



January 2024 NEWS

What is SEVIS?

The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based system used by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to maintain information about certificated schools, F-1 students studying in the US, and J-1 visiting scholars.

What is a DSO?

All staff in the Office of International Services (OIS) are designated school officials (DSOs) in SEVIS and serve students at all three USF campuses. There are 15 staff members who are DSOs. They are available during virtual drop in and walk in hours to answer questions about immigration status or work authorization. Students can [meet the staff](#) and view ways to [contact us](#) on our website.

DSOs help students to navigate their status while studying. They are required by law to update and maintain SEVIS records. OIS does this by pulling academic, enrollment, and biographical data into iStart and reviewing for compliance with federal regulations. If students appear to have violated an immigration regulation, an alert shows in iStart and OIS reaches out to the student via their USF email to assist them in making appropriate changes to stay in status.

Spring Semester Reminders for F-1 Students

- **Address Reporting**
 - F-1 students are required to report their physical US address to OIS within 10 days. This is reported by updating the “local mailing” address in OASIS. For instructions, go to <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/immigration/maintaining-your-status/address-updates.aspx>
 - F-1 students are also required to maintain a foreign address while they are in the US studying. The foreign address on the admission application is imported to OASIS as the permanent foreign address. This address cannot be changed to a US address. It can be updated to another foreign address.
- **Spring Semester Enrollment**
 - *F-1 and J-1 students who do not follow enrollment rules for their visa status will be contacted by OIS via email. The email will include recommended action. Do not ignore the email.*
 - Students who have questions about their enrollment should attend OIS Virtual Drop in or Walk in hours to discuss with the immigration advisors/DSOs.
 - F-1 and J-1 undergraduate students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours.
 - F-1 and J-1 graduate students must be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours unless they have completed all coursework and are enrolled in only thesis or dissertation hours.
 - All F-1 and J-1 students are restricted to counting one 3 credit hour online course towards their full-time enrollment.
 - All F-1 must enroll in the majority of their courses at their home campus as it appears on their I-20.

- **Payment of fees**

- Full fees are due on Friday, January 12 unless there is a tuition deferment. Failure to pay results in course cancellation.
- F-1 students with courses cancelled will be contacted by OIS via email. The email will include recommended action. Do not ignore the email.

USCIS Premium Processing Fee Increase

Effective February 26, 2024, USCIS will increase their premium processing fees. Premium processing is not required for any filing with USCIS. It merely speeds up the processing time. For students using premium processing for an OPT or STEM OPT application, this fee increases to \$1685. For students using premium processing for a change of status to F or J, this fee increases to \$1965.

H1B Pilot Program

On December 21, 2023, the US Department of State announced a very limited pilot program for domestic visa stamp renewals for H-1B's renewals who were issued an H-1B visa by a US consulate in Canada between 1/1/20 and 4/1/23 and a US consulate in India between 2/1/21 and 9/30/21. NOTE: This program does not apply to those renewing with visas from other consulates OR those with visas for other non-immigrant categories.

Get Ready for Tax Season

All F and J visa holders who were physically present in the United States, for any period of time in the year 2023, are required to file a tax form in 2024 regardless of whether they worked or received income. OIS will send a link to a special tax preparation tool *Sprintax* by mid-February to students who need to file taxes. This link allows access and applies the USF discount for the 2023 tax season.

There are many resources available in the tax section of our website at <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/immigration/taxes.aspx>. Starting in February, OIS will host software assistance sessions.

USF Academic Reminders

Spring 2024 Semester Important Dates

- January 12 – End of drop/add week and tuition payment deadline (deferments pay tuition by February 23)
- February 19 - March 5 – Midterm grading
- March 11-17 – Spring Break
- March 25 – registration for summer and fall
- April 26 – last day of classes
- April 27- May 2 – exam week
- May 4 – official end of the semester for immigration purposes

Workshops

Feb 9: OPT Q&A Session 10am-11am

Students who are planning to work after graduation, can join the OIS International Advisors for a Q&A via Teams. Students should review the provided [OPT information on the OIS website](#) prior to attending. Sign up in BullsConnect at <https://cglink.me/2k5/r1947785>

Feb 20: CPT Q&A Session 10am-11am

Students interested in applying for curricular practical training for work authorization for an internship in summer of fall, can join the OIS International Advisors for a Q&A. Students should review the provided [CPT information on the OIS website](#) prior to attending. Sign up in BullsConnect at <https://cglink.me/2k5/r1947790>

Join our BullsConnect Group - <https://bullsconnect.usf.edu/INTLSVCS/clu>



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<https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/>

Virtual Drop-In via Teams ([E-Form](#) in [iStart](#)) - Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 11am-1pm & Thurs 1pm-2pm

Walk-in Hours Tampa Campus ([BEH Map](#)) - Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 1pm-2pm & Thurs 2pm-4pm

Visit Schedule to USF St Pete & Sarasota - <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/about-us/contact-us.aspx>