



# International Student Handbook

For Newly Accepted F-1 Students  
International Student Services

Disclaimer: Information may have changed since the date of this publication.

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# WELCOME!

## INTRODUCTION

Columbus is located in the heart of Ohio and is the "Buckeye State's" capital. A Midwestern hub, Columbus is a short distance from major cities like Cleveland, Chicago, New York and St. Louis.

In our city's downtown neighborhood is Columbus State Community College, centrally and conveniently located and home to over 27,000 students from around the world. We welcome you to the Columbus State family and hope you will use this handbook to find information to help with your transition to the US as an international student, and the Columbus State resources available to help you along the way.



[https://www.globaltravelerusa.com/mothers-day-at-hotel-leveque/dreamstime\\_s\\_103783812/](https://www.globaltravelerusa.com/mothers-day-at-hotel-leveque/dreamstime_s_103783812/)

# WHO WE ARE

## OUR STUDENTS

Columbus State is home to more than 27,000 students and is committed to providing each of them access to an invaluable, affordable education. We are one of the most diverse schools in the region with 130 different countries represented in our student body.

## TYPES OF DEGREES OFFERED

Columbus State is a public, 2-year college with over 200 degree & certificate programs. Associate of Arts/Science degrees (AA/AS) fulfill the requirements of the first 2 years of a bachelor's degree with **guaranteed transfer credit** to any Ohio public and many private colleges/universities. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees provide skills & credentials to enter the workforce immediately, with select transfer options to continue on for a bachelor's degree in the same discipline.

## TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES

Columbus State offers more than 200 transfer opportunities to colleges & universities nationwide. For more information, visit [csc.edu/academics/transfer](https://csc.edu/academics/transfer)

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

## MADISON HALL



### WHERE WE ARE LOCATED

International Student Services (ISS) is located on the lower level of Madison Hall, right under Student Central.

### SERVICES WE OFFER

ISS supports applicants and students with the application process, including immigration compliance, setting long-term goals and support for currently enrolled F-1 students.

### ADVISING HOURS

Current student advising is available for short, walk-in advising sessions. Please check the ISS website for updated advising hours, or make an appointment with an Advisor through email at [istudent@csc.edu](mailto:istudent@csc.edu).

# MEET THE ISS TEAM



**DIANE BRACKBILL**  
Compliance Specialist



**CANDACE ALLEN**  
F-1 Admissions Advisor  
Prospective students and  
applicants



**JO YIN TANG**  
Supervisor of ISS  
Current F-1 student  
Advisor

An illustration on the left side of the page. It features a large, dark blue hand with three blue fingers, positioned as if holding two smaller, yellow hands. The background consists of a light green circle at the top left, a dark blue diagonal shape, and a light green diagonal shape.

# AFTER YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED

CONGRATULATIONS ON  
YOUR ADMISSION TO  
CSCC!

Now that you have your acceptance letter and Form I-20, read the information on how to pay your fees and apply for an F-1 visa.

# SEVIS & VISA APPLICATION

## I-901 SEVIS FEE

Your Form I-20 is attached to an online record called a SEVIS record. You must pay to activate your SEVIS record (I-901 fee) before a consulate will grant you an F1 visa. Be sure to keep a copy of your receipt and ensure the (SEVIS) identification (ID) number on the receipt matches the SEVIS ID number that appears on your Form I-20.

## APPLY FOR A VISA

After paying your I-901 fee, you can apply for an F1 visa at a US embassy or consulate. Visit the U.S. Department of State's website for more information about applying for an F-1 visa. You can also find your nearest embassy or consulate by visiting the U.S. Embassy website.

## PREPARE FOR TRAVEL

Once you receive your visa, check to make sure that you received the right type of visa (F-1) & that your name & date of birth are correct. Remember that a student visa does NOT guarantee entrance into the country, but it does give you permission to arrive at a U.S. port of entry.



## PORT OF ENTRY

Your F-1 visa allows you to arrive at a US port of entry (POE) up to 30 days before your Program Start Date listed on your I-20. You will meet a Customs & Border Patrol (CBP) officer who has the authority to admit or deny you entrance into the country. Have your documents ON HAND when arriving at a POE.

## DOCUMENTS TO HAVE

You must present your Form I-20, as well as your valid visa and passport. It is also a good idea to have your acceptance letter from your school, your evidence of financial support, and the name and telephone number of your DSO.

## RECEIVE AN I-94

If you are admitted into the country as an F-1 visa holder, you will receive an admission stamp in your passport and information on how to find your electronic I-94, or "Arrival and Departure Record." Your I-94 may take several days before it is reflected online. Be sure that your I-94 says Class of Admission: F-1 and your Admit Until Date is "D/S."

## REPORT TO SCHOOL

Soon after your arrival, you are required to report to ISS with copies of your new immigration documents. Find out which documents to bring on the next page.

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**Visit [studyinthestates.dhs.gov](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov)  
for more information**

# SCHOOL REPORTING

## REPORT TO YOUR SCHOOL & DSO

School Reporting is required for new, incoming F-1 students. After your admittance into the US in F-1 status, gather the following documents and bring them with you to the F-1 orientation.

- Original Form I-20
- Copy of your passport biographical page
- Copy of your F-1 visa
- Printed I-94 (can be found at [i94.cbp.dhs.gov](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov))
- Completed School Reporting Form



Passport &  
Visa



Form I-20



Printed I-94



School  
Reporting  
Form

# ORIENTATION & PLACEMENT TESTING

Check your acceptance letter for the F-1 Orientation date. At orientation, you will meet other new F-1 students, register for classes and learn about the support services and resources available to you at Columbus State.

Your presence at F-1 orientation is **mandatory**.

Placement tests in Reading, Writing and Math are required for students who do not have college-ready placement information (TOEFL, IELTS, SAT, ACT scores) or official transcripts with qualifying college credit from a US institution.

You will get your results within 3-5 days of taking the test. Plan to take your placement tests **before** orientation. There are many preparation materials available to you, just ask your ISS advisor.

## REGISTER FOR CLASSES

An Academic Advisor will explain your placement test results with you and discuss the courses for which you will register. If you need help registering for your courses, visit the assistance lab located in Student Central in Madison Hall.



## PAYING FEES AND TUITION DEADLINE

The tuition deadline is always the Wednesday before classes begin. Failure to pay your tuition will result in your entire course schedule being dropped. You can pay your tuition online or in-person at the Cashier's Office in Rhodes Hall.

# MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

## ENROLL FULL TIME

You must enroll in and maintain a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, excluding the Summer Term. Sometimes, F-1 students are not eligible for the summer vacation, for example if your first or final semester is the Summer Term. Check with ISS if you are unsure whether you qualify for the summer vacation.

## KEEP VALID IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

- Information regarding foreign embassies and steps to renew your passport in the U.S. can be found at [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)
- Get a travel signature from your DSO if you plan on traveling out of the country on your I-20. Travel endorsements are valid for 1 year and can be found on page 2 of your I-20.
- If you travel outside of the country on an expired F-1 visa, you must obtain a new visa at a US embassy or consulate before returning to the US.

## FOLLOW PROPER PROCEDURES FOR:

- Extension of stay – if you have not completed your degree program by the Program End Date listed on your I-20
- Change of address or programs of study – contact ISS if you change your address or major within 10 days of doing so
- Transfer to another school – see ISS during walk-in advising if you are considering transferring out of CSCC

## GET WORK AUTHORIZATION

F-1 students are only permitted to work on-campus jobs. Search for a "College Work Study" position in Cornerstone and apply for it. If you qualify, you will be contacted for an interview. If you get the job, you'll get a hiring letter from Human Resources. Bring it to ISS and you will receive paperwork on how to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN). For help with applying for jobs, visit **Career Services** in Nestor Hall.

Off-campus work without ISS authorization is a violation of your F-1 student status. For more information regarding employment, visit <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/employment>

# COLLEGE & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## Transportation from the Airport

Taxis, Uber/Lyft and the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) bus company are all available to pick you up from the John Glenn International Airport (CMH). Prices vary.

## Housing

CSCC does not offer student housing (dorms) and living accommodations are the student's responsibility. There are several hotels within walking distance to CSCC (downtown Columbus) if you are in need of temporary housing. For something more long-term, the following websites can help you get started:

- [ApartmentGuide.com](https://www.apartmentguide.com)
- [Trulia.com](https://www.trulia.com)
- [Zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com)

TIP: There are a lot of great apartments and rooms for rent listed on some controversial websites, but BE CAREFUL when utilizing websites that anyone can post on!

# COLLEGE & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## Finance and Banking

Opening a US checking or savings account is recommended for convenience purposes. Nearly all banks offer student promotions so be sure to ask about them and have your valid CougarID (student ID card) with you at the time of opening your account. Some popular bank companies include:

- Chase Bank
- Huntington Bank
- US Bank
- PNC Bank
- Fifth Third Bank

## International Tuition Payments

Paying your tuition with foreign currency is permitted via FlyWire Money Transfer. For more information, please visit:

- [csc.edu/admissions/international/fees](https://csc.edu/admissions/international/fees)

If using FlyWire, be prepared to pay your tuition several days in advance to avoid missing the tuition payment deadline.



# COLLEGE & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## Health Insurance

ISS strongly recommends investing in a US health insurance plan. Many companies offer health insurance specifically for international students. The company and plan that the student chooses is his/her choice and responsibility. If you have an F-2 dependent (spouse or child) make sure they are covered in your plan. Refer to Resources for International Students for a list of common health insurance companies.

## International Friendships, Inc.

IFI is a community faith-based organization that works in partnership with universities and volunteers to promote friendship and hospitality for international students, scholars and family members. Contact IFI at [info@ifiusa.org](mailto:info@ifiusa.org) if you need help with airport pick-up, temporary housing, or conversation partners.



# COLLEGE & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

For a full list of resources from Columbus State, visit:

[HTTPS://WWW.CSCC.EDU/SERVICES/](https://www.csc.edu/services/)





# INVOLVEMENT

## Student Clubs & Organizations

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

ISA is a student-led organization with more than 80 members from around the world. ISA coordinates events on and off campus to provide you with experiences and a network of friends, without the textbooks!

### HOW TO JOIN

To sign up as a member for ISA, visit [connect.csc.edu](http://connect.csc.edu) and search "International Student Association." Your membership will be approved by a student officer or advisor.



# EXPLORE COLUMBUS

ABOUT COLUMBUS  
[experiencecolumbus.org](http://experiencecolumbus.org)

## ATTRACTIONS

Center of Science & Industry  
(COSI) - [cosi.org](http://cosi.org)

Columbus Zoo & Aquarium -  
[columbuszoo.org](http://columbuszoo.org)

Columbus Museum of Art -  
[columbusmuseum.org](http://columbusmuseum.org)

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Short North Arts District - [shortnorth.org](http://shortnorth.org)

German Village - [germanvillage.com](http://germanvillage.com)

University District - [universitydistrict.org](http://universitydistrict.org)

## INTERNATIONAL GROCERY STORES

Saraga International Grocery

International Market Foods

CAM International Market

## SHOPPING CENTERS

Easton Town Center -  
[eastontowncenter.com](http://eastontowncenter.com)

Polaris Fashion Place -  
[polarisfashionplace.com](http://polarisfashionplace.com)

## PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS

Columbus Blue Jackets

Columbus Crew FC

# LEARN MORE!

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov)

While we hope this handbook has been informative and helpful, it is not an exhaustive list of your resources and responsibilities as an F-1 student. For more information on visa preparation, interview tips, arrival information and more, visit [studyinthestates.dhs.gov](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov)

Remember that maintaining non-immigrant F-1 status is ultimately the visa holder's responsibility and ISS cannot offer legal immigration advice.

If you believe your F-1 student status may be jeopardized, please email [istudent@csc.edu](mailto:istudent@csc.edu) or [jtang4@csc.edu](mailto:jtang4@csc.edu) immediately.

**STUDY** in the **STATES**

# CONTACT ISS



## ON CAMPUS

Madison Hall  
1st Floor

## ADDRESS

Columbus State Community College  
ATTN: International Student Services  
550 E Spring Street  
Columbus, OH  
43215

## PHONE

614-287-5422

## EMAIL

[istudent@csc.edu](mailto:istudent@csc.edu)