

California State University, Northridge
International and Exchange Student Center
Resource Guide for International Students 2012-2013

INTRODUCTION

The information in this guide has been compiled in the hope that it will be of use and initial assistance to international students at CSUN. The information is by no means complete or comprehensive; it is intended to be used in conjunction with the University catalog and other University publications. We encourage you to read it, print a copy, familiarize yourself with its contents, and keep it where you can refer to it from time to time. It will answer many of your questions and save you much time and effort. Please visit our website regularly for updates.

Please do not depend upon this or any other publication as your sole source of information and guidance. We strongly recommend that you communicate regularly with your academic advisor, your professors and the foreign student advisors (FSA) in the International and Exchange Student Center (IESC) to obtain answers to your questions and to seek advice on specific problems and general matters.

PHONE & HOURS

Office: (818) 677-3053, Fax: (818) 677-4191

Hours of Operation: 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Walk-in hours for International Students: 9:00am-12:00pm & 1:00pm-4:00pm

Website: www.csun.edu/international

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FUNCTIONS

The IESC staff provides services to all international students after they have been formally admitted to the University and will assist international students in 1) complying with the laws and regulations of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) 2) referring them to the appropriate department for academic advising in their major field of study and 3) dealing with personal concerns. The Office also coordinates cultural and social events so that international students can share their national heritage with the campus educational community. A special new student orientation program is provided at the beginning of each semester to assist international students in adjusting to the campus environment and American customs.

REQUIRED IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

Passport

Maintain a valid passport at all times. Make sure to renew your passport *at least six months* prior to the expiration date. Your passport can be renewed within the United States at your country's consulate or embassy. Information on your country's Consulate/Embassy is available at <http://www.embassyworld.com/>

Visa

A Visa is a stamp or sticker placed in your passport at a U.S. consulate or embassy *outside* the U.S. A visa is only a permit to enter the United States. Once you are in the U.S., your I-20/DS2019 becomes the relevant document that helps you to maintain legal immigration status.

You must make sure that your visa is valid for your entry or re-entry to the U.S. An expired visa must be renewed at a U.S. consulate/embassy *outside* of the U.S. prior to re-entry. Information on visa applications, related fees, and U.S. embassies is available at <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

Continuing students who plan to travel outside the U.S. and need to renew their F-1 visa must do the following:

- Check with the US Embassy/Consulate in their home country for appointments, required documents and processing times.
- Request IESC for a travel signature on page 3 of their I-20.
- Important! IESC provides advice for F-1 and J-1 visas only. Students are responsible for making inquiries regarding entry documents and procedures for entering all other countries.

Detailed handouts with information on F-1 and J-1 visa applications are available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>

Students are responsible for paying all required fees that are associated with the visa renewal process.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Card

An I-94 is a white arrival/departure card which is given to you when you enter the U.S. The immigration officer at the port of entry must stamp this card with the date of arrival and a stamp indicating D/S which means "Duration of Status." It covers the period of time for the completion of your course of study plus any periods of authorized practical training, plus 60 days for your preparation to depart the United States. J-1 students will have only 30 days to depart from the U.S. upon completion of their study program.

I-20/DS-2019

Once a student is admitted to CSUN, a Form I-20(for F1 students)/DS-2019 (for J1 students) is created in SEVIS, Student and Exchange Visitor Information System--an online database that allows United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to track all F-1 and J-1 students. The I-20/DS-2019 is the official admission document that students will need for their visa interview at the U.S. Embassy. Your I-20/DS-2019 form expires on the date you complete your studies. This cannot be extended once you have graduated.

If you lose your I-20/DS2019, or it is stolen or damaged, you must inform IESC immediately and request a replacement. Students must submit a completed Request for New I-20/DS2019 form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>) to IESC.

Grace Period

F-1 students are permitted to remain in the U.S. for up to 60 days after completing their program of study. Students must make plans to either return to their home country, begin a new program of study, or apply for Optional Practical Training before their 60 day grace period ends. Students who apply for OPT will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) which will show the dates of validity. The 60 day grace period for these students begin once their OPT period ends.

J-1 students can remain in the U.S. for up to 30 days after completing their program of study. They may be eligible to participate in academic training under certain circumstances. Consult with the Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) in the IESC for eligibility requirements. The 30 days grace period for these students begins once their academic training period ends.

Extension of Stay

F1 students: If you are unable to complete your program of study by the expiration date noted in item #5 on your I-20, you must apply for a program extension at least 60 days prior to that expiration date.

J-1 students: Please check item #3 on the DS2019 for the expiration date.

F1/J1 students must submit a completed Extension of Stay Request form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>) along with supporting documents. A detailed information handout is also available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>.

Change of Major

You must report any change of your major and degree level to the IESC no later than 10 days after the change has been made by the Office of Admissions and Records and is visible on your web portal. IESC is required to report these changes to USCIS. You will need to request a new I-20. Students must submit a completed Request for New I-20 form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>).

Travel Signature

Remember to obtain a travel signature on your I-20/DS2019 from the IESC when traveling outside the borders of the U.S. *Plan ahead of time!* The IESC currently takes 2 business days to process your travel signature request. Processing time may be longer during busy periods. All students requesting a travel signature are required to submit a completed and signed Travel Signature Request Form.

Important! IESC provides advice for F-1 and J-1 visas only. Students are responsible for making inquiries regarding entry documents and procedures for entering all other countries.

Travel signatures are granted to students who meet all eligibility requirements.

- Travel signatures for continuing students will be valid for one year provided the student continues to maintain legal immigration status.
- Students who need to travel during the semester will have to either make sure they don't miss any classes or request permission from their instructors to miss class.
- Students who have applied for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must show a Notice of Action Receipt from USCIS to request a travel signature. Students who have received an Employment

Authorization Document (EAD) or approval for OPT must submit a copy of the EAD in order to request a travel signature. Students with expired F-1 visas are responsible for renewing them. USCIS recommends that students on OPT show a letter from their employer at the Port of Entry when returning to the U.S. All students who have either applied for or are currently on OPT should communicate with the FSA for current information on appropriate documents and immigration regulations. Travel signatures for students on OPT are valid for six months only.

Transfer of a SEVIS Record:

Transferring In-

The Office of International Admissions will issue an I-20 to students transferring in to CSUN. Students who change their minds about attending CSUN and intend to transfer out to another school must request and process their transfer out no later than the first day of classes of their first semester at CSUN (Refer to instructions in the transfer out section).

Transferring Out-

All students planning to transfer to another school need to submit a completed Transfer Request form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>), and an Acceptance Letter from the new school. The student can either come in person to the IESC or email the required paperwork to the appropriate Foreign Student Advisor. The request must be made by the student directly.

Please abide by the timelines and deadlines according to your situation:

- New students who entered the US on an “Initial” CSUN I-20 and want to transfer to another school: must request their SEVIS record to be transferred out no later than 30 days after their arrival into the US or the add/drop deadline of the current semester (at CSUN) whichever is earlier. They will be required to submit copies of their passport, visa, I-94 and I-20 (with entry stamp) in addition to the other paperwork.
- New Students who have entered on an “Initial” I-20 from another US School, who have transferred to CSUN and then desire to transfer to another school: must request their SEVIS record to be transferred out no later than 30 days after their arrival into the US.
- Continuing students: must request their SEVIS record to be transferred out no earlier than the last day of the current semester or no later than the add/drop deadline of the next semester (at CSUN) in which they wish to transfer.
- Students on a current valid OPT: must request their SEVIS record to be transferred before the start date of the semester at the school where they want to start the new program of study. Please Note: If students transfer their SEVIS record out prior to the expiration of their OPT, they will forfeit the remaining period of their OPT. The OPT start and expiration dates are noted on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- Students who have graduated and have not applied for OPT: must request to have their SEVIS record transferred no later than 60 days after the completion date of their course of studies. The actual program completion date may be earlier than the date recorded on section #5 of the I-20.
- Students with an expired OPT EAD must request to have their SEVIS record transferred no later than 60 days after the expiration date on their Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).

***Please consult with a Foreign Student Advisor at IESC if you have questions. ***

Proof of Health Insurance

Provide proof of health insurance, including medical evacuation and repatriation coverage to IESC each semester/year. International Students email their proof of health insurance to insurance@csun.edu. You should be covered for the entire academic year or one semester. Students are required to show minimum coverage of \$100,000 for health plus \$30,000 for repatriation and evacuation. Deductibles should not exceed \$500. Policies purchased in countries other than the United States must be officially translated in English and all relevant amounts must be officially stated in US dollars. Students who are on Optional Practical Training (OPT) are required to maintain all F-1 requirements including health insurance coverage.

Student ID Card

The CSUN Photo ID card is the primary piece of identification which shows that you are a CSUN student. It gives you access to student discounts and permits you to use library services such as library loans, online databases, etc. You may obtain your Student ID card from Room 100 in Bayramian Hall. The current cost of the ID is \$5.00. Students are required to show photo ID for security purposes when visiting different departments or offices on campus.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Be sure to meet with academic advisors and consult with FSAs as often as needed to make sure you are taking the right steps at the right time. Detailed information can be found in the CSUN Catalog (Undergraduate programs, pages 34-42 and Graduate students, pages 56-60).

Required Course Loads

As an international student, you are required to register in a full course load of classes each semester. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allows for certain exceptions to the full time enrollment requirement; however, all exceptions **must be approved** by the IESC.

PROGRAM LEVEL	MINIMUM # OF UNITS PER SEMESTER
Bachelor's	12
2 nd Bachelor's	12
Master's	8
Doctorate	6 <i>(depending on specific major department)</i>

Alternative Options for Full-Course Loads

Online classes

Undergraduate students may be permitted to take no more than 3 units of on-line classes each Fall or Spring semester provided they enroll in 9 units of regular classes and maintain their legal immigration status. *Note: If you have left to take one class to graduate, this class must be an in-class traditional course to be in compliance with legal guidelines governing your F-1 status.*

Concurrent Enrollment

You may take a class or classes at another school while enrolled at CSUN provided:

- You are enrolled in minimum 6 units (undergraduate) or 4 units (graduate) at CSUN
- The combined units will add up to a full time course load each semester.
- You submit a completed Concurrent Enrollment Request form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>). Students are responsible for clarifying transfer requirements with *academic departments*.

- Students sponsored by third parties (home country government) must obtain permission for concurrent enrollment from the financial sponsor prior to requesting permission from IESC.
- Students submit proof of enrollment from the school where concurrent enrollment is permitted within one week of receiving the concurrent enrollment letter from IESC.
- Students are responsible for making sure that the classes they take at other institutions do not exceed the permitted number of transferrable units to CSUN and that the classes meet requirements towards their degree.
- Continuing Students may be permitted to take classes at other colleges and universities during intercessions (Winter and Summer) and are not required to be concurrently enrolled at CSUN.

Part-Time Status

International students always need to request pre-approval to be a part-time student. This information is reported in SEVIS. Students must submit a completed Part Time Request form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>) along with supporting documents to IESC no later than the Add/drop deadline of the semester in which the student will enroll in less than a full course of study. The student must resume a full course of study in the next available term, session, or semester, excluding a summer session, in order to maintain legal student status. Students may be permitted to enroll in a part-time course load under the following SEVIS approved categories only:

- a) Academic Difficulty*
 - Initial difficulty with reading requirements;
 - Initial difficulty with the English language;
 - Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods; OR
 - Improper course level placement

**Important:* Students must enroll in at least 6 units (undergraduates)/4 units (graduates) to be authorized for part-time status based on academic difficulty. A student previously authorized to drop below a full course of study due to academic difficulties is not eligible for a second authorization due to academic difficulties while pursuing a course of study at the same program level. A student authorized to drop below a full course of study for academic difficulties while pursuing a course of study at a particular program level may still be authorized for a reduced course load due to an illness/medical condition.
- b) You are in your final semester and have only a few units remaining to graduate.
 - Undergraduate and Graduate students who have left to take one class to graduate, this class must be an in-class traditional course to be in compliance with legal guidelines governing your F-1 status.
 - Graduate students who have already enrolled in 598/698 (thesis/project) and were given a grade of “SP,” but still require ONE additional semester (Fall/Spring) to continue working on their thesis or graduate project may enroll in the Culminating Graduate Experience with department approval. Enrollment is through the Roland Tseng College of Extended Learning (EXL). Enrollment is required in the semester/session the degree is awarded, including the summer.
- c) You are ill or have a medical condition that requires a reduced course load. Written statement from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist required. Letter should include:
 - ✓ Student’s Name
 - ✓ Semester(s) student can or cannot attend
 - ✓ Duration of part time or non-attendance
 - ✓ Explanation of medical circumstances (We do not need to know the details of the student’s medical condition. We just need to know HOW is this medical condition affecting the student’s ability to study at CSUN)FSA can approve up to 12 months of part-time based on medical/illness conditions.

Leave of Absence

A Leave of absence for one or two semesters requires approval from a Foreign Student Advisor (FSA). Students must meet with an FSA to discuss their situation and options. Students are required to submit a completed Request for Leave of Absence form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/forms/>) along with supporting documents.

A leave of absence will be approved for one semester at a time. Students who need to return to their home country for personal or financial reasons may not remain in the U.S. in F-1 status. The I-20 for a student who will remain outside the U.S. will be terminated. A new I-20 may be issued for the semester in which the student will resume studies. The student must communicate with the appropriate FSA to verify if a new Affidavit of Financial Support with matching bank statement (checking or savings accounts only) is needed. Students must contact the appropriate FSA at least 45 days prior to the start of the intended semester of return.

Students approved for a partial or complete medical leave of absence may remain in the U.S. based on the written recommendation of a qualified medical practitioner. They may request a reduced course load or a complete leave of absence based on medical reasons for a maximum of 12 months during their academic program.

Students who do not resume studies after two semesters will need to reapply to the university. Please contact the International Admissions office for questions related to re-admission.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The university requires that students make normal academic progress while maintaining a minimum grade point average (GPA) throughout their academic program.

Program Level	Minimum GPA Requirement
Bachelor's	2.0
2 nd Bachelor's	2.5
Master's	3.0

Academic probation

Failing grades and Unauthorized Withdrawals will affect your GPA negatively, and as a result, may affect your academic standing. This could subsequently jeopardize your legal immigration status and your eligibility to continue in your academic program. Students who fall below the required GPA will be placed on academic probation. Please consult with an academic advisor in your major and a FSA on how this will impact your academic and immigration status at CSUN. Also read the CSUN catalog and schedule of classes to find out about the university policy on probation and disqualification.

Academic Disqualification

Students who are academically disqualified must contact their FSA immediately for advice regarding their legal immigration status.

- Undergraduate students will not be able to enroll at CSUN if they are disqualified. They may choose one of two options:
 - They may transfer their SEVIS record to another educational institution to improve their GPA. They may then reapply to CSUN through the Office of International Admissions. Readmission is based on current university policy, deadlines and eligibility. OR
 - They may return to their home country immediately. Students must notify their FSA of their return to the home country.

- They may take courses during summer (if disqualified at the end of the spring semester) or winter session (if disqualified at the end of the fall semester) to bring up their GPA and be able to continue at CSUN.
- Graduate students must contact their academic advisor as well as the office of Graduate Research and International Programs (GRIP) for readmission to their academic program. A copy of the Readmission/Reinstatement of Graduate/Credential Student Form (proof of readmission) must be submitted to IESC. The form must be signed by the Graduate Coordinator/Advisor, and SEVIS Coordinator or FSA at IESC.

Important: Except for the Graduate Culminating Experience noted above, matriculated students are not permitted to register through the Roland Tseng College of Extended Learning at any time. Students who become ineligible to enroll in regular university courses and wish to take courses elsewhere will have to arrange to transfer their SEVIS record to an educational institution that has admitted them.

Placement Tests/Exams

EPT (English Placement Test)/ELM (Entry Level Mathematics) scores are required for most freshmen. Freshmen must enroll in assigned English and Math courses during the first semester. See an academic advisor in your academic department regularly and be sure to complete all developmental/remedial requirements within your first year. Information on Freshmen Requirements is available in the CSUN Catalog.

The Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE) is a graduation requirement for all students. Transfer students who have completed 56.0 units should sign up now for the next exam; it may take you several attempts to pass it. A passing score may be a pre-requisite to many 400 level courses. Undergraduate students are now required to take the UDWPE no later than the semester in which the student completes 75 units. If the Undergraduate student does not take the exam by this deadline, the student will have a hold placed on future registration for classes. Graduate students are usually required to pass the UDWPE in order to achieve “Classified” status.

TIPS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Get to know other students in your classes. You may need their assistance in case you miss a class, or are part of a study group.
- Make sure you understand the course syllabi, dates and requirements of your assignments and exams. Be aware of important deadlines!
- Use campus learning resources such as the Learning Resource Center and the Testing Center.
- Talk to your professors when you have questions about course material or assignments. This can save you time and frustration.
- Understand the basics of expected student conduct and academic integrity as well as the consequences of academic dishonesty and plagiarism (University Catalog at <http://www.csun.edu/catalog/> Appendix E).
- Ask questions. Do not assume anything.
- Obtain clear information on all issues so that you do not make any mistakes.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration Holds

You may have one or more registration hold/s for different reasons from specific departments on campus. Be sure to visit the web portal regularly and follow the instructions available there. <http://www.csun.edu/portal>
Registration holds must be cleared PRIOR to your registration appointment.

Foreign Hold

A “Foreign” Registration hold is placed on each international student’s record each semester. You are responsible for ensuring that all your immigration documents such as passport, I-20, etc. are current and valid, that your health insurance policy has been renewed through the end of the semester in which you are enrolled or intend to enroll, and that your GPA meets the basic eligibility requirement. The “Foreign” hold may not be lifted if your health insurance policy expires during the upcoming semester. Students must email proof of health insurance to IESC to insurance@csun.edu prior to their registration period. Please include your first name, last name, and CSUN ID number in the subject line of the email.

Immunization Hold

Submit proof of Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Rubeola immunization at the Klotz Student Health Center (SHC). If you do not have a letter from your doctor in English stating the date on which you received the immunization, you will have to either take the immunization, take a blood test to prove immunity, or sign a waiver. Contact the SHC for more information.

Immunization for or immunity to Hepatitis B vaccine is required for all first-time freshmen 18 years or younger. Contact the SHC for information.

Missing Transcript Hold

If you are transferring units from another institution, you will need to submit official transcripts to the Office of International Admissions so that they can evaluate them.

Registration Guidelines

Follow registration instructions in the Schedule of Classes, <http://www.csun.edu/anr/soc/> Select classes via the internet and be sure to pay registration as well as tuition fees in full by the deadline. Failure to pay by the deadline will result in your being dropped automatically from your classes! Fees must be paid to University Cash Services. Information on fee payment deadlines, methods of payment, the Installment Payment Plan (IPP) etc. can be found at <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/>

Registration Deadlines

See Add/Drop deadlines in the Schedule of Classes. Students who have been unable to add classes via the Internet during the registration period may “crash” classes beginning the first day of classes. This means that you may attend a class that you wish to enroll in and request the professor to add you to that class if a seat becomes available. If “crashing” a class, be sure to attend the class from the first day of classes. If you choose to drop a class, make sure to drop it on the web portal. It is not enough to simply stop attending a class. Always verify enrollment status on the web portal. Be sure to enroll in full-time units by the Add/Drop deadline.

Email Alerts

Alerts about registration appointments, payment deadlines and other important information will be emailed to your CSUN email account. Be sure to check it regularly or forward all emails from this address to an email address you use regularly.

Registration/Tuition Fees and Deadlines

International students pay registration fees each semester in addition to non-resident tuition which is calculated according to the number of units they are enrolled in. Please refer to University Cash Services <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/> for more information on current costs.

IESC does not require ANY fees for the services it provides to international students. No fees, under any circumstances, shall be submitted or mailed to IESC.

- Payment deadlines depend on a student’s registration date. Registration alerts are posted on the web portal.

- Students who register for classes and fail to pay by the deadline will be automatically disenrolled.
- Students who receive loans from their home country or from other organizations must abide by the fee payment deadlines. Please plan ahead to obtain the required documents from CSUN or from your financial sponsor and submit them to the appropriate offices at CSUN to prevent registration delays and/or disenrollment.
- If you are being sponsored by a third party such as your home country government, please note that your letter from your sponsor may have an expiration date. Such letters must be updated each year and submitted to IESC as well as to the office of Student Accounting in a timely manner. Failure to do so can result in registration delays and/or disenrollment.
- Students wishing to utilize the Installment Payment Plan (IPP) may do so by signing a contract with University Cash Services in Bayramian Hall. There are TWO types of IPPs available, depending on your registration date. To apply for IPP or to obtain more information, contact University Cash Services at (818) 677-8000 option 3. Please do not wait until the due date to apply. International students may use IPP ONLY for the nonresident portion of their registration fees. All other fees must be paid no later than the Fee Payment Schedule due date.
- Please note: If students open a new bank account in the United States there may be a grace period where funds may not be accessible for at least 10 business days. Please contact the participating financial institution for further information.
- Payments made by demand drafts brought from foreign countries are acceptable if the bank has a branch in the United States.
- CSUN does not currently have a direct wire transfer option available for out of country payments.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

International students are not eligible for financial aid. They may be able to apply for some scholarships. If students need to obtain financial aid or an international scholarship the best place is to look in your home country. Student loans and scholarships may be available from your government, local businesses, organizations and foundations.

Other resources may be international humanitarian organizations that want to promote international education and cultural exchange with the US. Included in these organizations are the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the League of Red Cross Societies and the World Council of Churches. Financial aid and scholarships from these organizations are very competitive, so start the search early. Please exercise caution in your search as CSUN will not be held liable for the contents of the below websites and does not endorse scholarship search engines for which there is a fee.

Below are some links for websites that may provide some additional information:

InternationalScholarships.com is an online financial aid resource for international students wishing to study in a foreign country.

InternationalStudentLoan.com provides access to loans for non-U.S. students wishing to study in the USA, U.S. citizens studying abroad, and Canadian citizens studying abroad. Its sister site, InternationalStudentInsurance.com, is also a valuable resource for globally mobile students.

The International Education Financial Aid Page- www.iefaf.org features a searchable list of grants, scholarships and loan programs for international students.

eduPASS, The Smart Student Guide to Studying in the USA- www.edupass.org/finaid/ provides excellent articles, charts and links about financing college.

FundingUSStudy.org is a database of scholarships, fellowships and grants organized and maintained by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

The Fulbright Program- www.iie.org/en/Fulbright provides funds for students, scholars and professionals to undertake graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Established in 1946, Fulbright aims to increase mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills.

Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation- www.rotary.org administer a broad range of humanitarian and educational programs designed to improve the human condition, world understanding and peace. Learn more about Rotary's Ambassadorial Scholarships, Grants for University teachers and World Peace Scholarships for study at their Centers for International Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution.

GrantsNet- www.sciencemag.org features a database of funding opportunities in biomedical research and science education. Post-graduate status is necessary for most awards without U.S. citizenship requirements.

The Foundation Center- <http://foundationcenter.org> is an online resource devoted to foundations that fund individuals. The site also features a section for international grant seekers! IESC Resource Guide 11-12 11 Rev. 03/14/2011hl

The Soros Foundation Network- www.soros.org supports the development of an open society through funding specific educational opportunities around the world.

The Academy for Educational Development- www.aed.org is committed to solving critical social problems throughout the world through education, social marketing, research, training, policy analysis and innovative program design and management.

Mobility International USA- www.miusa.org offers a top-notch Financial Aid Resource Sheet for people with disabilities. The organization empowers disabled people around the world through international exchange, information, technical assistance and training.

EMPLOYMENT

All references to employment in this document refer to paid employment.

On-Campus Employment

International students are permitted to work on-campus. Students may work part-time (up to 20 hours) during the semester and full-time (20+ hours) during summer and winter vacations. Detailed information which also includes the procedure is available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/immigration/employment.htm> in the "Factsheet: On – campus Employment for International Students."

Off-Campus Employment (For Economic Hardship ONLY)

An eligible F-1/J-1 student may request off-campus employment based on severe economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control. F-1 students must have been in student status for one academic year and must be able to clearly document the circumstances causing the economic need. Approval is subject to USCIS adjudication. J-1 students may request employment authorization from the Alternate Responsible Official (ARO). Please discuss your financial hardship and eligibility requirements with a FSA before accepting off-campus employment.

Practical Training

F-1 students must have been in legal immigration status for a minimum of one academic year (two semesters) or 9 consecutive months prior to applying for practical training. Your F-1 status begins on your first date of entry into the United States. Always consult with a FSA before starting any practical training. It is extremely important to keep in mind that it is your responsibility to engage only in employment authorized as permissible for F-1/J-1 students.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training refers to any type of salaried employment, paid internship, or practicum which is related to an F-1 student's field of study. IESC processes student requests for CPT authorization on a semester basis if the internship is required for a degree program or is recommended by the academic department. CPT is authorized by a Foreign Student Advisor from the International and Exchange Student Center (IESC).

A detailed CPT handout and required forms are available at <http://www.csun.edu/international/>. Submit a completed application to a FSA for review and the required approval. The deadline to obtain CPT approval is the Add/Drop deadline for each semester if you are required to enroll in the internship course. Students must have the CPT authorization in order to begin the internship. Contact your FSA for any questions.

J-1 students may be eligible to participate in academic training under certain circumstances. Consult with the ARO in the IESC for eligibility requirements.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Optional Practical Training for F-1 students is intended to provide hands-on practical work experience complementary to the academic program. An F-1 student is eligible for a maximum of 12 months of OPT. However, if a student begins a new academic program at a higher level (e.g. master's after bachelor's degree, or Ph.D. after master's), the student is eligible for another 12 months of OPT.

NOTE: Certain science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree holders may be eligible for additional 17 months of OPT in addition to the regular 12-month OPT.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for OPT the student must:

- ✓ have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year
- ✓ have maintained F-1 status
- ✓ applied for graduation
- ✓ work in a job directly related to the major field of study

IESC requires all students to attend an OPT workshop at the beginning of their final semester. Students will be advised on the application process as well as other important information to maintain legal immigration status. Detailed information for OPT as well as OPT Extension is available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>. Students should always discuss employment authorization requirements with a FSA before starting

J-1 students at CSUN may be eligible to participate in academic training before and after completion of studies. Please consult with your J-1 ARO regarding eligibility requirements.

Social Security Number (SSN)

Social Security Numbers are issued for employment purposes only. Students can apply for a Social Security Number at any Social Security Administration Office. New Students (entering the U.S. on an “Initial” I-20) must wait for a minimum of ten (10) days after their arrival in the United States before applying for a Social Security Number (SSN). This gives USCIS & DHS sufficient time to record your arrival and confirm your immigration status in their databases.

In order to apply for a Social Security Number, students must submit the following documents:

On-Campus Employment

- Completed Letter Request form (available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>) supporting your application for a SSN;
- Copy of letter from on-campus Employer (Must mention Employer Identification Number);
- Valid Passport;
- I-20 form;
- I-94 form;

CPT

- Form I-20 with CPT authorization on page 3;
- Valid Passport; and
- I-94 Card

OPT

- Form I-20 with OPT authorization on page 3;
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD) for OPT;
- Valid Passport; and
- I-94 Card

Change/Update of Personal Information

Students must notify IESC of any changes or updates to their personal information within 10 days so that their SEVIS records can be updated accordingly.

Change of Address

Update your address by logging in to your CSUN Student Portal account. Once you have updated the personal information section, IESC will update your new address in SEVIS.

Name Change/Correction

As a general rule, the name on the I-20 must match a student’s passport. Students who change their name (i.e. get married) must update their passport immediately. Once this is done, students can request a new I-20 based on that name change and obtain a new visa when needed.

For consistency, the I-94 should reflect the original name until the student exits the US. When students re-enter the US with a new visa, the I-94 will then reflect the name change. Please make copies of all documents for your records and to submit to IESC.

Change in Financial Sponsor

If there is a change in financial sponsorship during a student’s academic program, s/he must submit updated financial documents (International Student Financial Affidavit Form and bank statement) to IESC so that his/her SEVIS record can be updated accordingly.

Third Party Consent

It is best for students to contact the IESC themselves. Students who are unable to contact the IESC themselves to pick-up/drop-off documents or discuss their immigration/academic status may authorize friends or family members to contact us on their behalf. Students must give permission in writing to IESC. Students should complete the [Third Party Consent Form](#) and send to the appropriate Foreign Student Advisor. The friend or family member will have to show a picture ID and sign for the document.

Important: Students may **not** request friends or family members to process the I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification Form. Students should report to the IESC so that an FSA can verify the original documents that verify the employment authorization and identity of each student.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

In the event of an emergency, natural disaster, etc., foreign students will be advised to contact their foreign student advisor and check the website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis> for information and guidance. They can email sevis.source@dhs.gov to report their location and contact information. Student should also contact their local embassy or consulate office for country specific updates.

Department/Office	Location	Hours of Operation	Telephone	Website
Fire, Paramedics, and Police (for emergencies only)		24 hours	9-1-1	
Police for non-emergencies			(818) 677-2111	
Ambulance (Paramedics) non-emergencies			(818) 701-7817	
CSUN Helpline		6PM to 12AM Sun.- Thurs. 7PM to 10 PM Friday & Saturday	(818) 349-4357 Or (818) 677-5552	
Klotz Student Health Center	SHC		818-677-3666	http://www.csun.edu/~shcenter
Suicide Prevention	BH 520		(818) 677-2366	
Escort Service, Community Service, Matador Patrol: Department of Public Safety	Corner of Prairie & Darby streets		(818) 677-5042	
Admissions and Records	BH 100		(818) 677-3700	http://www.csun.edu/anr/
Career Center	UN 105		(818) 677-2878	http://www.csun.edu/career/
Disability Resources (Center on Disabilities)	BH 110		(818) 677-2684	http://www.csun.edu/cod/
Graduate Studies Research and International Programs (GRIP)	UN 265		(818) 677-2138	http://www.csun.edu/graduatestudies/
Graduation Evaluations: UGRD	BH-150		(818) 677-3781	

Graduation Evaluations: GRAD	UN 265		(818) 677-4800	http://www.csun.edu/a&r/grad/
Human Resources	UN 165		(818) 677-2101	http://www-admn.csun.edu/ohrs/
Intensive English Program	BK 193		(818) 677-3923	http://tsengcollege.csun.edu/iep/index.html
International Admissions	BH 150		(818) 677-3760	http://www.csun.edu/a&r/intl/
Learning Resource Center	BH 408		(818) 677-2033	http://www.csun.edu/lrc/
National Center on Deafness	JC 107		(818) 677-2054(V/TTY)	http://www.csun.edu/ncod/
Public Safety (Campus Police)			(818) 677-2111	http://www.admn.csun.edu/publicsafety/
Housing, Student Housing & Conference Services	Residential Life		(818) 677-2160	http://housing.csun.edu/
Scholarship and Financial Aid	BH 130		(818) 677-4907	http://www.csun.edu/finaid/scholarships.html
Testing Center	BH 225		(818) 677-2369	http://www.csun.edu/testing/
University Cash Services	BH 100		(818) 677-2318	http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/
University Counseling Services	BH 520		(818) 677-2366	http://www.csun.edu/counseling/
University Student Union	USU		(818) 677-2491	http://usu.csun.edu
Academic Advisement Centers				
College of Arts, Media, and Communications	NH 135		(818) 677-2024	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Business Administration and Economics	JH 2113		(818) 677-3537	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Engineering and Computer Science	JD 1501		(818) 677-2191	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Health and Human Development	SQ 111		(818) 677-2883	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Humanities	JR 240		(818) 677-4767	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Science and Mathematics	EH 2126		(818) 677-4558	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html
College of Social and Behavioral Science	SH 204		(818) 677-2658	http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Academic Progress

1. What is a unit?
 - College progress is measured in UNITS. A semester unit in a lecture class can be described as one hour per week per semester. For example: If you enroll in a 3-unit class, you are enrolling in a class that meets for three hours a week.
2. What is a full-time course load for international students?
 - Undergraduate students/2nd bachelors must enroll in a minimum of 12 units each semester.
 - Graduate students must enroll in a minimum of 8.0 units each semester.
3. What is the unofficial transcript?
 - The unofficial transcript is an informal record of all the classes a student has taken at CSUN as well as his/her grades and GPA. Students can print their unofficial transcript by logging on to the web portal www.csun.edu/portal.
4. What is a DPR?
 - DPR stands for Degree Progress Report. It can be obtained at the web portal. It is a summary of the units an undergraduate student has completed, the remaining units as well as other requirements for the completion of his/her degree.

Maintaining Student Status

5. When is it OK to be a part-time student?

You always need to request pre-approval to be a part-time student. You may be permitted to enroll in a part-time course load under one of the following SEVIS approved categories:

 - Initial difficulty with reading requirements
 - Initial difficulty with the English language
 - Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
 - You are in your final semester and have only a few units remaining to graduate.
 - You are ill or have a medical condition that requires a reduced course load. Written statement from a qualified medial practitioner required.
 - Improper course level placement
6. What is Classified Status?
 - Incoming graduate students are generally admitted conditionally and held to meeting certain eligibility criteria such as, the UDWPE, pre- requisite classes, and/or Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, etc. Until they do so, they are considered to be “conditionally classified.” Refer to your academic advisor for more information.
7. How do I achieve Classified Status?
 - Graduate Students are required to meet the requirements of their academic department before they can achieve classified status.
8. What is a “Reinstatement of F1 status”?
 - Students who fall out of legal immigration status may request a reinstatement to legal student status either by travelling out of the U.S. and re-entering on an “Initial” I-20, or by submitting an application to USCIS. Students must meet with a FSA for information regarding options, and procedures. A detailed Reinstatement information handout is available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>

Registration/Classes

9. When do classes begin?
 - Verify start dates for each semester in the relevant Schedule of Classes.

10. How do I register for classes?

- Log into the Web Portal at www.csun.edu
- Click on Student Center SOLAR and follow the instructions for enrollment.

11. When should I register for classes?

The best time to register/enroll in classes is on your assigned enrollment appointment. This is your first available opportunity to register for classes and will give you the best selection of classes.

12. What do I do if all my classes are full?

- If all classes are full, it is the student's responsibility to look for all possible options. If no options are available before classes begin, then students must "crash" classes.

13. What does "crash" a class mean and how do I "crash" a class?

- Students will attend more than one section of each class beginning the first day of classes and participate in the class as though they are registered.
- Students can also request a "Unit Requirement Letter" from the IESC which states that international students are required by USCIS to enroll fulltime. This letter simply clarifies your requirements for full time enrollment to faculty. It is not a guarantee that you will get classes.
- You can either request the professor in person to add you to the class or you may e-mail the professor.
- If there is a seat available, the professor will give you a permission number, which you will use to add the class via the portal during the Add/drop period or at Admissions and Records during the late registration period.

14. What is the difference between a ticket number and a permission number?

- A ticket number can be found online or in the schedule of classes. Use this number to register for the class before classes begin.
- A permission number is used if a student is enrolling in the class after classes have already started.
- Be aware that a permission number expires by a certain date. If the permission number expires, request the professor to give you a new one.

15. What happens if I do not register full-time by the Add/Drop deadline?

- Students who fail to register full time by the Add/Drop deadline for each semester and do not have approved part time status, will be considered "out of status." This means that they have not maintained their legal immigration status. Their SEVIS record will be terminated, and they will have to file for reinstatement with USCIS.

16. Can I take online classes at CSUN if I am an international student?

- International undergraduate students may take no more than 3 units of online classes each semester provided they enroll in 9 units of regular classes.
- International graduate students may take no more than 3 units of online classes each semester provided the remaining units (5 units) are taken as regular classes.

17. I have only one class left to take in my final semester, could it be an online class?

- If you have left to take one class to graduate, this class must be an in-class traditional course to be in compliance with legal guidelines governing your F-1 status.

Payments/fees

18. How do I pay for my classes and when is the deadline?

- Go to <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/> for updated information on fee payment methods and deadlines for each semester. Students who fail to pay by the deadline will be automatically disenrolled from classes. Students who wish to utilize the Installment Payment Plan (IPP) must contact University Cash Services in Bayramian Hall and sign a contract. Students who receive loans, scholarships, etc. from their home countries are responsible for making sure that the university receives all paperwork and payments on time.
- IESC does not require ANY fees for the services it provides to international students. No fees, under any circumstances, shall be submitted to IESC.

19. Where can I get detailed information on fees and payment methods?

- Information on fee amounts and payment methods is available at: <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/>
- Please note that you will not be able to send a direct wire transfer from your home country to the university.

20. Does the university accept demand drafts to pay for tuition and fees?

- Payments made by demand drafts brought from foreign countries are acceptable if the bank has a branch in the United States.
- It is advisable to bring one demand draft for your first semester fees and if necessary, a separate demand draft for the second semester. Please make sure you understand the university refund policy if submitting a larger amount of money than required for your first semester.

21. Does the university accept wire transfers to pay for tuition and fees?

- The university does not currently accept wire transfers for payments. Please see <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ucs/> for acceptable payment options.

22. Can I send my fees to IESC?

- IESC does not require ANY fees for the services it provides to international students. No fees, under any circumstances, shall be submitted or mailed to IESC.

Advisement

23. What is academic advisement and how do I contact an academic advisor?

- Students need to communicate with an advisor in their academic department. This person will assist you with selecting classes for each semester.
- Important: You must consult with a FSA to make sure your academic plans fit in with immigration regulations.
- Visit <http://www.csun.edu/ugs/advisement.html> for information on college based Advisement Centers.

Employment

24. How do I find a job on campus?

- Students can visit the Human Resources website at <http://www-admn.csun.edu/ohrs/employment>, then click on “Internal Applicants” and log in with your user name and password for a list of job openings for student assistants or
- Visit various campus departments and ask for job openings for student assistants.
- Graduate students may communicate with their graduate advisor about teaching assistantships or graduate assistantships.

Purchases

25. How do I buy books?

- Students can go to the web portal and look up their classes to see which books are needed. Students can purchase them online from this website and either have them delivered to them, or held at the bookstore for pickup.
- Alternatively, students can purchase them directly from the campus bookstore or any other bookstore.

26. How do I purchase a parking permit?

- Visit <http://www-admn.csun.edu/parking/> for information and payment.

27. Where can I obtain a CSUN ID card?

- A CSUN Photo ID card can be purchased at Bayramian Hall, Room 100 for \$5.00. Students will be required to show a photo ID such as a Driver's License or Passport.

Immunizations

28. Where do I show proof of immunization to Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Rubeola (MMR)?

- Show proof of Measles, Mumps Rubella and Rubeola immunizations at the Klotz Student Health Center. If students do not have a letter from their doctor in English stating the date on which they received the immunization, they will have to either take the immunization, or a blood test to prove immunity, or sign a waiver.
- Contact the Student Health Center for more information on costs and availability.

Health Insurance

29. Where do I purchase health insurance?

- Health insurance can be purchased online at www.csuhealthlink.com

30. Alternative Health Insurance Requirements:

- CSUN offers a health insurance plan which is easy to purchase and convenient to use. International students are able to use an alternative insurance policy to meet the health insurance requirement. In order for the IESC to approve a student's alternative health insurance plan, the student must provide to the IESC documentation from the insurance company of the following criteria:
 - Student's First and Last Name
 - Effective start and end date of the policy—students must be covered throughout the entire semester
 - Medical Coverage of at least \$100,000
 - Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Coverage of at least \$30,000
 - Deductible may not exceed \$500
 - All information must be translated into English
 - All coverage amounts must be converted to U.S. dollars

31. How do I submit an insurance claim?

- Go to www.csuhealthlink.com and click on your plan's Claim Provider to access your claim form.

Housing

32. How can I get housing on-campus?

- Information about on-campus housing, applications and contracts can be obtained at <http://housing.csun.edu/>

33. How can I find housing off-campus?

- Information about off-campus housing can be obtained at <http://housing.csun.edu/> or,
- Students can use online resources to find off-campus housing. Please exercise caution in your search as CSUN will not take responsibility for any arrangements made by students.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

34. I need information about Scholarships and Financial Aid.

- International students are not eligible for Financial Aid. A few merit based scholarships are offered by CSUN. For more information visit the Scholarship and Financial Aid Office <http://www.csun.edu/finaid/scholarships.html>

Graduation and Beyond

35. How do I apply for graduation?

- Undergraduate students may apply for graduation once they have completed 90 units (including work-in-progress) or approximately one year prior to your planned graduation date. At least one semester of work must be completed in residence at CSUN before a student's graduation application can be reviewed by the Office of Graduation Evaluations.
 - Step 1: Complete the Bachelor's Degree and Diploma Application Form and print the document, <http://www.csun.edu/anr/forms/index.html> and consult an academic advisor as needed.
 - Step 2: Access My Academic Planner (MAP) through the Student Center SOLAR at the web portal. Use MAP to plan your remaining coursework in future terms.
 - Step 3: Review your MAP and planned coursework with your department academic advisor. Be sure to secure his/her signature for the major on the Application for Bachelor's Degree and Diploma.
 - Step 4: Submit the completed Application for Bachelor's Degree and diploma and a copy of your MAP along with the appropriate fee to Admissions and Records at the Student Services Center in Bayramian Hall during the appropriate application filing period.
 - Step 5: Meet all requirements and submit documents for graduation evaluation by the last day to confirm awarding the degree.

If students have any other questions regarding graduation please refer to Admissions and Records, <http://www.csun.edu/a&t/>

- Graduate students may file for graduation in the semester preceding their final semester. Complete the Masters Degree and Diploma Application from <http://www.csun.edu/anr/forms/index.html> and submit to Admissions and Records along with the appropriate processing fee.

36. What options do I have after graduation?

- Apply for OPT either 90 days prior to graduation date or no later than 60 days from the graduation date. **OR**
- Leave the US within 60 days of graduation date and return to home country, **OR**
- Apply for another degree program within the same university, **OR**
- Transfer to another school within 60 days of graduation date.

37. What is the difference between graduation and commencement?

- Graduation is the completion of studies. It is when you complete your studies and meet all graduation requirements that the actual degree or certificate is conferred upon students. It is the process of posting the credential to a student's academic record.
- There are three graduation dates in an academic year - Fall, Spring and Summer.
- Commencement is a ceremony to celebrate graduation. CSUN has one commencement ceremony in the spring of each year.

Travel/Re-entry Information

38. I recently traveled and entered or re-entered the United States with my CSUN I-20. What do I do now?

- Please submit photocopies of pages 1 and 3 of the I-20, and the front and back of your new I-94 card to the IESC within 15 days of your arrival.
- If you renewed your F-1 visa, you must submit a copy of the new visa to IESC.

Documents/Requests to IESC

39. Where do I find all the forms required for making requests to IESC?

- All forms required by IESC are available at <http://www.csun.edu/international>

40. How do I request a release of my SEVIS record to CSUN?

- Go to the international student office in your current school and request the international student advisor to release your SEVIS record to CSUN.

41. How do I request CSUN to release my SEVIS record to another school?

- When you request your SEVIS record to be transferred out of CSUN, the IESC requires you to complete and sign a Transfer Out Request Form. Proof of admission to your new school is required.

42. How do I pick up my CSUN I-20?

- Transfer students must pick up their I-20 from IESC no later than the 15th day of classes in their first semester at CSUN.

Transferable Units

43. How do I get credit for classes I took at another educational institution?

- Students who take classes at other schools and want those units transferred to CSUN are responsible for making sure that official transcripts reach Admissions & Records. Students are advised to allow for sufficient time to evaluate and process transfer credits.

Students are advised to consult with an academic advisor in their major department to make sure that courses taken outside of CSUN are transferable.

Remember, you can always visit IESC during walk in hours to consult with a FSA if you have additional questions.

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