

# The Office of International Student Services

## Center for International Affairs

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Website: <http://www.case.edu/international/iss/>

As you interact with international students, you may find it helpful to be aware of the Office of International Student Services (ISS) and the services we offer. Our office is responsible for providing a variety of support services to international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Our primary responsibility is to assist international students with immigration matters. We prepare visa documents, advise students on the visa application process, help students to maintain their legal status while they are studying at CWRU, and assist them with applications for employment authorization when appropriate. We provide a wealth of practical information ranging from how to obtain a U.S. Social Security card to how to obtain an Ohio driver's license. We also provide initial consultation to international students who are faced with academic, financial, and personal concerns. Although international students may feel most comfortable bringing their concerns to us, we frequently refer the students to other departments within the university. If a student is unfamiliar with healthcare practices in the U.S. or is not entirely comfortable with the idea of going to the University Counseling Service, for example, we would encourage the student to take advantage of the university's services. We might call ahead on the student's behalf, or we may even accompany the student when he/she goes to make a first appointment. In all that we do, we try to be sensitive to the variety of cultural differences that international students bring to our campus.

We would like to make two specific requests of CWRU faculty members:

First, we ask that you keep in mind the fact that international students are subject to immigration regulations which do not affect U.S. citizens or permanent residents. **For instance, our students are required to maintain full-time enrollment (a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester for undergraduates and 9 credit hours/semester for graduate students until they are enrolled in 651 or 701 research.)** For international students, a fairly routine action, like dropping a course, could jeopardize their legal status in the United States. If an international student comes to you with a request to take less than a full-time course load, please contact our office. There are certain circumstances which will permit the student to take a reduced course load, but we will need documentation for the student's file. There are many other issues which may arise in your work with international students, but the question of full-time enrollment occurs most frequently.

Second, we'd like to remind you that international students experience profound cultural differences when they first come to the U.S. Cultural adjustment, coupled with the stress of academic rigor and being far from home and family, may result in a period of "culture shock" for these students. Culture shock can manifest itself in many different ways. Tiredness, irritability, lack of motivation, sadness, even physical symptoms like headaches or upset stomachs, all can be signs of culture shock. If you suspect that a student is having adjustment difficulties, please refer the student to ISS.

If you would like to learn more about the Office of International Student Services, feel free to call our office. Also, whenever you have a question regarding an international student, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We're here to help!

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