



Mission Statement

The Texas A&M University student population is a diverse group numbering more than 45,000 individuals. Nowhere is this diversity more evident than among the international student population. There are approximately 3,700 students from nearly 130 nations attending the University. Their presence and integration into academic, community, and student life is essential to the overall vision of International Programs: *Ensuring that all Texas A&M graduates have the experience and skills to excel in the global environment of the 21st century.* As part of this vision, the mission of International Student Services (ISS) is ***to facilitate the international student's transition to life in the United States and at Texas A&M, promote interactions between the US and international populations, and provide services necessary to meet the special needs of international students.***

International students begin their studies at Texas A&M wanting guidance as they overcome cultural barriers and gain an understanding of the requirements under which they are pursuing their educational objectives. They have many questions about US customs and values, government and university regulations, academic issues, campus and community facilities, medical care, banking, shopping, and entertainment. ISS responds to these questions and serves as an information resource for all partners in the international education process, those both on campus and off campus.

The ISS staff is composed of eight professionals, four support staff, and numerous student workers (some of whom are international students). The office provides leadership opportunities to international and US students through coordination of approximately 50 international student organizations, including the International Student Association. Various planned activities are designed to integrate US and international students from around the world in order to foster international awareness and an appreciation for people of all cultures. Such programs include: I-Camp, International Week, Mini-Olympics, Diwali, Spring Festival, Moon Festival, and hundreds of seminars, performances, and conferences focused on country or regional celebrations. In addition, the office facilitates joint programming efforts with traditional US organizations, such as Student Government, MSC Hospitality, and other groups, to encourage interaction and integration among the various cultural groups on campus and in the community.

Responding to the needs of international students also means serving as a liaison between the many partners involved in the international education process. ISS staff assists US and foreign government officials, family members, businesses, and faculty and staff from Texas A&M and foreign institutions in coordinating the academic and support services for international students. From simple activities (such as assisting with money shortfalls through loans and scholarships, or helping faculty members understand how immigration laws impact a Texas A&M international student taking an extra class at Blinn College) to complex situations (such as helping students make contact with family members during civil unrest or return home during emergency situations), ISS links all these partners and provides a support network for them.

For additional information about International Student Services contact:

Texas A&M University
International Student Services
First Floor Bizzell Hall East
1226 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1226

Phone: (979) 845-1824
Fax: (979) 862-4633
e-mail: iss@iss.tamu.edu
Web: <http://international.tamu.edu/iss>

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation required that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the International Student Services Office for further information.

∞ Services Available ∞

The services necessary to accomplish the office mission are as diverse as the student population itself. However, there are six general areas of services available:

Immigration Services and Advising

- Review a portion of the prospective student applications, evaluate financial resources, and issue Certificates of Eligibility (forms I-20 and DS-2019) to allow students to obtain visas and attend the University.
- Represent the University on immigration related matters involving non-immigrant students and serve as the liaison between ISS and campus departments and offices, government agencies, businesses, and members of the community on these matters.
- Serve as a resource about federal regulations that impact international students.
- Manage information regarding the legal status of Texas A&M international students, as required by federal regulations.
- Provide education and counseling for students regarding federal regulations and assist them with procedures including, but not limited to:
 - Extensions of stay, work authorizations and reinstatements.
 - Changes of status and degree level changes.
 - Transfers to and from TAMU.
 - Concurrent enrollment and full course of study waivers.
 - Lost document replacements.
 - Letters of invitation, certification and expense statements.
 - Review and endorsement of immigration documents for travel abroad.
- Research and compile reports and census information.
- Assist in developing Texas A&M standards, policies, and procedures for student immigration concerns.
- Provide referrals to immigration attorneys and to consulates and embassies.
- Verification of health insurance coverage to assist students in remaining in compliance with Texas A&M System and federal regulations.

Personal Advising

- Advise students on a broad array of matters that include the following:
 - Cultural adjustment and socialization issues, orientation and readjustment to home country.
 - Academic concerns and University policies.
 - Health insurance and health care.
 - Personal and family tragedies.
 - Travel, transportation, banking, and other settling in needs.
 - Personal safety, income taxes and legal issues.

Liaison for International Students

- Represent the interests of international students.
- Provide assistance in accessing community and campus resources.
- Encourage leadership opportunities and training for international students.
- Provide linkages with government, business, university and community officials.
- Facilitate conflict resolution.

Community and Campus Outreach Activities

- Advise International Student Association (ISA) on activities and programs such as:
 - Mini Olympics and Mini World Cup Soccer.
 - International Week (Cultural Displays, International Buffet, Consuls' General Banquet, Talent and Fashion Show).
 - President's Council meetings and General Assemblies.
 - Joint sponsored activities with Texas A&M and community groups.
- Coordinate community outreach programs, including:
 - Speakers' Bureau.
 - International Friendship Partners and Host Family program.
 - Cultural awareness programs and classes.
 - Volunteer program for helping settle new students.
 - Volunteer recruiting and training sessions.
- Special programs for families of international students.

- Secondary advising for international clubs.
- Programs for faculty and staff regarding international student issues.

Special Programs for International Students

- Two-week orientation each semester providing:
 - Check-in program, including immigration check, health insurance verification, English Language Placement Exam (ELPE) information, information on banking/utilities, assistance locating housing, community and campus information, and Social Security information.
 - Seminars on car buying, computer facilities and test preparation
 - Campus tours, shopping trips and a welcome party.
 - Airport pick-ups and temporary housing.
- Formal orientation seminar, within the above schedule, on the following:
 - Personal safety issues.
 - Transportation and travel.
 - University policies and federal regulations.
 - Health facilities and health insurance
 - International organizations and student activities.
 - TAMU traditions.
 - Basic academic information.
 - Banking and tax obligations.
 - Living essentials and off-campus housing.
- ISS Listserv providing information on changes to federal regulations, new regulations and related immigration updates.
- Workshop on how to qualify and apply for work authorization.
- Income tax filing seminar and question/answer sessions.

Administration of Scholarships, Grants and Loan Programs exclusively for International Students

While all students are eligible for financial aid, the following are available only to international students:

- **Appala Scholarship**
Self supported international students in their first, second, or third semester are eligible for this \$500 award based on academic merit, financial need, and length of time at A&M.
- **Eppright Outstanding International Student Award**
All international students are eligible to apply. One \$2,000 award for leadership, service and academic excellence.
- **Good Neighbor Scholarship**
Citizens of countries in North America (excluding the U.S.A.), Central America, South America and the Caribbean are eligible to apply, if they have attended TAMU at least one semester. Full tuition waivers are provided.
- **International Education Fee Scholarship**
All international students are eligible to apply for one of the 8 scholarships available per year, based on financial need, academic qualifications and international activities.
- **International Education Fee Study Grant**
All international students are eligible to apply for up to \$300 when presenting a paper at or attending a recognized conference.
- **Khalil Ghattas Lebanese Scholarship**
Available to Lebanese students only. Two scholarships of \$1,200 per year.
- **Shibata International Memorial Scholarship**
All international students are eligible to apply for this \$500 award based on academic merit and organization/community involvement.
- **Texas/Mexico Education Scholarship**
Mexican citizens are eligible to apply. Out-of-state tuition waivers are provided. Limited number, based on financial need.
- **Watkins Emergency Loan Fund**
Loans are available to international students for emergencies only. This loan cannot be used for tuition and fees