



# Office of International Services (OIS)

## *Information Session for New F-1 and J-1 Degree Students*

*Intended for students who have entered the United States as an F-1/J-1 student*



## Overview

- I. Introduction to the Office of International Services (OIS)
- II. Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status
- III. F-1/J-1 Employment Options
- IV. Immigration Status Verification (ISV)
- V. Life in the U.S.
- VI. OIS Contact Information



# ***Introduction to the Office of International Services (OIS)***



# Office of International Services (OIS)

OIS supports international students and scholars as they strive to achieve their educational, professional, and personal objectives. Recognizing the many benefits of international educational exchange, OIS advocates for these benefits on campus, locally and nationally.

OIS is a resource center to help members of the USC international community make the most of their USC experience:

- Answer any questions F-1/J-1 students and scholars may have regarding their immigration status or benefits
- Provide one-on-one and group advising and support
- Assist students with navigating life in the U.S.





# ***Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status***



## Full-Time Enrollment Requirements

To maintain F-1/J-1 immigration status, students must enroll full-time in courses that apply to their degree requirements during each fall and spring semester.

Students admitted for Summer Session are required to enroll full-time during their first summer at USC.



# Full-Time Enrollment Requirements

**Students are considered full-time when enrolled in a minimum number of units, based on their degree level:**

- Undergraduate students – *12 units*
- Master's students – *8 units*
- Graduate Certificate students – *8 units*
- Ph.D. students – *6 units*
- Master's/Ph.D. students with an assistantship – *6 units*



## Online Course Restrictions

- No more than one online course (up to 3 units) are applicable to the full-time enrollment requirement
- After meeting the full-time enrollment minimum for each level as described below, any additional units of coursework may be either in-person or online

Degree Level	Course Enrollment
Undergraduate <i>12 unit minimum</i>	9 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)
Master's or Graduate Certificate <i>8 unit minimum</i>	5 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)
Master's/Ph.D. with an assistantship or Ph.D. <i>6 unit minimum</i>	3 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)





## Reduced Course Load (RCL)

**F-1/J-1 students may qualify for exception(s) to the full-time enrollment requirement for the fall and spring semester if they meet certain criteria for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) category:**

- 1) Academic Difficulty
- 2) Medical Reason



# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

## RCL due to Academic Difficulty (first semester ONLY)

- A student may qualify for an academic difficulty RCL if they meet one of the below criteria:
  - initial difficulty with reading requirements;
  - initial difficulty with the English language;
  - unfamiliarity with US teaching methods; or
  - improper course level placement
- Students who file an RCL must be enrolled at least part-time (6 units for undergraduate, 4 units for masters, and 3 units for doctorate)
- An academic difficulty RCL can be used only *once per degree level*



# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

## RCL due to Medical Reasons

- OIS may authorize a medical RCL due to a temporary health (physical or mental) condition(s) with an appropriate doctor's letter recommending the RCL for medical reasons
- To submit a medical RCL, F-1/J-1 students must provide a doctor's letter with their RCL submission to OIS
- No more than 12 months total of a medical RCL is permitted per degree level
- Must receive treatment from a US doctor while remaining in the US
  - Students who need to take a semester off to receive medical treatment from outside the US will need to apply for a Standard Leave of Absence (LOA) instead of a Medical RCL.



## Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Students who meet criteria for an RCL must submit their RCL request to OIS via Trojan International by the end of the second week of the classes.





## SEVIS Final Semester Check

Students who are in their final semester of study and only have a few units remaining to meet academic program requirements are exempt from the full course load requirement. For example, if you only have 4 units remaining in your degree program, you do not have to enroll in additional units to maintain your immigration status.

Students who are in their final semester and are taking less than a full course load must submit a [SEVIS Final Semester Check eForm](#) through Trojan International.





# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status: Address Updates

Immigration regulations require all international students to **report any change in their local address to OIS within 10 days of moving.**

Students must submit the [SEVIS U.S. Address and Contact Update](#) in Trojan International to ensure their U.S. address gets updated in SEVIS. The submission of this form only updates your U.S. address in SEVIS. It does not update any other university system.

Students must [enter their U.S. address in the correct format](#) for their information to be updated in SEVIS.





# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status: International Travel

## Traveling Abroad

- Students may travel internationally during scheduled [university breaks](#)
- Students returning to the U.S. from a temporary break should ensure they have the required documents to re-enter the country







# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status: International Travel

## Required Documents for Re-entry to the U.S.

- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of the re-entry to the U.S.)
- Valid F-1/J-1 visa in passport (except students from Canada)
- I-20/DS-2019 with a [valid travel signature from OIS](#)

## Recommended Supporting Documents

- Financial support documents (proof of funding)
- USC acceptance letter
- Paper receipt of [Form I-901: SEVIS fee payment](#)
- Copy of USC transcript and/or proof of course registration





# ***Employment Options for F-1 & J-1 Degree Students***



# F-1/J-1 Employment Options

## Types of Employment

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1) On-campus Employment                | (F-1 & J-1) |
| 2) Curricular Practical Training (CPT) | (F-1 only)  |
| 3) Optional Practical Training (OPT)   | (F-1 only)  |
| 4) Academic Training (AT)              | (J-1 only)  |

## On-Campus Employment (F-1 & J-1)

- Does not require separate work authorization
- Limited to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters
- May work up to 40 hours per week during summer and vacation breaks, if approved by the hiring USC department
- Review the [OIS website for additional information](#)



# F-1 Employment Options

## Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Authorization for paid off-campus internships
- Requires separate work authorization from the student's academic department and OIS
- Authorized during a student's degree program
- Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)

## Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Authorization for employment after the student graduates
- Requires OIS and USCIS authorization
- Employment can be paid or unpaid and needs to be related to the student's field of study
- Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)



# J-1 Employment

## Academic Training (AT)

- Pre-Completion AT: Authorization for employment before the student graduates
- Post-Completion AT: Authorization for employment after the student graduates
- Requires authorization from the student's academic department & OIS
- Employment can be paid or unpaid and needs to be related to the student's field of study
- Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)



## F-1/J-1 Employment Options: Social Security Number (SSN)

- If a student finds a paid job in one of the categories mentioned under F-1/J-1 employment options, they are [eligible to apply for the SSN](#)
- SSN is 9-digit number issued to citizens, permanent residents and temporary (working) non-residents by the [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#)
- Primary purpose on an SSN is to track individuals for taxation purposes; it is not intended to be used for identification purposes

Students and scholars who are not eligible for an SSN may be eligible for a [Tax Identification Number \(ITIN\)](#) to use for filing taxes during tax season reporting.



# Trojan International

The Office of International Services uses [Trojan International](#), an immigration compliance and case management tool, to streamline how students request documents and services from OIS. Trojan International is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) SEVIS system and USC's Student Information System (SIS).

Students will need their USC NetIDs to access Trojan International.



# *Immigration Status Verification (ISV)*





# Immigration Status Verification (ISV)

ISV is a mandatory online check-in procedure for international students that verifies their entry to the U.S. as well as their immigration status to ensure the student is eligible to start an academic program at USC for their upcoming start date. Once all documentation is submitted, OIS will validate the SEVIS record.

Upon arrival to the U.S., all new international F-1/ J-1 students are required to complete Immigration Status Verification (ISV) via Trojan International. Refer to the [ISV webpage for instructions](#).

**Failure to complete ISV in a timely manner will affect their eligibility to legally remain in the U.S.**



# Immigration Status Verification (ISV)

## Immigration Documents

### Passport

- F-1/J-1 students are required to always maintain a valid passport
  - Should be valid for at least 6 months into the future, especially for re-entry into the U.S. and when applying for a visa
- Students must contact their local embassy or consulate for instructions on renewing their passport
  - Students may continue to use the expired passport with the valid visa, along with the new passport, when traveling





# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Immigration Documents

## F-1/J-1 Visa

- Students may stay in the U.S. on an expired F-1/J-1 visa if they maintain their immigration status by being in possession of a valid I-20/DS-2019 and an [I-94 Arrival/Departure record](#)
- **Visas cannot be renewed inside the U.S.;** they must be renewed at a U.S. embassy/consulate abroad
  - Review the [U.S. embassy/consulate](#) website for details on the visa renewal process including required documents
  - Check [visa wait times](#) prior to renewing to ensure you have enough time to renew and re-enter the U.S.
    - Due to security checks, it is not recommended students use the period of winter or spring breaks to renew since they may be unable to return by the first day of classes





# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Immigration Documents

## **SEVIS and the Form I-20/DS-2019**

- The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based system of the federal government that maintains information on international students (F-1/J-1 visa holders) while in the U.S.
- School create and issue the Form I-20 for F-1 students and Form DS-2019 for J-1 students via SEVIS



# Immigration Status Verification (ISV)

## Immigration Documents

Form I-20

**SAMPLE**

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: **NO0**

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME ■■■■■■■■■■	GIVEN NAME ■■■■■■■■■■	Class of Admission <div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">F-1</div> ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME ■■■■■■■■■■	PASSPORT NAME ■■■■■■■■■■	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH CHINA	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP CHINA	
CITY OF BIRTH CHANG	DATE OF BIRTH 05 DECEMBER 1997	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE	ADMISSION NUMBER ■■■■■■■■■■	

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

SCHOOL NAME University of Southern California University of Southern California	SCHOOL ADDRESS Office of International Services, 649 West 34th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90089
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Sarah Butler Assistant Director	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE LOS214F00291000 30 JANUARY 2021

**PROGRAM OF STUDY**

EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE Not Required	MAJOR 1 Industrial Engineering 14.3501	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Not Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES English language fluency is vital to student success at USC. However, USC does not set minimum scores for admission. The university uses benchmark English test scores to determine whether an admitted student needs to take an internal English placement exam upon arrival. Top scorers skip the writing and oral skills assessment test to place students in specific required English courses while pursuing their academic degree.	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE 16 DECEMBER 2020

**START OF CLASSES**  
15 January 2021

**PROGRAM START/END DATE**  
15 JANUARY 2021 - 17 DECEMBER 2025

**FINANCIALS**

ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR 9 MONTHS	STUDENTS FUNDING FOR 9 MONTHS
Tuition and Fees \$ 52,210	Personal Funds \$ 0
Living Expenses \$ 22,482	Scholarship \$ 74,692
Expense of Dependents (0) \$ 0	None \$ 0
None \$ 0	On-Campus Employment \$ 0
<b>TOTAL \$ 74,692</b>	<b>TOTAL \$ 74,692</b>

**REMARKS**

**SCHOOL ATTESTATION**

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

X

SIGNATURE OF: Sarah Butler, Assistant Director	DATE ISSUED 05 November 2020	PLACE ISSUED Los Angeles, CA
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**STUDENT ATTESTATION**

ICE Form I-20 (04/30/2021) Page 1 of 4





# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Immigration Documents

## I-94 Arrival Record

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>

The screenshot shows the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website for I-94 information. The header includes the agency name and logo, with the tagline "Securing America's Borders". On the right, it displays "OMB No. 1651-0111" and "Expiration Date: 11/30/2014". The main content area has two tabs: "Get I-94 Information" (selected) and "I-94 FAQ". Below the tabs, the heading "Get I-94 Information" is followed by instructions: "The following information is required to retrieve your I-94 information. Enter the information as it appears on the travel document you used to enter the United States." and a disclaimer: "This website provides information maintained in CBP systems. The information returned may not reflect applications submitted to or benefits received by U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or Immigration and Customs Enforcement." The form fields include: "Last/Surname:" with a text input; "First (Given) Name:" with a text input; "Birth Date:" with three separate inputs for "Year (YYYY)", "Month:" (a dropdown menu), and "Day (DD)"; "Passport Number:" with a text input; and "Country of Issuance:" with a dropdown menu. At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Get Most Recent I-94" and "Get Travel History". A note at the very bottom states: "Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number."



# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Immigration Documents

## I-94 Travel History

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>

View Travel History

*I-94 travel history includes up to 100 arrivals and departures spanning the last five years*

Enter Traveler Info | **Travel History Results**

### Travel History Results

Passport Number [REDACTED]  
Passport Country of Issuance: China

	Date	Type	Location
1	2020-05-16	Departure	LOS
2	2020-01-07	Arrival	LOS
3	2019-12-18	Departure	LOS
4	2019-08-10	Arrival	LOS
5	2019-04-27	Departure	LOS
6	2018-09-07	Arrival	LOS

Do you have a pending Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for your U.S. travel history? (FOIA is a law that gives the public the right to request access to records from any federal agency.) [learn more](#)

A FOIA request is a written or electronic request received by CBP from any individual or entity requesting records including databases held or believed to be held by an agency. You can find additional information about FOIA and FOIA requests at <https://www.cbp.gov/site/policy-notices/foia/>. If you submitted a formal request through the FOIA office at CBP to obtain travel history and received a FOIA number, you can cancel your request on this website if the information you received satisfies that request. You must enter your FOIA number in the space provided and select the "Request FOIA Cancellation" button. The FOIA case numbers begins with CBP and is followed by the year submitted and 6 alphanumeric characters (e.g. CBP-2014-XXXXXX). The cancel button is only located in the travel history section. When you chose this option, your FOIA request will be formally cancelled. You will not hear back from the FOIA office.

Yes  No





# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Registration Holds

## **STU50 Hold – *Removed by OIS***

- Placed on graduate student records
- Restricts course registration

## **STU60 Hold – *Removed by OIS***

- Placed on undergraduate student records
- Does not restrict course registration

## **ALI01 Hold – *Removed by [USC American Language Institute \(ALI\)](#)***

- Placed on all students who have not met the USC English proficiency requirement
- Restricts course registration
- Questions? Email [askali@usc.edu](mailto:askali@usc.edu)



# Immigration Status Verification (ISV) Registration Holds

## **ADM40 Hold – *Removed by [USC Registrar](#)***

- Placed on students who are required to submit their previous degree documents to IERF
- Does not restrict course registration
- Deadline to submit is by end of student's first semester
- Contact: <https://ierf.org/uni-evaluation/usc/>, [usc@ierf.org](mailto:usc@ierf.org)



# *Life in the U.S.*



# Life in the U.S.: Punctuality

Being on time is very important

What is “on time”?

- About 5 minutes early

Consequences of tardiness

- Lose appointments, negative impact on reputation

Proper notification

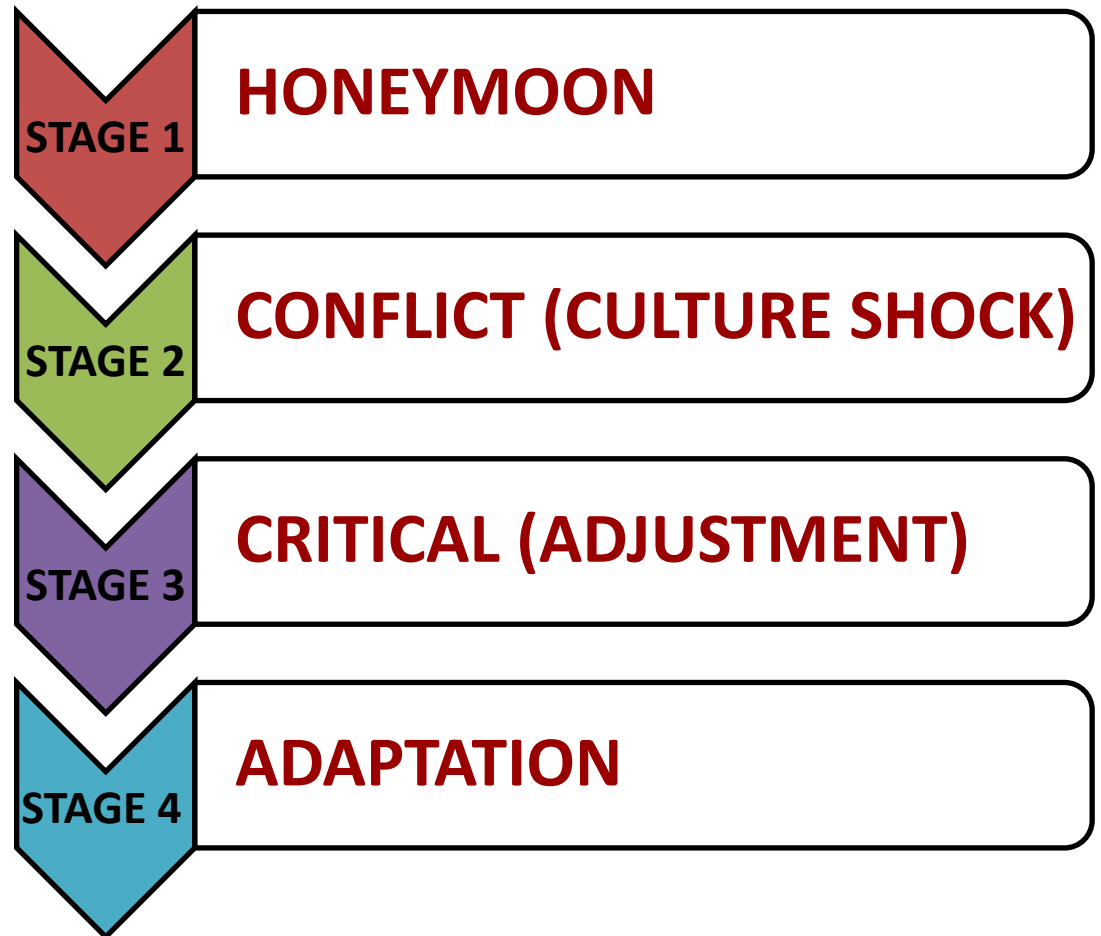
- Call/email if you are going to be late





# Life in the U.S.: Cultural Adjustment

After arrival in the U.S., it is common for students to experience a period of cultural adjustment





# Life in the U.S.: Cultural Adjustment

## **STAGE 1: Honeymoon Stage**

- Taking care of practical matters
- Observing new culture/environment
- Meeting new friend/staff/professors
- Seeing/trying new things
- Able to understand/be understood (if English is not first language)

## **STAGE 2: Conflict (Culture Shock) Stage**

- Negative feelings (isolation, frustration and depression)
- Homesickness
- Problems with subtleties of language
- No time to make new friends/time spent with friends from home culture
- Complain about host culture/blame for problems



# Life in the U.S.: Cultural Adjustment

## STAGE 3: Critical (Adjustment) Stage

- Choose to explore a new culture
- Accept the challenge of self-reflection
- Assume responsibility for own cultural adjustment

## STAGE 4: Adaptation Stage

- Language skills improved
- Better understand actions of the members of the host culture
- Made friends in the host culture
- Developed greater tolerance for strange and new environment
- Become a mediator between two cultures



## Life in the U.S.: Health and Wellness

- Medical centers and other health administrators may ask personal questions to gather information in order to provide you with better, individually-tailored health services – *this is a normal part of the intake process*
- In the U.S., medical information is legally required to remain confidential and private
- In the U.S., it is common and encouraged to seek professional help if you need help with a medical or mental health issue
  - Counselors and therapists are trained to listen to you and offer help; they can provide treatment for issues such as homesickness, stress, depression, social anxiety, and more
- Are you worried about a fellow Trojan are unsure how to help? [Submit a Trojans Care for Trojans \(TC4T\)](#) report to connect them with important resources
- Review comprehensive list of [USC Health and Wellness Resources](#)



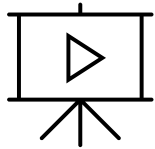


## Life in the U.S.: California Driver's License

- Students are encouraged to obtain a California Driver's License from the [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (DMV) if they plan to drive a car in the US
- California **does not** recognize an International Driving Permit (IDP), International Driver's License or an International License as a valid form of driver's license
- A California driver's license is required to purchase a car and obtain auto insurance
- Apply for the driver's license after the add/drop deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> semester at USC
- Social Security Number (SSN) is not required to apply for a driver's license
- Must pass written and driving exams



# Life in the U.S.: Beware of Scams



Watch the [OIS video](#) for information on how to protect yourself from scams

**Beware of scammers!**

Know the facts.  
Follow safety tips.

If you've been the victim of a scam or suspect you've been scammed, contact:  
USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) (213) 740-6000

### Know the Facts

**IRS or other government agencies will never:**

- Ask for money over the phone or online
- Request or accept payments in the form of gift cards or Bitcoin

**Law enforcement agencies will never:**

- Request payment of citations, warrants, etc., via the phone

### Safety Tips

- Never provide your credit card information or your Social Security number over the phone or online to someone you don't know
- If you visit a website that asks for your Social Security number, don't provide it
- If you receive an email from a stranger or company asking you to click on a hyperlink and/or open an attachment and enter your financial information, delete the email
- Do not respond to friend requests from strangers
- Hang up on telemarketers



# Life in the U.S.:

## Resources for International Students

### Campus Involvement and Student Organizations

- Get involved with various nationality-based or interest-based student organizations for community support
- For more information, see [Campus Activities](#)

### Los Angeles (LA) Activities

- Explore LA museums, visit amusement parks and enjoy the numerous beach/hiking trails

### International Update (IU)

- Stay up-to-date with the weekly OIS e-newsletter
- [Subscribe today](#)



# ***OIS Contact Information***



# Contact OIS

The Office of International Services provides assistance to our international community via email, one-on-one advising via Zoom, or through online group advising/webinar sessions.

## **OIS Live (Virtual Front Desk/Drop-in Advising via Zoom)**

OIS Advisors are available for one-on-one consultation Monday through Friday via Zoom. Advising hours and Zoom meeting link are posted on the [OIS website](#). Appointment not required.

## **Zoom Group Advising**

OIS will offer group advising sessions via Zoom. Refer to the [OIS eCalendar](#) to view upcoming session topics.

## **Email**

For all F-1 student related inquiries: [ois@usc.edu](mailto:ois@usc.edu)

For all J-1 student related inquiries: [J1student@usc.edu](mailto:J1student@usc.edu)