



Welcome

After record temperatures this summer, mornings have turned chilly and fall has finally arrived in Florida! We hope that you are able to get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather. Check out [Visit Tampa Bay](#) for a calendar of interesting things to do in our area! If you can, check out [The James Museum](#) in St Petersburg. Every Tuesday admission is only \$10.

November NEWS

Travel Signatures

Students planning to travel outside the U.S. for the November or December holidays should check their I-20 on page two for a valid travel signature. If the travel signature is dated November 20, 2022 or earlier, it is time for a fresh signature. Log into iStart to access the Travel Signature eform. Be sure to give staff at least 5 days to process.

For information on traveling as an F-1 please view our travel webpage at <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/immigration/travel.aspx> and watch this helpful video - https://youtu.be/Vhal_O7WBM4

Graduation Sash Ceremony

Our office hosts a special Sash Ceremony for students who are graduating each semester on the Wednesday before Commencement. This year, the ceremony is on December 6. During the ceremony, students are presented with a sash that represents the flag from their home country. Students who have registered for graduation and RSVP'd for commencement will receive an email invitation. Students must be present at the Sash Ceremony to receive the sash for free.

International Education Month

One week each November, [International Education Week](#) is celebrated as part of a joint initiative between the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of State. The week celebrates the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. At USF, we celebrate by hosting a full month of events to recognize the university's global connections. Check out the full calendar on the USF World website here <https://www.usf.edu/world/participate/week.aspx>

On Thursday, November 2 at 5:30pm in the Patel Center Auditorium, USF World is presenting Perspectives on Global Justice: Steve Biko's Legacy in the Quest for True Humanity. The guest speaker is Nkosinathi Biko, the son of Steve Biko and Trustee of the Steve Biko Foundation. RSVP here: https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_88JK9day8cENQW2

University Holiday Closures

The university and our office will be closed on Friday, November 10 for Veteran's Day and on Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 for Thanksgiving Day.

Winter Break Closure

The university will be closed for Winter Break beginning Thursday, December 21, 2023 through Monday, January 1, 2024. *iStart eforms will not be processed during Winter Break. Students should finalize all eforms by Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 11:59pm, if they need to be processed in 2023.*

Holiday Scams

The winter holidays are a common time for scams especially in the form of a suspicious phone call or email. Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself:

- **Guard your personal information.** Do not give out birth date, Social Security Number, or any other identifying information to someone over the phone or email.
- **Don't be afraid to hang up.** If an individual asks for information or payment, it's okay to hang up.
- **Don't offer to pay a debt with a gift card.** Government officials will never ask for payment over the phone or email. Especially not with gift cards!
- **Government officials will not use fear to encourage a person to complete a process.** If a phone call or email threatens to arrest or deport a person unless they pay a fee, hang up!
- **Most government offices still send paper mail.** Regular paper mail is the most common way that government agencies contact people about immigration status or taxes. Suspicious mail can be show to our office for verification.
- **Report scams.** Let our office know about the scam! Also report to the [Federal Trade Commission](#), and the organization or institution from which the scammer claims to be representing. Most government agencies have a section on their website about reporting fraudulent activity.
- **Contact OIS about suspicious phone calls, email, or if you've fallen victim to a scam.** We can help you, and reporting scams helps us protect other international students from dangerous or expensive scams, too.

USF Academic Reminders

Spring 2024 Course Registration

Official registration for courses for spring semester begins October 30th. F-1 students should select mostly in-person courses at their home campus. Undergraduate F-1 students should plan to enroll in 12 credits hours and graduate F-1 students should plan to enroll in 9 credit hours. F-1 students are restricted to counting one 3 credit hour online course towards their full-time enrollment. Students who are completing their academic program and graduating in Spring 2024 can complete the Reduced Course Load eform in iStart if they need less than full-time courses to complete the program.

Excess Credit Hours

Students should not postpone graduation or add additional excess credit hours for the purposes of engaging in internships or post graduation work.

USF Home Campus

F-1 students are required to take the majority of their courses at their USF Home Campus. Our office will begin running an alert in Spring 2024 and will contact students who do not follow this rule.

We recommend that students check carefully to determine the campus connected to online courses. Taking courses at multiple campuses does not allow a student to take additional online courses. F-1 students are restricted to counting one 3 credit hour online courses towards their full-time enrollment.

Winter Session

The [Winter Session](#) occurs during Winter Break and consists of online courses. While F-1 students can take courses during winter session, they need to be aware that these courses count towards the Spring semester and appear on their transcript as Spring semester courses. This means that students who take a winter session online course will need to take all face-to-face courses for Spring semester.

Workshops

Nov 1: Visa + Sponsorship 101

The Tampa campus USF Student Government is hosting a discussion on the different visas available to work in the US and companies that provide sponsorship. The event is from 11am to 2pm on November 1 in MSC2708.

Nov 1: USF Tampa – The Job Search Process for International Students

The Center for Career & Professional Development is hosting a special workshop for international students about the process of finding a job on November 1. Our professional immigration advisors will be part of this session to discuss CPT and OPT. The session is from 4pm to 5pm in MSC4200. For details - <https://careers.usf.edu/events/2023/11/01/usf-tampa-the-job-search-process-for-international-students/>

Nov 7: CPT Session

Join the Practical Training Team for a Q&A session about applying for Curricular Practical Training (used for internships). The session is online from 10am to 11am on November 7. To register - <https://cmlink.me/2k5/r1938487>

Nov 8: USF Student Government International Student Workshop

This event will have two immigration attorneys presenting general legal advice. Plus an option for students to sign up for 1:1 time with the attorneys to go over their specific inquiries. The event is from 5pm to 9pm on November 8 in MSC. Questions about this event should be directed towards USF Student Government - studentgovernment@usf.edu

Nov 17: OPT Session

Join the Practical Training Team for a Q&A session about applying for Optional Practical Training post graduation. The session is online from 10am to 11am on November 17. To register - <https://cmlink.me/2k5/r1944914> .

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>