

# Supporting International Graduate Students

## *Quick Guide for A&S\**

We hope this serves as a useful reference for Directors of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences. If students are asking immigration-related questions, please refer them to [John Honeycutt](#) in [ISSS](#).

**Graduate School [Policies and Procedures](#)** for DGSs and [Bulletin](#)

### **[Student Immigration Timeline](#)**

- After receiving admission offer, student activates [LinkBlue](#) account/email.
- Student submits e-forms & proof of funding in [iCAT](#) (ISSS data system).
- A Designated School Official (DSO) in ISSS issues an I-20 or DS-2019 to student, who then pays SEVIS fee of \$350.
- Student applies for visa at U.S. embassy or consulate at cost of \$160.
- Student enters United States up to 30 days before program start date and receives I-94 at point of entry.
- Student attends [international orientation](#) and submits arrival documents in iCAT.
- After student registers for classes, DSO reviews and approves arrival information and registration of student in [SEVIS](#), the Student Exchange & Visitor Information System administered by the U.S. government.

### **ABCs of Student Immigration**

- ***Read the latest immigration updates related to COVID-19 [here](#).*** General regulatory updates and trends can be found [here](#).
- **[I-20 & DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility](#):** ISSS issues one of these documents to international students who then use it to obtain a visa appointment.
- Students obtain either **F or J status**. Read about the [differences](#) in status.
- **Proof of Funding:** International students (F-1) must show proof of funding for the first year. J-1 students must show funding for the duration of their program. It can be a combination of assistantships, sponsors, scholarships and/or personal funds.
- **Visa Stamp:** Students receive a visa stamp at the U.S. embassy or consulate.
- **I-94:** Upon entry to the U.S., students receive an I-94 tracking arrival/departure.
- **Full-Time Status:** F-1 and J-1 students must be enrolled in the graduate degree program course work that is listed on their I-20/DS-2019. **9 hours** is considered full-time (767 dissertation credit is considered full-time). Fall & Spring registrations are required.
  - Any online coursework is subject to approval by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). See [more information](#).
  - Enrollment below full-time requires ISSS authorization of a ["Reduced Course Load Exception."](#)
  - Students must complete their degree by the **end date** on their I-20/DS-2019. [Extensions](#) may be granted if students meets established criteria.

## Employment, [Taxes](#) & [Health Insurance](#)

- Students can work **on campus up to 20 hours** per week.
  - During official breaks, students may work on campus full-time.
  - *Off-campus employment requires prior authorization ([CPT/OPT \(F-1\)](#); [Academic Training \(J-1\)](#)).*
- If a student is **experiencing financial difficulties** (basic needs or tuition), please report their situation to the **UK Center for Support and Intervention (CSI)** [here](#).
  - Students with difficulties in paying tuition should email [iss@uky.edu](mailto:iss@uky.edu). An ISSS staff member will reach out about available resources.
- **Any student present** in the United States during the tax year is **required to file**. *UKY offers [free tax prep services](#); ISSS provides a short [tax resource guide](#); and the College of Law operates a [free clinic](#).*
- International students (F-1, J-1 and J-2) are **required** to have health insurance meeting UKY's criteria. It's **billed automatically** unless a waiver is requested.

## Supporting Cultural Adjustment

- [GradCATS](#) is a new program launched in 2020 to support international graduate students in the period between admission and arrival.
  - Contact [Karen Slaymaker](#) or [Angela Garner](#) to learn more!
  - Read student testimonials [here](#).
- [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) occurs before the start of each semester and is coordinated by the [Graduate School](#) and [ISSS](#). (*Orientation in [Canvas](#)*).
- [English as a Second Language Support](#) is available for graduate students.

## Best Practices

- Create a **mentoring program** for all graduate students.
  - Upon their admission, connect incoming students with current students.
- Encourage new students to participate in **GradCATS** and **New Graduate Student Orientation**.
  - Provide a **departmental orientation** as well.
- **Develop documents** that help international graduate students understand the **role of an advisor**, including a **departmental handbook**.
- Schedule **one-on-ones** with all new students early in the first semester.
- **Include international alumni** in departmental symposiums/forums.
- **Connect** students with the [Graduate Student Congress](#) and the [Center for Graduate and Professional Diversity Initiatives](#).

## ISSS Contacts for A&S

**Karen Slaymaker** Assistant Director [karen.slaymaker@uky.edu](mailto:karen.slaymaker@uky.edu)  
**John Honeycutt** Student Immigration Specialist [john.honeycutt@uky.edu](mailto:john.honeycutt@uky.edu)