, at the C.I.E. in the afternoons. She works closely with the director in organizing and coordinating all aspects of the study abroad program. She can assist you with sending faxes and setting up appointments to see the ISA if she is not available and answering questions if you are interested in any of our study abroad programs.

### Documents Required by the C.I.E.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires that the C.I.E. maintain current and accurate information on all international students. This information will also help the I.S.A. to notify you of any changes in immigration regulations. Please review the following information and prepare to bring all necessary documents with you upon your arrival at Stetson and when any of this information changes:

- Admission number from I-94 Arrival/Departure Record
- Photocopy of I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 Visa Students)
- Photocopy of passport ID
- Photocopy of Visa
- Photocopy of health insurance card/proof of insurance valid in U.S.
- Address, phone number and e-mail address
- Degree program or major
- Expected date of graduation
- Other information such as financial documentation if necessary for document issuance

Please note that every semester the I.S.A. sends an "Information Update" for you to fill out. This ensures you are on campus and that the C.I.E. has the most up-to-date information in your record. This form gets sent to you within the first two weeks of classes to the email we have on file for you. It is important that you fill this out and return it NO LATER THAN 4 weeks from the beginning of the semester. Not filling out this form can result in termination of SEVIS record and loss of F-1 status.


**CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

Stetson University, Center for International Education, 421 N. Woodland Blvd., Unit 8412, Deland, FL 32723, Ph. (386)-822-8165, Fax (386) 822-8167

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (please remember a new one must be filled out EVERY semester)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Stetson ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Date of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PHYSICAL</b> United States Address ( <b>NOT</b> Campus Mail box#)	Address line 1	
	Address line 2, if any	
	City	
	Postal Code	

<b>Permanent foreign</b> Address	Address line 1	
	Address line 2, if any	
	City	
	Postal Code	
	Country	

<b>Stetson Information</b>	Campus Box #	
	Phone extension, if any	
	Phone number	
	Stetson email	
	Preferred email	

## Back to the Basics: Practical Information

### Food around Deland

You may find American food strange. It may taste different, or be cooked differently, or it may seem bland or heavy compared to what you are used to. If you are in self catering accommodation and unused to cooking for yourself, you may find yourself relying on “fast” food instead of your usual diet. Try to find a supplier of familiar food, and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

1. **Stetson Meal Plan:** Stetson University Dining Services has locations near the dorms and classrooms with hours starting at 7:00 am and open until 12:00 am to help fit in a nutritious meal into your schedule. Stetson University Dining Services is dedicated to serving students’ dietary needs. Stetson University Dining Services offers several different options for you to choose from to best fit your lifestyle.

Stetson University Dining Services has several different meal plan options to best fit your dining habits. Choice of plan is a highly individual matter. When choosing your meal plan, it’s important to remember factors like your class schedule and eating habits (especially frequency and quantity). Plans begin at orientation and end at final exams each semester.

A meal consists of one entrée, four side items, and unlimited fountain beverage refills. Each meal plan comes with an allotted amount of meals for the week. The week starts on Sunday and ends Saturday evening, therefore every Sunday morning the plan will reset. Plans come with a pre-determined amount of flex dollars for the semester. Flex dollars are spend able dollars in the debit form that can be spent in various places around campus. At the end of the Fall Semester all flex dollars that are left will roll over to the Spring Semester. At the end of the spring semester any flex dollars left are not refundable.

Meal Plan choices for 2005-2006:

*PLAN SELECTION:*

19 meals plus \$100 Flex Dollars	\$1600.00 per semester
15 meals plus \$175 Flex Dollars	\$1600.00 per semester
15 meals plus \$50 Flex Dollars	\$1250.00 per semester
One a day plus \$100 Flex Dollars	\$925.00 per semester
Give me Five (5) plus \$100 Flex Dollars	\$690.00 per semester

2. **Local Food Markets:** The Deland community has several places for you to grocery shop if you prefer to prepare your own meals. Here are just a few that you might consider visiting:

*Deland Asian Market:* Able to find an array of foods for Asian cuisine.  
114 N. Woodland Blvd. (386)736-9905.

*La Guadalupeana:* Carrier of Mexican and other Latin foods.  
1097 S. Woodland Blvd. (386) 738-2761.

*Publix:* General Grocery store with an array of American and ethnic foods.  
299 E. International Speedway Blvd. (386) 734-7112.

*Winn-Dixie:* General Grocery store with an array of American and ethnic foods.  
346 E. New York Avenue. (386)734-1221.

*Wal-Mart Super center:* Large store with both food and other household goods.  
1699 N. Woodland Blvd. (386) 734-4420.

3. **Local Restaurants:** Deland has an array of restaurants specializing in ethnic cuisine. Most of these establishments are found in the downtown area. We encourage you to visit these places and let your pallet taste a bit of the world.

### Transportation Concerns:

Ask an American about transportation in the U.S. and they may say that the only way to “get around” is to have a car. Unfortunately, many international students are frustrated with the limited U.S. transportation system. However the information below will help discover some of your options.

1. **Local Area Transportation Options:**

- VOTRAN (Volusia County Public Transit System) BUS
  - ⊙ Limited local service; may not be as convenient as local buses in your home country
  - ⊙ Takes you to Orlando and other locations throughout Volusia county
  - ⊙ <http://www.votran.org>
  - ⊙ Phone Number (386) 943-7033
  
- Boulevard Taxi
  - ⊙ Phone Number: 774-1104
  
- Deland Taxi
  - ⊙ Phone Number for Price Quotes: 736-4486
  - ⊙ Phone Number for pick-up: 374-8484

2. **Rental Car Options:** Generally, you must be 25 years old to rent a car. Some companies will rent to you if you are 21, but you will pay extra.
  - MUST have a credit card to rent a car
  - Deland - Enterprise Car Rental (Phone number 738-4013)
  - Orange City – Budget Car Rental (Phone number 386-774-2320)
  
3. **Greyhound Bus:**
  - Convenient and inexpensive for regional and national travel
  - Station is located at 224 E OHIO AVE in Deland (very close to Stetson)
  - Phone Numbers: (386) 734-2747 in Deland, or toll free 1-800-229-9424
    - <http://www.greyhound.com/>
  
4. **Amtrak (Train):**
  - Can sometimes be more expensive than flying
  - Not as punctual or direct as trains may be in your home country
  - Station is located at 2491 Old New York Ave. in Deland
  - Toll free phone number **1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245)**
  - <http://www.amtrak.com/index.html>
  
5. **Airports:**
  - Daytona Beach International Airport (DAB) (<http://flydaytonafirst.com/>)  
Closest to campus (approximately 20 miles each way)  
Much smaller than Orlando Intl. Airport (OIA)  
It is often more expensive to fly in and out of DAB than OIA
  
  - Orlando International Airport (OIA) (<http://fcn.state.fl.us/goaa/index.htm>)  
Approximately 51 miles from campus (each way)  
Allow at least 1.5 hours driving time each way
  
6. **Getting to the Airport:**
  - Taxi
    - To DAB: Approximately \$40.00 (plus 10-15% tip)
    - To OIA: Approximately \$100.00 (plus 10-15%tip)
  
  - DOTS (Daytona-Orlando Transit Services) Shuttle bus
    - Fare \$30.00 one way, \$55.00 round trip
    - Will drop you off at the Howard Johnson Hotel in Deland
    - Call 1-800-231-1965 to make reservation
    - <http://www.dots.daytonabeach.com> to check schedule

## 7. Useful tips on traveling by air in the U.S.:

- Arrive 1-2 hours early for domestic flights and 2-3 hours early for international flights
- Be patient with security checks
- Review the current guidelines for what you can and cannot take in your carry-on luggage
- Do not pack prohibited objects like scissors, pocketknives, and corkscrews in your carry-on bag
- Bring a government-issued photo ID (driver's license or passport)
- Bring your ticket or a printout of your itinerary for your E-ticket

## 8. Useful websites for making travel plans

- [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) (flights, rental cars, hotels, etc.)
- [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com) (flights, rental cars, hotels, etc.)
- [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) (maps & driving directions)

## Communication

### 1. The Telephone

- On Campus vs. Local vs. Long Distance vs. International Calls
  - On-campus = x8165
  - Local calls\* (Deland) from campus phone = 9-738-1234
  - Long distance\* (different city or state) = 1 -area code- 7 digit local number
    - *Examples: 1-407-123-4567 (Orlando), 1-202-123-4567 (Washington D.C.)*
  - International\*= 011-country code-city code - number
  - "Toll free" or "800 numbers" are always free =(1-800-123-4567)
- Particulars about on-campus phones
  - Must provide your own phone
  - When calling off campus from a campus phone, you must always dial 9 first, then the number
  - To call internationally from campus, you must set up an access code
    - Should have received this with other welcome materials from ResLife
    - Call 1-800-YES-ECCI for more information on calling long distance from campus
  - No fee for incoming calls, and no fee for local calls
  - Fee per minute for outgoing calls depends on where you are calling
  - "Shop around" to find the best per minute price for calling your home country
  - Search the internet
  - Ask another international student from your country cheapest rates

- ⦿ Setting up voice mail can be challenging—see attached instructions

## 2. Mailing Options & Services

- U.S.P.S. (United States Postal Service) is usually the most economical method  
<http://www.usps.com/>
- FedEx ([www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com)) and DHL ([www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)) are also available at the Campus Post Office; they cost much more than the U.S.P.S, but are much quicker, and more reliable
- The campus Post Office can be very helpful if you have questions about the best way to mail things
- All students have their own on-campus mailbox: Mail should be addressed as follows:
  - ⦿ First Name Last Name  
421 N. Woodland Blvd; Unit XXXX  
Deland, FL 32723

## 3. Fax

- You can send and receive faxes at C.I.E. (Fax Number 386-822-8167)
- You must pay \$1.00 per page for sending international faxes; receiving faxes is free
- If someone is sending you a fax to C.I.E., please tell them to make sure your name is on it!
- We will do our best to contact you if you receive a fax at C.I.E., but you may also contact us (x8165) to inquire after a fax if you are expecting to receive one

## 4. Email/Internet

- To access your email online, go to: <http://email.stetson.edu>
- To access from campus, enter “email” on web-browser
- Email addresses will be assigned to you by University IT services after signing user agreement.
- All accounts can have their passwords changed by going to: <http://alpha.stetson.edu/changepass.html>

## Forms of Identification

There are many forms of identification that you may need to have and carry with you. Some identification (ID) is used to obtain other forms of ID, so read the required

documents carefully. Consider your purposes for having each form of identification. Remember that some are a “photo ID” requiring a picture to be taken of you.

*\*Indicates ID is issued by a U.S. government agency*

1. **Stetson Student ID:** Stetson requires that all students obtain and carry this ID card regardless of whether the student has a meal plan or lives off campus. It is a photo ID provided by Stetson University that permits access to computer labs, Hollis Center, theater shows and other university events for free or at a discount. When you buy a meal plan from the university, you use your card to purchase the food from university restaurants. Also, local stores and many movie theaters will offer student discounts when you show your Stetson ID.
2. **State of Florida Driver’s License \*** This photo ID is issued by the state of Florida when you present yourself as a capable driver along with proper identification materials at the State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Since it is government issued, it provides proof of your age, address, birth date etc. Call the DeLand office of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle (386) 736-5326 or see Web site: [www.hsmv.state.fl.us/html/dlnew.html](http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/html/dlnew.html) for more information.
3. **State of Florida Photo ID \*:** This photo ID is also issued by the state of Florida when you present yourself with proper identification. Since it is government issued, it provides proof of your age, address, birth date etc. Call the DeLand office of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle (386) 736-5326 or see Web site: [www.hsmv.state.fl.us/html/dlnew.html](http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/html/dlnew.html) for more information.
4. **Social Security Card \*:** The U.S. federal government issues this card and the number printed on the card. The Social Security Number (SSN, “your social”) serves many identification purposes, such as a tax identification number, which is required for on-campus employment. It is also used for filing your income tax with the U.S. government Internal Revenue Service (IRS). See ISA for more information.
  - A social security number can only be obtained if you have secured an on-campus job, or have been approved for need-based work permit, CPT, or OPT.
  - Documents required: passport (issued at least one year ago), current I-94, I-20 or DS-2019, evidence of full-time attendance (J-1, depending on category, may require authorization letter

### Laws and Consequences

As a student at Stetson University in Deland Florida, you are subject to the laws of the U.S., State of Florida, and the City of Deland, and the County of Volusia. Your

Connections, Campus Life Handbook & Calendar will offer more detailed information of the laws described below.

1. **DRUG USE** : Illicit drug purchase, possession and use are a crime under state and federal law. Illicit drugs include, but are not limited to marijuana, cocaine, heroine, ecstasy, methamphetamines etc. Consequences for use, possession and/or intent to sell vary in severity, ranging from fines and probation to imprisonment.
2. **ALCOHOL USE:** Laws prohibit a variety of alcohol related conduct, including the purchase, possession, and consumption of alcohol by any person less than 21 years of age. Another law that many people are not familiar with is that no person (no matter what age) shall have an open can, bottle, keg or other container of any alcohol or non-intoxicating beer in any public place or while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.

**NOTE – Violations of these laws are punishable by fines, imprisonment or both.**

- Stetson University allows consumption of alcohol on campus under certain guidelines including:
  - ⊙ In private dorms by students of legal drinking age
  - ⊙ IN approved common areas of Greek Houses under certain guidelines
  - ⊙ In areas designated for social functions
  - ⊙ Alcohol cannot be consumed or possessed in any outdoor are of campus, in any classroom, lab or office
  - ⊙ No alcoholic beverages can be sold on Stetson campus
  - ⊙ Certain areas are designated as alcohol free

3. **Driving:** Please refer to the Web site below:

- Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles  
<http://www.hsmv.sate.fl.us/>

**NOTE - If you are arrested for any reason, contact the International Student Advisor as soon as possible!**

# Finances: From Banking to Taxes

## Banking Basics

1. **Checking Accounts:** A checking account, called a "current account" in many countries, is a convenient way to pay your bills and to pay for large purchases. A canceled check serves as a legal receipt for bills paid. To open an account, go to the bank of your choice and the receptionist will direct you to someone who can describe that bank's services and charges, if any. You will be required to present your passport or other photo ID when you open your account.
2. **Checks:** After you open a checking account, you will be given numbered checks preprinted with your name, address, account number and perhaps your telephone and driver's license number. You may then write checks against the balance in your account. When the check is received at the bank, the amount is deducted from your balance. You will also be given a check register in which to record all checks written and deposits made. This allows you to keep a running balance of your checking account. It is important to keep a record of how much you spend and how much you have in the bank. If your checks are lost or stolen, notify the bank immediately. Remember that dates in the United States are written in the format mm/dd/yyyy. To avoid confusion, get into the habit of spelling out the month.
  - It is a serious matter to write a check without having sufficient funds in your checking account. If you write checks for more than the amount of your account balance, your account will be "overdrawn" and your check will be returned to the person or business to which you owe the amount of the check. You will also be charged a "returned check" fee by both the bank and the business. Fees are at least \$15.00. You must immediately "cover" the check by paying the person to whom you wrote the check the same amount in cash, plus the returned check fee. If you do not cover the check, you can be placed under arrest and/or fined. You may also be reported to a credit agency and some businesses may no longer accept your checks.
3. **Emergency Funds:** There might be a time where you will need money sent to you in case of an emergency and perhaps a bank wire is not possible. One way to do so is via Western Union. Visit <https://wvmt.westernunion.com>
4. **Banking:** Banks provide many services, including checking and savings accounts, 24-hour Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs), foreign currency exchange, traveler's checks, and money orders.

- Home bank account-vs.-U.S. bank account
  - ⊙ It may be more convenient to keep bank account in home country and use debit cards to access money
  - ⊙ Contact your home country bank and see if this would be more convenient than opening an account in the United States
  
- DeLand Area Banks (Use handout to help you choose a bank and an account)
  - ⊙ Bank of America
  - ⊙ Suntrust
  - ⊙ Wachovia
  
- Typical Banking Hours
  - ⊙ From 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday
  - ⊙ From 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Friday
  - ⊙ Some banks are also open from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. on Saturday
  
- Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)
  - ⊙ Very convenient "24 hour banking"
  - ⊙ There is usually no fee to use your own bank's ATM machine
  - ⊙ If you use another bank's ATM machine, you may be charged twice (once by your bank, and once by the bank who owns the ATM machine you are using)
  - ⊙ There is a Wachovia ATM located on campus in the CUB

### Finding a Bank in Deland

In choosing a bank, you should balance convenience of accessing the bank versus the cost of banking.

#### **1. Bank of America**

- Contact: (386) 943-6009
- What you need:
  - ⊙ 1 primary ID: a national passport, US driver's license, Mexican consulate card;
  - ⊙ 1 secondary ID: a bank card like a credit/debit card with a *Visa, MasterCard* logo (anything that shows it is official). Stetson ID with a picture will also do;
  - ⊙ 25 dollars fee to open student checking account.
- What you get:
  - ⊙ account has direct deposit;
  - ⊙ free checking;
  - ⊙ no minimum balance must be maintained.

#### **2. First Union = Wachovia (Wachovia merged with First Union)**

- Contact: (386) 738-8800
- What you need:
  - ⊙ national passport;
  - ⊙ document showing where you live (at Stetson and abroad);
  - ⊙ opening deposit of 100 dollars (this is not a fee but a deposit that you don't lose).
- What you get:
  - ⊙ no minimum balance required (but keep at least \$1 in account because at \$0 account closes automatically);
  - ⊙ if account is closed within 6 months, there is a 25 dollar charge.

### 3. Suntrust

- Contact: (386) 738-9477
- What you need:
  - ⊙ a passport;
  - ⊙ another "appropriate" ID with a picture (your Stetson ID or driver's license will do);
  - a letter from your homeland bank stating you can handle a bank account.
- What you get:
  - ⊙ student checking account is free (no fee to open it);
  - ⊙ no minimum balance must be maintained (but keep at least \$1 dollar to avoid account cancellation (like Wachovia).

## Building Credit

Your credit history can make or break you when trying to convince lenders you're a good risk. Without a good credit history, it's hard to get new credit. But without credit, it's tough to build a good credit history. Every day, people take steps that establish and improve their image in the eyes of lenders. So can you. Here's what you need to do:

1. **Open checking and savings accounts.** Having these bank accounts establishes you as part of the financial mainstream. Lenders want to know you have a checking account available to pay bills, and a savings account indicates you're putting aside something for the future.
2. **Apply for department store and gasoline cards.** These are usually easier to get than major bank credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard.
3. **Consider taking out a small personal loan from your local bank or credit union and paying the money back over time.** The bank may require you to put up some collateral -- such as the same amount you're borrowing, deposited into a

savings account. But the loan, if reported to the credit bureaus, can still help build your credit history. Make sure that it will be reported before you borrow the money.

4. **Apply for a secured credit card.** These work something like the loan described above: You deposit a certain amount at a bank, and in return you're given a Visa or MasterCard with a credit limit about equal to the amount you deposited. You can find a list of secured cards at Bankrate.com (see link at left under Related Sites). Avoid any card that charges a big upfront fee for processing your application or a high annual fee.
5. **Once you've got credit, use it right.**
  - Charge small amounts on each card -- but never more than you can pay off each month. You need to use credit regularly to establish your credit history, but there's usually no advantage to paying interest on those charges.
  - Once you've been approved for one card or loan, don't rush out and apply for several more. Applying for too much credit will hurt, rather than help, your score. Most people need only one or two bank cards, a gasoline card and a department store card, acquired over a year or more, to start a solid credit history.
  - Pay your bills on time, all the time. This includes household bills such as utilities and telephone as well as your credit card bills and loans. Late payments on any of these accounts can wind up in your credit report, and can really hurt your credit score, the three-digit number widely used by lenders to evaluate your creditworthiness.
  - Don't max out your credit cards. In fact, don't even come close. Try to avoid using more than 30% or so of the credit you have available to you -- even less, if you can. Your credit score measures the difference between the credit available to you and what you're actually using. The smaller that gap, the more it hurts your score. Lenders will worry that you're becoming overextended and won't be able to pay your bills if you charge too much.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to obtain a credit card without a social security number. Talk to your bank in the United States and see if there are any steps they can take to help in this process. If this is not possible, then speak with major credit companies back in your home country (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) and see how it might be possible to transfer your credit history from abroad to the United States.

## Taxes

1. **Sales Tax:** Florida sales tax is 6% and applies to most items that you purchase such as clothing and electronics and clearly marked on your receipt. Some counties in Florida add 1% to this, making it a total of 7%. So be aware that sales tax may differ county by county. You will notice that the sales tax is added on to the price of an item at the time of purchase. Therefore, the amount you must pay will be higher than the amount on the price tag.
2. **Income Tax:** All F-1, J-1, and M-1 students, even those with no U.S. income, are expected to file a tax return every year. Sources of U.S. income may include on-campus employment, scholarships, practical or academic training, and any compensation received for labor. Foreign students do not have to pay taxes on interest paid to them by U.S. banks. Note that "income" is not limited to wages paid to you in cash, but also includes that portion of your scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship that is applied to your housing and meal expenses. The portion applied to your tuition fees, books, and supplies is not counted as income. Once you have filed and *income tax return*, you have begun a tax record with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which can benefit you in the future.

Although C.I.E. staff members do not give tax advice, we do arrange a Tax Workshop for International Students each spring to help you with your tax questions. Do not interpret the information presented here as individual tax advice.

3. **Yearly Filing of Tax Return Forms:** Everyone in the United States, regardless of immigration status, is responsible each year for submitting a complete and accurate income-tax statement to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), an agency of the U.S. Treasury Department. Americans call the process "filing a tax return." Foreign students, regardless of whether or not they work or earn income while in the United States, must file an appropriate return each year.
  - In the United States, it is each individual's personal responsibility to meet his or her tax obligations; the government will not do it for you, but it will penalize you if you do not do it yourself. You are responsible for:
    - ⊙ Helping your employer estimate how much of your income should be "*withheld*" (or deducted) from your wages for the purpose of paying taxes. Your employer pays those amounts directly to the U.S. Treasury on your behalf.
    - ⊙ In your annual tax return, you must reconcile your account with the government to verify that you paid the right amount over the course of the year.

- ⊙ If you paid too much, you may claim a refund, which will be paid promptly unless the government disagrees with your calculations.
- You must file a tax return even if you did not have income from a U.S. source, just to keep the government records straight.
- Social Security Tax:
  - ⊙ Students often have questions about payment of a U.S. tax called *Social Security tax* or *FICA*. FICA is a taxation system that provides benefits to retired workers. Most F, M, and J students are not subject to this tax, but J-2 dependents with work permission are.
- Important Dates:
  - ⊙ **April 15:** The last day on which residents and nonresidents who have earned wages from U.S. sources may file their U.S. federal income-tax returns.
  - ⊙ **June 15:** The last day on which nonresident students and their dependents that have no wage income from U.S. sources may file their 104ONR-EZ or 104ONR returns.

# Safety and Security

## Personal and Property Safety

Stetson is located in a small town, Deland, Florida, which has very few violent crimes, especially when compared to large cities. However, international students have little knowledge of the area and may mistakenly feel overly secure. Crime and violence may be much different than you anticipate. You will find that crimes such as theft are more common than violent crimes, and that there are simple precautions you can take that will easily prevent crime.

### 1. **Campus:**

- Lock your residence hall room and your car
- Walk with a friend after dark
- Do not leave personal belongings unattended, such as in the cafeteria or library
- Lock your bicycle
- Take advantage of campus security escort services at night
- Let someone know where you are going
- Avoid studying in empty classrooms
- Remain alert
- Trust your instincts

### 2. **Deland:**

- Lock your apartment and car
- Lock windows, even if you are at home
- Do not leave windows open unless you can monitor them
- Try to carry small amounts of cash
- Be aware of your surroundings when using the ATM
- Don't share your personal information such as address, bank card PIN, or Social Security Number
- Walk with a friend after dark
- Record serial numbers of expensive items, and store in a safe place in case they are stolen
- Write your name and passport number in your textbooks
- Try not to park in deserted areas or in unlit parking lots
- Remain alert

3. **Traveling:** We hope that each one of you will have at least one opportunity to travel around and see the sites in the United States. However, remember, there are some safety differences between big cities and small towns. Observe the following for safety:
  - Make sure that someone knows where you are going.
  - Keep your passport and immigration documents with you at all times. This is proof of your legal status.
  - Use a money belt for anything you would not want to lose. Sleep with it, even in hostels or hotels. And NEVER leave luggage unattended, even for a moment.
  - When taking the train, choose compartments with people in them.
  - Note the location of emergency equipment on any sort of vehicle.
  - Do not fall asleep on short trips. You could wind up inadvertently taking a long ride.
  - Do not stand on the edge of a train or metro platform.
  - Keep your wallet in a side pocket/keep your purse closed. When in large crowds, carry your backpack in front of you. If you put it down, even for a moment, put your foot through the strap.
  - If someone is bothering you, inform the driver or train operator.
  - Beware of scams and keep an eye open for potential problems.
  - Make use of lockers or safes in hostels/hotels.
  - Buy a chain bicycle lock and use it to secure your luggage to racks or poles on trains and buses. Usually the presence of the lock itself will be enough of a deterrent to thieves.
  - Do NOT hitchhike. While accepting rides from strangers in your home country may be an acceptable means of travel, it is not safe to do so in the USA.

### Dealing with Emergencies

1. **University Public Safety:** Campus Public Safety Officers are on campus and are there to secure the safety of students. The Public Safety Office is open 24 hours a day, every day, all year. They offer many services, including:
  - Emergency Phones (21) throughout campus (blue light above phone) to be used in emergencies only.
  - Escorts are available to accompany individuals to their destination after dark. Call Ext. 7300 to request an escort.
2. **Emergency Phone Numbers:**
  - The national emergency phone number is 911. Dial this number from any phone and you will immediately reach assistance in an emergency. USE ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY.

- If you are on campus and have an emergency first dial Public Safety at 7300.
- If you dial 911 from a cell phone make sure that you know your location for emergency vehicles to know how to find you.
- Make sure to contact your International Student Advisor in a timely manner of your emergency at extension 7012.
- If you cannot contact the International Student Advisor, please call the C.I.E. at extension 8165.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers by your dorm room phone. Be sure that someone you trust can contact your family in case of an emergency by giving a copy of your family's phone numbers.

## Health Concerns and Insurance

### On-Campus Services

1. **University Counseling Services:** The Counseling Center is committed to providing comprehensive emotional and mental health services for students dealing with *personal, social, academic* or *career* concerns. The Counseling Center strives to help students achieve a more satisfying educational and life experience at Stetson. The Counseling Center services are free of charge to all registered students. To begin counseling you first schedule an appointment for an initial session called an *intake*. An *intake* session consists of gathering background and current information to define and help us understand the problem or concern. To schedule an appointment please stop by or call the Counseling Center at (386) 822-8900.
2. **Student Health Services:** Student Health Services (SHS) is an outpatient clinic with a doctor, four nurses and a consulting pharmacist on staff to care for the health of university students. Students are seen on a walk in basis by the nurse but by appointment to see the doctor. Visits to SHS are free (service included in Stetson tuition and fees), but students are charge for certain supplies, medication, and laboratory tests. Students must complete a medical history record. When seeking medical care, students must bring their health insurance card with them (and prescription card, if applicable). SHS is located across from the Hollis Center on Bert Fish Drive. Hours open: 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. Please contact SHS for holiday hours. For emergency medical care on-campus, you can call Stetson Public Safety at x7300.

### Health Insurance

The U.S. has a fee-for-service health care system. This is vastly different from many other countries where health care is socialized, or paid in part by the government. Health care is extremely expensive, and since it is not socialized or organized under a national health care system, insurance is the only way to ensure affordable care when it is needed. Insurance is organized and sold by independent and private companies. Arranging and paying for health care in the U.S. is solely your responsibility so please read the information below. The complicated information may indeed be “foreign” to many of our international students, but remember that your ISA can offer some assistance and suggestions.

1. **Premium:** Once you have collected information on several different health insurance plans, you’ll need to compare the similarities and differences. Some plans may require you to pay the *premium*, the price to purchase and maintain

the insurance, in full before policy effective date. Others may require monthly payments.

2. **Deductible, Co-Pay or Co-Insurance:** To seek medical care, you may need to pay a *deductible*, *co-pay* or *co-insurance*. A *deductible* is an amount that you pay before your insurance pays. For example, if the deductible is \$500, you will have to pay the first \$500, and the insurance company will pay the remainder. Some insurance plans actually set different deductibles for doctor's visits, prescriptions, emergency room visits, surgeries etc. They can also have a deductible for each separate injury or sickness.

- A *co-pay* is typically an amount that you are required to pay for each doctor's office visit or for each treatment. For example, if your insurance requires a \$20 co-pay, you pay the doctor's office \$20 each time you visit, and the doctor's office charges your insurance company for the remainder of the cost of your visit.
- *Co-insurance*, on the other hand, is typically a percentage. For example, if your total doctor's bill is \$100 and your insurance requires you to pay a 10% co-insurance, you must pay the doctor's office \$10, and then the doctor's office will charge the insurance company for the remaining \$90.
- Only go to the Emergency Room or call an ambulance if it is absolutely necessary. The costs can be astronomical for these services and treatments.

3. **Networks:** Most plans require that you receive care from a "network of doctors," often called the *provider network*. This is a list of doctors from which you can choose for healthcare services. Otherwise, they may set a higher deductible, co-pay or co-insurance or not pay for the treatment at all.

- HMO, Health Maintenance Organization, is the name for a type of plan that organizes your health care options under one *primary care physician*, or PCP. Under an HMO, you see your PCP first, and then he/she refers you to specialists that are approved within the HMO network.

A PPO, Preferred Provider Organization, is becoming more common, because you are given more control over the doctors you see (no referral needed), but you are still restricted to the PPO network.

Indemnity or POS (Point of Service), plans are generally more expensive because there is no network, and the insured can see any doctor. Usually, the company reimburses medical expenses, and there is often a limit.

4. **Exclusions :** *Exclusions* are common and vary for each plan type you may choose. They are a list of medical expenses that are not covered. Most plans for international students state that medical care for pre-existing conditions are not

covered, treatment received in your home country, injury sustained as a result of war, suicide, or self-inflicted injury, or treatment which is not medically necessary or which is experimental.

5. **Prescriptions:** Some plans will offer a limited amount of coverage for prescription drugs.
6. **Required Health Insurance:** J exchange visitors are required by law to obtain and maintain health insurance during their stay in the U.S. All students (F and J's) are required by Stetson university to have health insurance while in the U.S. This insurance must meet the following criteria:
  - Medical Benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
  - Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500
  - Expenses associated with medical evacuation of the student to home country of up to \$10,000
  - A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness, which meets other standards specified in the regulations
  - All copies of medical insurance documentation must be given to the C.I.E. within the first month of being at Stetson.

# Understanding Your Immigration Status

## Immigration Definitions

1. **SEVIS:** Acronym for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a system that collects data and monitors student activity in the United States. SEVIS creates an interface between institutions of higher education, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consulates and embassies abroad, and ports of entry. Schools are required to make regular electronic updates in SEVIS throughout each semester on the records of their enrolled students in F-1 and J-1 status, dependents of F-1 and J-1 students, and researchers in J-1 status, and faculty in J-1 status. Included in these electronic updates are enrollment status, change in address, changes in level of study, employment recommendations, and school transfers.
2. **Form I-20:** The Certificate of Visa Eligibility for Nonimmigrant F-1 Student Status is commonly known as the I-20. This is the document issued by a school through SEVIS. This form is then presented by the student to a U.S. consulate abroad to apply for an F-1 Student visa. The I-20 must also be presented to an immigration official upon entry into the U.S. When traveling outside the U.S., students in F-1 status intending to return to the U.S. to continue their education must carry financial documentation and either an initial or recertified I-20. The I-20 and its corresponding electronic updates in SEVIS are a permanent record of the one's activities as a student in the U.S. It is very important for students to keep all I-20's issued to them throughout their student status regardless of how long they stay in the U.S. or how many times they travel abroad. The I-20 is a very important immigration document and students should make a photocopy for their records. If you lose your I-20, please report it to the C.I.E. immediately. Under most circumstances, we can provide you with a replacement form within 3-5 working days.
  - *Your Contract with DHS:* When you received your I-20, you were required to sign it (Item 11) after carefully reading the terms and conditions concerning your admission and stay in the U.S. This is your contract with DHS. By signing this document, you show that you have honestly represented yourself and your intentions for being in the U.S. and have read and understood the conditions by which you will enter and remain in the U.S.
3. **DS 2019:** The Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant J-1o Exchange Visitor Status is commonly known as the form DS-2019. This is the document issued by the program sponsor (Stetson University) through SEVIS for presentation at a U.S. consulate abroad to obtain a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. Those in J-1 status must also present the DS-2019 to an immigration official upon entry into the U.S.

The completion date on the DS-2019 must always be in the future. The DS-2019 is a very important immigration document and students should make a photocopy for their records. If you lose your I-20, please report it to the C.I.E. immediately. Under most circumstances, we can provide you with a replacement form within 3-5 working days.

➤ *Your Contract with DHS:* When you received your DHS, you were required to sign it, after carefully reading the terms and conditions concerning your admission and stay in the U.S. This is your contract with DHS. By signing this document, you show that you have honestly represented yourself and your intentions for being in the U.S. and have read and understood the conditions by which you will enter and remain in the U.S. You also agree to certain rules that may apply to your temporary stay in the U.S., including the Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement and stay/admission/readmission regulations. (For more information about the requirement, contact the ISA)

4. **Visa:** The visa is a stamp in your passport issued by an American Consulate outside of the U.S. It authorizes you to apply for admission into the United States at the port of entry. All international students with the exception of Canadian nationals, requesting F or J immigration status, are required to have a valid visa stamp in their passport at the time of entry into the U.S. Your visa specifies the type of immigration status you will hold, the date until which you may make entries into the U.S., and the number of entries you may make before you must apply for a new visa stamp. The length of validity of each visa type is determined by an agreement between your own country and the U.S. government and is not necessarily tied to the length of your program of study. F-1 or J-1 visa stamps cannot be obtained within the U.S. Application for a new stamp must be made at a U.S. consulate outside the U.S. **The validity period of your visa stamp does not determine the length of time you may remain in the US after you enter.** Your length of stay is determined by the dates on your form I-94 and I-20 or DS-2019.
5. **I-94:** During the flight or immediately upon arrival, you received your white I-94 card. This is a record of nonimmigrant status and permission to stay in the U.S. An immigration officer usually staples it into the passport when you enter the U.S. It shows your immigration status (see below), the date and port of your arrival in the U.S., and the date until which you have permission to stay. The notation D/S indicating “duration of status,” refers to the completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019 given to those who wish to enter the U.S. in student status. The I-94 is also called the Arrival/Departure form because each time you enter the U.S. you receive a new I-94, and each time you leave the U.S. you surrender your I-94. Only in the case of short trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean do you keep your I-94. Be very careful with your I-94. Replacement of the I-94,

while in the U.S., is a long and costly process. We recommend you keep it stapled to your passport.

6. **Legal Immigration Status:** Your immigration status (F-1, J-1, etc) is determined at the time of your entry into the U.S. by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) official at the port of entry and is noted on the form I-94. Your immigration status is generally the same as your entry visa classification. On arrival in the U.S., the immigration official retains the arrival portion of the I-94, notes your immigration status on the departure portion, and staples the I-94 card to your passport, usually to the same page on which the entry via is stamped. Unlike your entry visa, your immigration status may be changed in the U.S. Your legal immigration status must be maintained at all times by obeying the laws governing the status. For F-1 and J-1 students, this means you must attend the school that issued your I-20 or DS-2019, enroll as a full time student at all times, make normal progress toward your degree, transfer legally, and not work illegally.

### Common Immigration Procedures

1. **Transfer between U.S. Institutions:** A student who is in status may transfer from one U.S. educational institution to a new one. To do this, the student's SEVIS record must be transferred from one institution to the other so a new I-20 can be issued. An acceptance letter from the institution you are transferring to is necessary proof to transfer your record. If you plan on transferring to another institution, please come and see your ISA within 2 months of your intended transfer.
2. **Change of Academic Program: Educational Level, Degree, or Major:** Student who wish to change academic programs (such as from undergraduate to graduate) must be sure that the ISA processes a new I-20 or DS-2019. The academic goals noted on your I-20 must be current and correct to maintain status. Please give the ISA at least 5 business days to process a new I-20 for a change in academic program. Please note that if you are changing an academic program from one degree level to another, you must once again provide the necessary documents that demonstrate financial ability to cover expenses while in the United States.
3. **Extension of Stay:** The expiration date in Section 5 of your I-20 must always be in the future to maintain a valid stay in the United States as an F-1 student. If for some valid academic reason you cannot complete your degree by the expiration date in your current I-20, you must apply for an Extension of Stay. Failure to apply for an Extension of Stay prior to the expiration on your I-20 will result in a violation of your legal student status.

- You must apply to the International Student Advisor for the extension before the program completion date on your current I-20 and provide updated proof of finances.
  - You must have continuously maintained legal student status during your academic career.
  - The delay in completion is caused by compelling academic or medical reasons.
4. **Reduced Course Load:** Although it is required for all international students to carry a full-course of study, there are certain circumstances when a student MIGHT be allowed to drop below full-time enrollment. If you are facing medical or academic difficulties you must **first** contact your ISA to discuss your options and see if a reduced course load is a feasible option. **DO NOT DROP BELOW FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT BEFORE SPEAKING WITH YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR!**
5. **Reinstatement:** Reinstatement is a process in which you apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to be restored to legal student status after a violation. Reinstatement is for individuals who, through no fault of their own or through circumstances beyond their control, have violated the terms of their immigration status and can show that not being reinstated would cause a significant hardship. The student also has to verify that they have not worked illegally. Students have the best chance of approval if applying within five months of violating status.

You will need to schedule an appointment to meet with the International Student Advisor if you need to apply for reinstatement.

### Maintaining Immigration Status

F-1/J-1 visa students must comply with all requirements imposed by the USCIS. Briefly, you must follow these ten regulations:

1. F-1/J-1 students must check-in with the C.I.E. and provide the C.I.E. with copies of all immigration related documents upon arriving on campus for registration in SEVIS.
2. F-1/J-1 students must register for a full course of study each term (except summer term when attendance is optional). An undergraduate student enrolled for 12 or more credit hours of coursework and a graduate for 9 or more credit hours is a full time student.
3. F-1 students must make normal progress towards completing the degree program as noted on your I-20. Normal progress is defined as the successful completion

of twelve (12) hours per semester and attaining a cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.00 or above.

4. F-1/J-1 students may accept on-campus employment not to exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session or 39 hours per week during breaks and holidays.
5. You must not accept off-campus employment during your first year at Stetson, and after that, only with permission from the USCIS.
6. F-1 visa students must attend the school specified on the I-20 for at least one semester before initiating any transfer procedures.
7. F-1/J-1 students must make certain that all information on the I-20/DS-2019 is current and complete. If anything is incorrect, contact this department immediately.
8. Abide by rules requiring disclosure of information regarding criminal activity or special registration.
9. You must report any change of address to the C.I.E. within 10 days of moving.
10. You must keep your passport valid at all times.

### **Immigration Problems**

A few words of advice you should consider before dealing with the USCIS:

- Never go to an USCIS office without first consulting with the International Student Advisor.
- The International Student Advisor is the first person to contact when you have any problems with your immigration status.
- Do not rely on your friends as a source of advice on immigration matters when faced with serious problems.
- Do talk with the International Student Advisor about the possibility of consulting an attorney who specializes in immigration law.



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRACT

*All International students are required by U.S. law to abide by immigration regulations throughout their stay in the U.S. The Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship Services (BCIS) admits international students to the U.S. for the sole purpose of being a full-time student. Participation by students in any other activity, from employment to vacation, is considered to be a privilege and is only allowable in accordance with strict BCIS rules. When you entered the U.S., you accepted responsibility to abide by the conditions of your nonimmigrant (student) status. Failure to take appropriate measures to maintain your lawful nonimmigrant status could result in penalties for violations of immigration law. Penalties can be severe and include deportation and ten-year bars from reentry to the U.S. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about immigration rules. The Center for International Education can provide international students with the necessary information to maintain status. However, it is the student and not the university who is ultimately responsible for remaining aware of and abiding by the BCIS rules and maintaining legal student status.*

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

**Passport:** The passport is the legal document issued by your country of citizenship. It must be kept valid at all times during your stay in the U.S., and must be valid at least 6 months into the future to re-enter the U.S. or to apply for a visa. Your passport can usually be renewed through your country's Embassy or one of its Consulates in the U.S.

**Form I-20 or Form DS 2019:** The I-20 (for those with F-1 status) or DS 2019 (for those with J-1 status) is the document issued by an agency or institution which you must present to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad to obtain a visa, and which you present to immigration officials to enter the U.S. each time you travel abroad and come back. It must be signed for travel on page 3 (I-20) or on page 2 (DS 2019) every 6 months in order for you to be able to depart and reenter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status.

**I-94 Card:** The I-94 card is the white card, which you complete before passing U.S. Immigration inspection officials upon entrance into the U.S. This is the document that authorizes your presence in the U.S. as a student, for a specified period of time, in a specified program of study, at a specified institution. Two dates appear on the I-94; the date of your entrance into the U.S., and the date of expiration of your permission to stay. For F-1 and J-1 visa holders, the expiration date is usually D/S (duration of status), which corresponds to the I-20 or DS 2019 date of program completion. The number at the top of the I-94 card that you receive upon your initial entry is called your "Admission Number."

**Visa:** The U.S. entry visa is a stamp or sticker on a page of your passport, which permits you to enter the U.S. Students will have either an F-1 or J-1 entry visa. The visa may expire while you are in the U.S. **You cannot and need not renew it while you are in the U.S.** A new entry visa will be required if the original expires, and you want to travel outside and then wish to re-enter the U.S. in legal student status.

**YOU MUST ALWAYS:**

1. Maintain a valid passport throughout your stay in the U.S.
2. Attend the school whose name appears on your Form I-20 or Form DS 2019.
3. Be registered as a full-time student. You cannot drop below this except under specific circumstances, which must be authorized *in advance* by your international student advisor.
4. Keep your “Certificate of Eligibility” (Form I-20 or DS 2019) valid at all times, and apply for an extension of stay one month before the document expires. You must get a new Form I-20 if you change your major.
5. Do **one** of the following within **60 days** of completion or termination of the program of study **for F-1 students, within 30 days for J-1 students:**
  - a. leave the U.S.
  - b. get a new “Certificate of Eligibility” for a new school or program and enroll in classes for the next available term
  - c. change to another immigration status
6. Be sure that the International Student Advisor signs your Form I-20 or DS 2019 before you travel outside the U.S. Allow at least 48 hours for this process.
7. Maintain health insurance that meets specific requirements. All international students studying in the United States are required to have health insurance.
8. Keep your international student file current. New students must report to the Center for International Education within two weeks of the semester start to complete their file.
9. Always notify the Center for International Education of a change of mailing address, e-mail address, or telephone number immediately.
10. Carefully read e-mail messages sent by C.I.E., and adhere to all C.I.E. deadlines.

**YOU MUST NEVER:**

1. **WORK OFF CAMPUS** unless you have the necessary authorization printed and signed on your Form I-20 (letter for J-1) from your International Student Advisor.
2. **WORK ON CAMPUS** more than 20 hours per week while school is in session
3. Take a leave of absence, drop below a full-time student course load (12 credit hours a semester for undergraduates and 9 credit hours per semester for graduates), start an internship, curricular training, or practical training without ***FIRST*** receiving SEVIS approval on your I-20 or DS 2019 from your International Student Advisor.

*Note - once you have completed or terminated your program, or have failed to maintain legal student status, you can no longer legally enter the U. S. with your I-20 or DS 2019 form and the international student advisor can no longer sign those forms.*

In addition, all international students are required to complete and submit U.S. tax form to the federal government every year regardless of whether or not they had any U.S. source of income.

I have read and understand my responsibilities as outlined above.

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Student Signature

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Date

## Employment in the United States

Students entering the United States on an F or J visa have certain restrictions on the location and type of employment they are able to accept. Below are outlined the circumstances and procedures in obtaining legal work authorization with an F or J student visa. While USCIS regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 or J-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. You should therefore consult with your foreign student adviser before taking up any employment.

### On-Campus Employment

1. **USCIS Regulations:** You may work on campus provided:
  - You are maintaining F-1 status
  - You do not work more than a total of 20 hours per while school is in session
  - You do not displace a U. S. resident.
  - You may be employed full time during holidays and vacation periods, including summer vacations, provided you are eligible and intend to register for the next school term.
  - The 20-hour-per-week limit on your employment while school is in session applies to all types of on-campus employment
2. **Stetson Regulations:**
  - You are not allowed to work on-campus if you have a full scholarship
  - You must have a Social Security to Human Resources by December 1<sup>st</sup>
  - To obtain on-campus employment (university employment) you must speak with Glenna Roof at extension 7104.
    - ⦿ **Please note:** on-campus employment is limited and preference is given to upper classmen. You should not rely on having on-campus employment to subsidize your income while in the U.S.

### F-1 Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a work permit option available to F-1 students when work experience is required for internship and/or academic credit. Curricular Practical training is intended to give students relevant work experience in their field of study. Examples of CPT are internships and practicum.

1. **Conditions for Curricular Practical Training:**
  - You must have been in legal F-1 status for nine consecutive months. However, graduate students in programs that require immediate participation in internship or practicum are not subject to this requirement.

- Employment must be an integral part of your degree program by being required and/or for credit.

## 2. **Additional Important Information:**

- Students will need to check with their academic departments regarding availability of academic credit for internships or independent studies.
- Students who have failed to maintain legal F-1 status and who make a new entry to the U.S. to regain legal status are not eligible for practical training until they have maintained legal F-1 status for nine consecutive months from the new date of entry.
- Students involved in part-time (20 hours per week or less) CPT during the academic year must also maintain full-time student status.
- The time you spend on CPT will not be deducted from the 12 months allotted for Optional Practical Training UNLESS you use the 12 months or more of full-time CPT
- See *Finances: From Banking to Taxes* for more information for responsibilities of international students for declaring earnings to the IRS.

## 3. **Completed applications must include:**

- A letter from your employer stating the duties of the job, beginning and ending date of your employment, and supervisor's name, title, address, and phone number
- CPT application with authorization from academic advisor
- Complete SEVIS Release form
- Proof of enrollment in course credit for internship
- Most recent I-20 form

4. **Note:** You cannot begin employment until you have received authorization on your I-20 form the CIE. You must also be careful not to continue employment past the date authorized on your I-20 unless you apply and are granted an extension of your permission to work by your academic advisor and the ISA.

Please make an appointment with the ISA for more information.

## **F-1 Optional Practical Training**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to a practical work experience off campus. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) issues Optional Practical Training for temporary employment directly related to your major area of study. The maximum amount of time granted to work in F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) status is 12 months for an undergraduate degree and an additional 12 months for a graduate degree. You may use

some or all of the available 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT) during your course of study or save the full twelve months to use after you complete your degree. However, new USCIS regulations require that all applications for OPT must be submitted before completion of the degree. This authorization can take up to 120 days to obtain, so it is important to apply well in advance of the date you wish to begin employment.

### 1. Eligibility Requirements

- You must have been in full-time student status for at least one full academic year.
- You must be maintaining valid F-1 status at the time of the application.
- You must intend to work in a position directly related to your major field of study.

### 2. Application Procedure:

Application packets are available at the Center for International Education. The following documents are required for the application:

- \$180 check or money order made payable to the USCIS
- Pictures
- Completed I-765 form
- Completed SEVIS Release Form
- Immigration documents
- Copy of passport expiration page, biographical data and picture page
  - Copy of I-94- FRONT & BACK
  - Copies of all previous I-20's or DS-2019's- FRONT & BACK
  - Copies of any Change of Immigration Status Approval Forms
  - Copies of any previous work permits
  - Copy of Visa

### 3. Final Steps:

Return to the CIE after submitting your completed application to sign your new I-20 and pick up your application for mailing. Within 30 days of mailing, the CIE should receive a receipt stating the average processing time and your file number. This information will be forwarded to you. Finally, when the EAD (work permit card) is received, the CIE will contact you for mailing instructions.

See *Finances: From Banking to Taxes* for more information for responsibilities of international students for declaring earnings to the IRS.

For more information, visit the International Student Advisor and pick up an OPT application.

## F-1 Off-Campus Work Permit Due to Severe Economic Hardship

If you are experiencing severe economic hardship based on an unforeseen change in your financial circumstances, you may submit an application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) for permission to work off campus. You will be required to document the change in your financial situation and your economic need. Examples of changes in financial circumstances are tuition increases of 30 percent or more, loss of a sponsor, severe illness in the family, etc. Permission to work off-campus based on severe economic hardship allows you to work in any type of job.

1. **Limits** : Limits imposed on off-campus work are:
  - Students authorized for off-campus employment by the USCIS may not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. During vacations and breaks, students may work full-time if not enrolled in classes.
  - Remember you can only work a total of twenty hours per week while school is in session. So, if you have a campus job for 10 hours per week, you may only work off campus for 10 hours. Scholarship service hours count toward this total as well.
  
2. **Eligibility Requirements:** You are eligible to apply for off-campus work permission based on severe economic hardship if you meet the following conditions:
  - You have been in F-1 status for a minimum of nine months
  - You are currently in legal status and carry a full course of study
  - You have made a good effort to find employment on campus
  - You are able to demonstrate unforeseen severe economic hardship
  - You are in good academic standing (Grade Point Average is at least 2.0)
  
3. **The following documents are required for the application:**
  - \$180 check or money order made payable to the USCIS
  - Pictures (See page 3)
  - Completed I-765 form (Page 5)
  - Student letter stating need (See Page 6)
  - Documentation of economic hardship
  - Completed SEVIS Release Form (Page 7)
  - Immigration documents
    - ⊙ Copy of passport expiration page, biographical data and picture page
    - ⊙ Copy of visa page
    - ⊙ Copy of I-94- FRONT & BACK
    - ⊙ Copies of all previous I-20's- FRONT & BACK
    - ⊙ Copies of any Change of Immigration Status Approval Forms
    - ⊙ Copies of any previous work permits

- 4. **Final Steps:** Return to the CIE 3-5 days after submitting your application to sign your new I-20 and pick up your application for mailing. Within 30 days of mailing, the CIE should receive a receipt stating the average processing time and your file number. This information will be forwarded to you. Finally, when the EAD (work permit card) is received, the ISA will contact you for mailing instructions. Please see *Finances: From Banking to Taxes* for more information for responsibilities of international students for declaring earnings to the IRS.

# Traveling in, out and to the United States

## Traveling Outside The U.S

If you plan to travel outside the United States, reentry on an F-1 or J-1 visa requires a valid I-20 or DS-2019, passport, and F-1 or J-1 entry visa stamp.

If you need a new entry visa stamp, see the visa renewal section of this handbook.

1. **Entry at the Border** : U.S. Customs will require that you present your I-20 or DS-2019 along with your financial documentation as you reenter. They may also want to review any previous I-20 or DS-2019 documents.
2. **If You Already Have a Valid Visa Stamp**: If your current entry visa stamp will be valid at the time you reenter the United States, you will not need to visit the U.S. Consulate. For reentry, you will need a valid I-20 or DS-2019 that reflects your current program, as well as a completion-of-studies date that is in the future. In addition, the USCIS requires a signature for reentry on page 4 of the I-20 or the back of the DS-2019 form. This signature should be made just prior to travel.
  - **Note**: The reentry signature is **valid for 6 months only** and must be renewed if it has expired or will expire soon. Also, if your entry visa stamp was issued for a school other than Stetson University, you should be prepared to present documentary evidence of your finances to the USCIS officials when you reenter. To make a request for a reentry signature, present your I-20 to the International Student Office at least two weeks before departure.
3. **If You Are Planning a Trip to Canada or Mexico**: If you wish to visit Canada or Mexico, find out whether you need a visitor's visa to enter that country. To do so, visit [www.embassy.org](http://www.embassy.org) and click on Canada. To reenter the United States, you will need a valid I-20 or DS-2019 with a current signature from the International Student Advisor. You are not required to have a valid U.S. reentry visa stamp in your passport if your visit to Canada or Mexico is for less than 30 days, unless you are a citizen of Iraq, Iran, or Libya.
4. **If You Have OPT Authorization**: If you are currently pursuing Optional Practical Training and plan to reenter the United States, you must present the following documentation for reentry
  - A valid I-20 that has been signed for reentry within the last 6 months
  - Passport with valid entry visa stamp, unless you are reentering from Canada or Mexico (see previous),
  - The Optional Practical Training Card
  - A letter from your current employer stating you are returning to RESUME employment

**NOTE** - If you are on Optional Practical Training and need a new entry visa stamp, be aware of the risk that your visa request may be denied. Consulates do not like to issue new visas for OPT.

### **Travel Checklist**

Verify expiration dates of passport and visa. Make plans to renew if necessary.

Let someone know of your travel plans—roommate, RA, or ISA

Pack your passport, I-94 and I-20/DS2019

Give copy of passport, I-94, I-20 and visa to your “travel buddy” or pack in different location than your original documents.

Pack your insurance card and be sure you understand your coverage.

Have the following emergency contact information readily available:

Embassy or Consulate for your home country

Family contact information

CIE and Stetson University contact information

5. If traveling by air, follow Federal Aviation Administration regulations regarding items prohibited on carry-on and checked luggage and check –in times.
6. If you are traveling within the United States, immigration officials encourage international students to carry all identification documents at all times (passport, visa, I-20). For practical purposes consider carrying photocopies while placing your passport and other documents in a safe place.
7. Read Practical Concerns-transportation, and safety and security sections.

# Cultural Adjustment

Leaving your home country and culture is an exciting experience. You will encounter new people, cultures, ways of life, and much more. This can be disorienting, uncomfortable, and even shocking. Some compare the experience to jumping into cold water; it is a sudden shock, but you can acclimate and come out of the experience with a refreshed perspective.

There are four stages to cultural adjustment - one of which you may be familiar, culture shock - **CULTURE SHOCK IS NOT A SINGLE EVENT**. Rather it is a cycle of personal readjustment you experience when you encounter challenges to your own cultural beliefs, values and behaviors. Most individuals find that they experience one stage longer than others, or they actually re-experience one or more stages. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the stages and you will find a better understanding of how you will ultimately gain a bicultural perspective.

## Initial Culture Shock

### 1. The Honeymoon Stage

- Feelings of exhilaration and excitement will out-weigh your initial feelings of loneliness and disorientation.
- Anticipation of finally realizing your dream of studying in the U.S.
- Smiling and indicating that you understand your surroundings, when in fact you may not.
- As misunderstandings and confusions increase, you begin to enter the next stage.

### 2. The Hostility Stage

- Periods of frustration, anxiety and anger at:
  - ⊙ College bureaucracy
  - ⊙ Speaking and listening to English all day, everyday
  - ⊙ Disrupted sleep patterns
  - ⊙ Lack of appetite, indigestion
- Rejection of new environment
  - ⊙ Blame of frustrations on "them"
  - ⊙ Excessive fear
  - ⊙ Mistrust of Americans and disillusionment with American values and customs
- Lack of interest and motivation
  - ⊙ Absent from classes
  - ⊙ Isolation from social interaction
- Understanding and appreciating these feelings, as part of your adjustment is essential to moving on to the next stage.

### 3. The Humor Stage

- Adjustment to culture's typical routine
- Begin to relax
- Find humor in minor misunderstandings and mistakes (which caused hostility in previous stages)
- Learning to manage U.S. college and social life
- Making casual friends and working towards lasting friendships
- As you adjust to your life here, you will gain a unique perspective and move into the next stage

### 4. The Home Stage

- Able to retain allegiance to your home culture while also feeling "at home" in the U.S.
- Successful adjustment to norms and standards of the University
- Beginning to understand U.S. values, yet understand that you do not lose your own culture
- Patience and openness
- Overcoming language barriers and being an active student
- Taking initiatives in class and in social life
- Occasional homesickness

### Tips on Adjusting

Make a genuine effort to learn as much as possible about the country and its people, preferably before you leave home. Your expectations should be realistic - remember that you are only going to be in this new culture a short time. - ask yourself what you can accomplish, given the amount of time you will be in the host country. Most importantly, don't isolate yourself; please stop by the office and seek out some help.

1. **Maintain perspective:** Remember that a lot of international students like you have survived their cultural adjustment and overall experience at Stetson University.
2. **Sense of humor:** We all fight the urge to take ourselves much too seriously. You will truly benefit from understanding that we all make mistakes. Sometimes a few small mistakes early are the best way to prevent bigger mistakes later. Find the humor: the small mistakes in the first few weeks can provide you with comic relief for a lifetime.
3. **What are your expectations?** When you experience confusion or frustration, ask yourself, "What did I expect? Why? Was my expectation reasonable?"

4. **Open mind:** The people you meet will be acting according to their own culture and set of values, *not yours*. Meeting other international students and Stetson's U.S. students will expose you to similar yet different ways of doing things.
5. **Learn more about yourself:** Many students who live in a culture different from their own find out more about their own values and attitudes and tend to leave with a broader point of view.
6. **Visit your ISA:** Your ISA may help you find a healthy perspective on your adjustment. You may also be introduced to a more experienced international student that can offer some advice.

### Common Conflicting Values

These are U.S. values that international students commonly find conflicting with their own. Think about what these philosophies or cultural tendencies would mean "through the eyes" of your culture. What do you know about these U.S. values?

1. **Individualism**
  - Person is a separate and unique individual, not representative of family, community or group
  - Self-reliance and independence
  - People's actions often carried out with little reference or concern for others
  - Voicing opinions in groups of peers or superiors
2. **Materialism**
  - Success often measured in monetary terms
  - Emphasis on winning
3. **Consumerism**
  - Abundance of consumer goods
  - Consumer right to complain if treated unfairly or if merchandise is unsatisfactory
  - Incredible offers, discounts to buy, buy, buy
  - Credit easily obtained, but often becomes crippling factor in an American's financial life
  - Buyer *must still* beware!
4. **Privacy**
  - Acceptable and common questions: "Where do you work?," and "What are you doing?"
  - Direct and unacceptable question topics: money, age, sex, views on politics, and religion
  - However, many Americans will volunteer much of this information about themselves, without being questioned.

5. **Social equity**
  - All individuals are equal and expect to be treated equally regardless of gender, race, occupation, handicap or religion.
6. **Time Consciousness/Pace of Life**
  - Americans always seem to be in a hurry – “Hurry up!”
  - Important not to be late for meetings, appointments and class
  - Rushing to eat, eating on the go (Drive-thru restaurants!)
  - Possible origin: Protestant religious heritage of first Pilgrim founders.
7. **Ethnocentrism**
  - Ignorance of world geography and other cultures is common
  - International students may be asked silly or odd questions about their country
  - Possible origin: Geographic size and location. Super-power egoism.
8. **Friendship**
  - Relationships tend to be casual
  - Americans have large circle of acquaintances (casual and friends)
  - Common greetings: “What’s up?” and “Hello, how are you?”
  - Americans seem to create friendships easily, may avoid deep involvement
  - *Possible Origin:* Mobile society
9. **Dating**
  - More informal compared to other cultures
  - A lot of interaction between the sexes
  - Invitation or “date” *does not indicate* interest in future meetings, nor sexual involvement.
  - Honesty and sensitivity may prevent misunderstandings

These values may not be *your* cultural values and you do not have to adopt these values. However, managing to appreciate and respect them as another culture’s values will provide for successful adaptation to U.S. culture.

### **American Culture: Myth and Reality**

You have probably formed your own idea from movies, books and news images of what makes a typical U.S. American. Unfortunately, this does not substitute for the observations and experiences that you will have for yourself. Below are a few myths and realities taken from *NAFSA’s International Student Handbook*. They may help you de-mystify common judgments of Americans and find a more realistic and objective view of American culture.

### 1. **MYTH: Life is easy in the United States**

- **REALITY:** While it is true that the material standard of living in the United States is high, this has not resulted in a leisurely pace of life. Visitors to the United States are often surprised at how hard most Americans work, at their long work hours and short vacations and at the fast pace of American life in general. Even leisure time is often devoted to activities such as sports exercise, or other hobbies that involve intense activity and effort. Many Americans are uncomfortable with true leisure and feel guilty about doing nothing or spending long periods of time relaxing or talking with friends

### 2. **MYTH: America is "the land of the free," so I can do whatever I want there.**

- **REALITY:** Individual freedom is an important American value, but newcomers may find themselves overwhelmed by the legal and bureaucratic restrictions on their activities and confused by the complexities of social interaction. Throughout their 300-year history, Americans have been trying to balance the freedom of the individual with the well-being of society, sometimes with odd results. Often the right of a majority to freedom /row something wins out, as in anti-smoking laws, where the right of nonsmokers to be free of smoke overrides the right of smokers to smoke. International students are often shocked by the number of rules governing their behavior as foreigners, as students, as motorists, as bicyclists—any of the roles they may assume during their stay in the United States. The rules of social behavior in the United States can be equally confusing. There is a strong dose of Puritanism mixed in with the generally laissez-faire American attitude, which makes it difficult to predict how people will behave or react to others' behavior.

Also, in the United States many different cultures exist side by side, which means that values may differ widely from one social group to another and from one individual to another. Sometimes it may seem that no rules apply and that "anything goes," but a newcomer should be wary of making assumptions about what is acceptable, especially in the area of sexual relations.

### 3. **MYTH: Americans are racist/Americans are tolerant.**

- **REALITY:** These contradictory stereotypes exist side by side, and both have elements of truth. In general you need not fear that you will encounter overt racism in the United States, particularly within the university or college community. In regions where there are many immigrants you may find yourself blending in, suffering more from indifference than intolerance. In

other, more isolated and homogeneous areas, you may be an object of curiosity, noticed and welcomed, but perhaps not always understood. Because of America's relative geographical isolation, many Americans are quite ignorant about the rest of the world and may be rather chauvinistic (have a sense of national superiority). This can be irritating, but you will find that hostility toward foreigners is rare. Racial and ethnic prejudice is unfortunately a reality in the United States and occasionally a foreign student experiences hostility, even violence, of this nature. It would be wise to be aware of the tensions that may exist in the communities you visit in the United States, but do not fear that this will be a common or frequent problem. Pay attention to the news, listen to the advice of friends, and perhaps take a class on race relations in the United States. This is a complex issue that reflects many of the paradoxes of American history; be aware also that you may have been influenced by racial stereotyping in American films. Visitors to the United States are sometimes surprised to find that the African-Americans they meet in the United States have nothing in common with the violent stereotype so often projected in the movies.

**4. MYTH: The United States has a classless society.**

- **REALITY:** Although the United States does not have a history or tradition of rigidly defined social classes, distinctions among economic classes in the United States result in de facto social stratification. Although the majority of Americans can be considered to belong to the middle class, there is a small, wealthy upper class and a growing underclass. Still, the American ideal of equal educational opportunity and the belief that hard work and ability should be rewarded make for a society in which upward mobility is still common.

**5. MYTH: Americans are rude and loud.**

- **REALITY:** This is the image of the "ugly American" who, when abroad, demands in loud English to be understood. Although you may find examples of this stereotype on your campus, there will probably be only a few. It is true that Americans are often less inhibited socially than people from some other cultures. It is equally true that directness, or saying what one thinks, is acceptable behavior. Americans value honesty and frankness. They are generally not embarrassed or angered by being told they are wrong, as long as the criticism is stated in a friendly and respectful way. They would generally prefer an honest argument or refusal to polite but insincere agreement. The definition of "rudeness" varies widely from one culture to another. Do not jump to hasty conclusions about the intention behind someone's words or behavior that may seem very rude to you. Someone who

tells you have done something wrong, including your professor, is probably trying to help you, not embarrass or hurt you.

**6. MYTH: All Americans are rich and drive fast cars.**

- REALITY: In the United States, as in any country, there is a wide spectrum of economic status. You may be surprised to find American students at your university who come from very modest means and who struggle daily with money issues. Many American students go deeply into debt to obtain a university degree. Some of the students you meet will, in fact, be rich, but you may find it hard at first to tell the rich from the poor. Even "poor" American students own a lot of things, from cars and computers to stereos and skis. Material goods are easy to acquire in a consumer-oriented, credit-driven society, but they do not necessarily indicate great wealth. A car may be a practical necessity for a student who works long hours after classes or who lives with his or her family in another town.

**7. MYTH: American students are less well prepared academically than students from my country, and I will not have to work very hard in class.**

- REALITY: Some American students are less well prepared academically than others. While it may be tempting to think you will not have much competition in the classroom, rest assured that there are many, many academically prepared and highly competitive American students. Do not underestimate the effect a change in language or a change in classroom style can have on your performance. In general, American students have a lot of experience in test-taking and at expressing their opinions in class. You may come from an academic system that does not emphasize those skills.

**8. MYTH: American professors are casual, sometimes even asking students to address them by their first names.**

- REALITY: It is true that your American professors may ask you to address them by their first name, but this does not mean they do not expect your respect. The way in which courtesy and respect are shown to an American professor may well be different from how they are expressed in your country. Respect in a U.S. classroom includes a willingness to participate in class debate and to ask questions when you do not understand something that has been said. Spend time watching how your American classmates interact with the professors. You will catch on quickly to the unique mix of formality and structure.

**9. MYTH: American students use illegal drugs.**

- REALITY: Some do; most do not.

## Social Taboos

1. **Public Urination:** Urination in public areas such as a street corner or alley may be acceptable socially or even legally in many other countries. In the U.S., it is both illegal and socially unacceptable. Violators could be arrested and prosecuted for “indecent exposure” which often means the offender incurs a fine or must perform community service
2. **Smoking:** If you are a smoker, you may have noticed immediately upon your arrival that there are not many places where you can smoke freely in the U.S. Smoking is an interesting social phenomenon. It is widely visible in bars and clubs, yet prohibited in most restaurants, offices, and public places. On the Stetson University campus, smoking is forbidden in offices and classrooms. Smoking “sections” are available in some restaurants, airports and other places, but more often than not, you will see a “No Smoking Sign.” So, in the U.S., get used to going outside to smoke (in California smoking is now illegal in bars and clubs). When in doubt, ask first.
3. **Nude Sunbathing:** The vast majority of public beaches, pools and parks prohibit any nude sunbathing. No topless sunbathing or swimming is allowed. There are very few beaches that permit this, and most would be privately owned with their own restrictions. Most males wear Bermuda-type shorts to swim in rather than the bikini type suits common in Europe.
4. **Hygiene:** American culture proves quite aggressive in influencing individual hygiene. The number of hygiene products available is daunting at first visit to a grocery store, supermarket or drugstore. Americans spend a large amount of money on products to clean, scrub, soothe, plump, firm and scent their bodies. They appreciate individuals that smell fresh and look clean and can be quite critical of those they judge not necessarily at their cleanest. Hence the common saying, “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”  
Cleanliness should not be confused with tidiness and being well groomed. In the U.S., it is perfectly acceptable for one’s jeans to be ragged as long as they are freshly washed. It is acceptable for one’s t-shirt to be wrinkled as long as it is freshly washed. Similarly, it is acceptable for one’s hair to be unruly or tousled as long as it is freshly washed.

## Reverse Culture Shock

Intercultural travelers may also experience different degrees of reverse culture shock. It is the *reverse* because the student is actually returning to a familiar culture or native culture, but feels uncomfortable and needs time to re-adapt to this home culture. However, this culture will not be immediately understood because your perspective has

changes and you seem to “view” and experience this culture differently. Intercultural travelers may experience:

1. Feelings of exhilaration and excitement to be returning home.
2. Confusion and difficulty in sharing your intercultural experiences.
3. Frustration and feelings of not knowing where you “belong.”
4. The important thing to remember when in returning home is to accept that you have developed a sort of bi-culturalism, where you can adapt and survive in different cultures. You have had the opportunity to see the world from different perspectives, and this will be a skill that will remain invaluable throughout your life.

# Academic Success

## Keys to Academic Success

To succeed in the U.S. academic system, you will need to learn how it is organized and how it works, or, as we sometimes say, "how to play the game". Listed below are some suggestions that you should keep in mind as you begin your studies. You will learn more of the informal rules of academic success as you undertake courses and have the opportunity to talk with experienced students in your field of study and your academic advisor. The more you discuss these topics, the sooner you will be able to develop a helpful understanding of the way your academic department functions.

1. **Examine your expectations:** Keep in mind that a period of adjustment to a new educational system is necessary before you will be able to perform to the best of your ability. In general, foreign students earn slightly lower grades than U.S. students do during their first semester in this country. Then, as they become accustomed to the system, overcome culture shock, and as their English improve, their grades improve. Foreign students generally cannot expect to do outstanding work during their first semester here.
2. **Select your courses wisely:** Especially during your first semester, do not take more courses than you have to. Make sure you have a combination of more demanding and less demanding courses, rather than only difficult ones, which require unusually heavy amounts of work. When arranging your course schedule, consult not only with your academic advisor, but also with experienced students who are familiar with available courses and teachers. You may be tempted to take more courses than necessary in order to try to earn your degree faster. The usual result of taking too many courses is discouragement and poor academic performance. Limit your course-load to 15 credit hours or less.
3. **Work hard from the beginning:** Don't wait until the latter part of the semester to begin studying! If you do not begin studying on the first day of classes, you are likely to fall behind and to experience difficulty. Grading is cumulative in the U.S. and you begin earning that grade on the first day of classes.
4. **Talk with your professors:** Professors here expect students to ask questions in class or immediately following the class. They expect students to see them in their offices when the students are having problems. If you are not doing well in a class and do not discuss the situation, the professor is likely to assume that you are not interested in the class. Any time you feel unsure of what is expected of you in a class, ask the professor and some of your fellow students about it. If you do not ask, it will be assumed that you understand everything.

5. **Open your mind to the values of the system:** From your past experience in other educational systems, you have developed certain assumptions about the purposes and methods of education, and about the way your field of interest should be studied. For example, you may assume that it is best to examine narrow aspects in great depth. Here, by contrast, you may find that memorization of material is less important than synthesizing material from a variety of sources, and that a field of study can be approached by briefly studying the educational system to realize that differences of this kind exist between the United States and other educational systems, and that one is not necessarily better than another. There are many different ways of learning. Be open-minded and adaptable and you will have a richly rewarding academic experience at the University. Remember, we are all here to help you succeed.

### Academic Support Office

Stetson University also offers its student's access to the Academic Support Office (ASO). This office offers several services and programs to students who wish to learn the skills and techniques to reach their academic potential.

The ASO's website, [http://www.stetson.edu/offices/study\\_skills/](http://www.stetson.edu/offices/study_skills/), provides you with more information on:

1. Student Success Workshops schedule
2. Time management
3. Learning styles
4. Note-taking methods
5. Memory techniques
6. Reading & studying strategies
7. Test taking strategies
8. Goal setting/motivation

You may sign up for workshops or other services by e-mail [pgibbons@stetson.edu](mailto:pgibbons@stetson.edu) or call ext. 7127.

### Goals of the American Academic System

1. **Broad Education:** The United States academic system, as a whole, is intended to provide a broad education for as many people as possible. There is no screening examination, which directs a student at an early age into an academic or non-academic area. A high proportion of the population completes secondary school - and secondary school is not as challenging as it is in countries where access to education is more limited. A high proportion of the population attempts some type of post-secondary education.

2. **Specialization:** The United States educational system also produces specialists, people who have studied a limited range of topics in depth. However, specialization comes later in the United States system than it does in most others. It is not until the third (junior) year of undergraduate work that a student concentrates on the study of his "major" field. There is further specialization in graduate work, especially as a student undertakes research for a thesis.
3. **Evaluation:** As in any educational system, it is considered important to evaluate students' work. A "grading system" is used to rank and compare students' academic work. Grades receive considerable attention in competition for scholarships and fellowships, for admission to universities and for jobs.

There are many conflicts among these goals. For example, there are arguments for earlier and greater specialization, and against opinions for broader "humanistic" education. The grading system is considered by some people to be opposed to the development of learning. As a result of the existence of these conflicts, there are changes from time to time in the rules, procedures and practices of the academic system.

### Organization of the Academic System

1. **The Semester:** The Stetson academic year is two semesters of approximately sixteen weeks length. In addition, there are summer sessions, which are optional.
2. **Credit Hours:** The quantity of academic work a student does at the University is measured in "credit hours". Most courses at Stetson are worth three (3.00) credit hours. There are also some classes worth between one and five hours depending on amount of time spent in class.
3. **The Grading System :** The quality of a student's academic work is measured by means of "grades" and made part of the student's record through his or her Grade Point Average (GPA). Grades at Stetson are on a 4-point scale with:
  - A = 4.0
  - B = 3.0
  - C = 2.0
  - D = 1.0
  - F = 0.0
  - In order to calculate your GPA, multiply your grade points by the number of credits for the class; add all of the grade points for all the classes together; divide by the sum of the number of credits taken. You can learn more about GPA and how to calculate your GPA in the *Connections Handbook*.

## Classroom Expectations

You may notice that students and instructors are very casual in class. You may feel it is a bit too casual for serious academic study, but don't mistake this casual classroom atmosphere for casual academics. A few tips:

1. Arrive on time and be seated before the scheduled starting time
2. Never be late for a class
3. Listen attentively and take careful notes
4. Attend class from the first day and never miss a class
5. Prepare homework before class and keep up on reading
6. Tests are given frequently, so staying current on studies and reading proves necessary
7. Understand material covered in class, don't simply memorize
8. Ask questions, contribute to discussions and express your opinion, participation is encouraged and often makes up a significant portion of your class grade. Instructors count on classroom participation!
9. Be honest with your instructor and ask for help if you do not understand an assignment or class discussion
10. Research papers and essay work is frequently assigned
11. Library work is common
12. Citing resources used for research is extremely important, failure to do so can lead to a failing grade, even expulsion

## Other Important Aspects of Academics

1. **Academic Honesty:** In general, citizens of the United States prize independence and individual effort. In the academic world, they value independent thought. The most serious offense in the academic world is that of representing another person's work as one's own. Copying another person's work without acknowledging that the other person is responsible is called "plagiarism". Plagiarizing the work of another scholar can result in expulsion from the University. All papers submitted must be original. Do NOT use a paper from another student or off the Internet. Professors CAN tell. Copying off another person's test or homework is simply called "cheating". Don't do it!
  - Read the Stetson University Handbook, Connections section on Academic Honesty to learn more about plagiarism and other academic integrity violations.
2. **Academic Advisor:** All students have an academic advisor assigned to them when they enroll at Stetson or change their degree major. You should be sure to meet with your advisor before class registration to discuss your academic goals and requirements for the courses you wish to take. Your academic advisor will

usually be a professor in the college or school of your major is therefore an ideal resource for questions that you may have regarding your major and minor.

Your academic advisor is more than an individual who approves your course selection. He/she can also offer insight into your career goals, discuss your academic strengths and weaknesses, grades and help you evaluate your progress. In the U.S., each student is regarded as a unique individual, and your academic advisor gives you a chance to grow and succeed in meeting your academic goals through dialogue and discussion.

You are responsible for your academic progress, so take action and be sure that you understand your degree goals and course load.

3. **Academic Responsibilities:** Stetson students are expected to make reasonable academic progress and maintain an acceptable GPA. Academic warnings and suspension from Stetson University may result for those students who earn a low GPA. As an international student or exchange visitor, your GPA directly affects your student status. You jeopardize your studies at Stetson University if you earn a GPA of 2.0 or lower. If you are having difficulty for any reason, please see your academic advisor and your ISA at CIE for advice and assistance immediately.
  
4. **Withdrawing from a class:** Please consult with the International Student Advisor prior to dropping (withdrawing from) a class. Dropping a class may adversely affect your visa status unless done with proper advising and notification. Withdrawal without evidence on the permanent record is permissible through the first two weeks of the fall and spring terms when a student completes official withdrawal procedures.

## A. APPENDIX I: DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC TERMS

1. **ACADEMIC ADVISOR** - A member of the faculty in your field of study who will help you to plan your program of courses and who will be available during the year to advise you on academic matters. Your academic advisor should be consulted on all matters affecting your progress and study plans.
2. **ACADEMIC CALENDAR** - The schedule of important dates during the academic year. You will find an Academic Calendar in the Class Schedule and in the University Bulletin.
3. **ACADEMIC YEAR** - The two official terms of study combined. The academic year includes the Fall semester of 16 weeks, August through December; and the Spring semester of 16 weeks, January through May.
4. **ASSIGNMENT** - Any course work prescribed by your professor: for example, reading the books on the "reading list" or writing a term paper.
5. **ELECTIVES** – Optional classes taken by students that do not count towards their major or degree requirements. These classes are usually taken to fill hours towards graduation or are in an area of interest to the student.
6. **EXAMS** - Periodic examinations are given in most schools and departments. The mid-term examination covers the first half of the course work; the final examination covers the complete term's work; quizzes (short examinations) may be given any time during the term without notice. Chapter tests or other tests are usually given periodically during the semester, but Professors usually give notice of these tests. Unless you have a valid excuse (illness or other extreme emergency) attendance at examinations is mandatory, and you will be given a failing grade if you are absent.
7. **FULL COURSE OF STUDY** - Registration for 12 credit hours and completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours each term. A full course of study is required for all international students holding F-1 visas.
8. **HOMEWORK** - Course work done outside class. For each hour spent in class, you should devote two, three, or more hours of preparation.
9. **MAJOR** – A field chosen as an academic specialty.
10. **MINOR** – A second area of specialized study. This requires less courses and credits than a major does.

11. **PREREQUISITES** – Classes that must be taken before more advanced classes in the same academic field
12. **RESEARCH PAPER** - An essay on an assigned or selected topic, required in some courses; it is generally due at the end of the term. Sometimes it is called a “Term Paper”.
13. **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES** – Published each semester, this bulletin includes every class offered during that semester. It is sorted by division and includes class meeting time, meeting place, schedule number, course number, and professor name. Students choose their class schedule from this bulletin.
14. **TAKE HOME EXAMINATION** - Sometimes given instead of an examination in class; the questions are to be answered "at home" (outside of class) using resource materials. You should not consult with classmates when completing the exam.
15. **TRANSCRIPT** - A statement from the University which records the courses for which you are registered and the grades that you received in them.
16. **TRANSFER CREDIT** - Credit given toward a Stetson degree for academic work completed in another school either in the United States or abroad.
17. **UNIVERSITY BULLETIN** - Published each year, contains full description of all majors, minors and university requirements and all courses offered in each department.

## B. APPENDIX II: DEFINITIONS OF IMMIGRATION TERMS

1. **ALIEN** - a visitor or resident from a country other than the U.S.
2. **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD** - also known as an I-94 or a "permission to stay". This white card is issued when the student enters the country and is usually stapled inside the passport. The card shows the arrival place and date and how long the student is authorized to stay. The card is removed on extended visits outside the U.S., and a new one is issued upon return.
3. **DSO** – (Designated School Official) the person designated by the USCIS to sign USCIS forms. At Stetson, your designated school official is the International Student Advisor.
4. **DURATION OF STATUS** - the length of time you have been permitted to remain in the U.S. (2 years, 4 years, etc.) plus 60 days to depart or apply for another legal status.
5. **I-20** – this certificate of eligibility was sent to you from the CIE at Stetson. It is your "ticket" to the United States because it tells immigration officials that Stetson wants you as a student and you have the right to stay in the U.S. as long as you are a student. This is the main document you will use when you travel abroad or if you decide to transfer schools. It is a valuable piece of paper, so be careful with it. Keep every I-20 (DS-2019 for J-1 students) for your permanent record.
6. **ILLEGAL ALIEN** - a visitor or resident in the U.S., who is "out of status", staying without permission of the USCIS; or whose permission has expired; or who is in violation of any USCIS rules and regulations.
7. **IMMIGRATION** - term often used when referring to the USCIS.
8. **USCIS** - an abbreviation for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service.
9. **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT** - a student who is not a U.S. citizen
10. **"OUT OF STATUS"** – a student who has not complied with Immigration laws. This could result from staying in the U.S. longer than authorized (more than 60 days after completion of a degree); not maintaining F-1 visa status (see "Essential Information for F-1 Students"); or other related reasons. Reinstatement (regaining status) requires filing form I-539 with the USCIS.
11. **PASSPORT** - issued by the country of origin (home) and enables the traveler to visit or temporarily live in other countries with their permission. Keep your passport and other important documents in a safe place. Report a lost or stolen passport to the

police immediately, as your government may require a police report before issuing you a new passport.

12. **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING** – work permission given by the International Student Advisor for employment, which is a required part of an established curriculum or is for internship course credit. CPT is intended to give students relevant experience in their field of study. Examples of CPT are internships, cooperative education, and practice.
13. **OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING** – work permission for employment, either paid or unpaid, which is related to the student's major, and is performed generally upon completion of all the requirements for a degree. Practical training can be approved for up to twelve months. This can be approved before completion of studies and can be used in segments.
14. **REINSTATEMENT** - when a student is "out of status", s/he sends an appeal to USCIS in the form of: • Letter from the student, • School transcript, • Bank statement or letter from his/her sponsor, and • I-20 and I-539 forms and fee • USCIS will decide whether to let the student stay or send the student home.
15. **SOCIAL SECURITY** - money withheld from a wages, to fund a supplemental income program for retired Americans. F-1 & J-1 students employed legally are exempt from this withholding.
16. **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER** – A number granted by the Social Security Administration to residents of the U. S. for purposes of identification, banking, and employment.
17. **TAXABLE INCOME** - wages earned while working for an employer that will be taxed by the federal government. This regulation DOES apply to you.
18. **VISA** – a stamp placed in your passport, showing that it has been examined by the proper officials of a country, granting entry into or passage through that country. A visa to enter the U.S. as a non-immigrant is a stamped entry on a page of the passport. It enables the passport bearer to request admission at the port of entry to the U.S. Specific conditions are made for the type of visa the bearer holds.
19. **WORK PERMIT** – A work permit is an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) approved by the USCIS that grants an F-1 student permission to work off-campus for a period of one year. F-1 students must provide evidence of severe economic hardship. All F-1 students working off-campus must have been issued an EAD from USCIS prior to starting work.

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