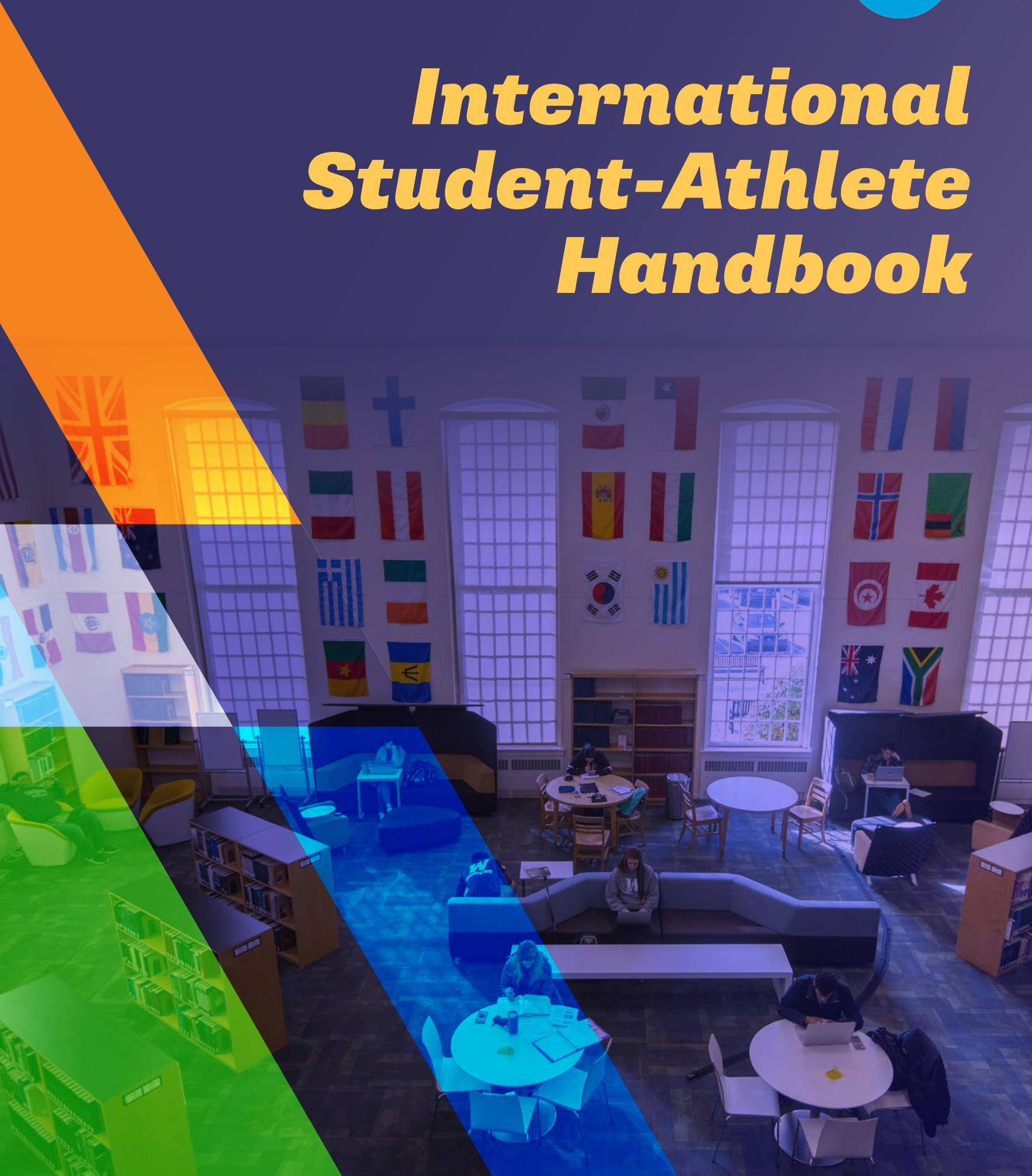




International Student-Athlete Handbook





*If you are taking your first steps toward becoming an **international student-athlete**, you must first meet **academic** and/or **amateurism** standards set by NCAA member schools and get certified by the **NCAA Eligibility Center**. To begin, be sure to review the **Registration Checklist**.*



Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



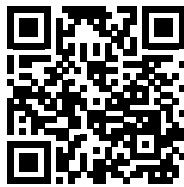
[Become an International Student-Athlete](#)



[Academic Requirements](#)



[Amateurism Overview](#)



[NCAA Eligibility Center](#)



[Registration Checklist](#)



Welcome!

I am excited that you are pursuing higher education and considering competing in your sport at a U.S. college or university. Through education and sports, the NCAA strives to provide a pathway to opportunity and lifelong success for the 500,000 student-athletes we serve across 24 sports and three divisions. Currently, more than 25,000 international students are studying and competing at NCAA schools. International student-athletes bring a unique perspective, add to the diversity of our athletics teams and culturally enrich the campus community.

We understand that leaving your home country, choosing the right college and moving to the U.S. can be an extensive and exhausting process. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a basic orientation for you as an international student. Each U.S. region and state has its own history, dialect and climate. We compiled this valuable information on educational, social, cultural and economic aspects of studying and competing in the U.S. so you have an idea what to expect. This guide is designed to equip you and your family with information about academic requirements to compete and give you tools to navigate this complex process. You will find these insights and so much more.

I applaud you for taking an active role in preparing to live, study and compete at a U.S. college. I wish you all the best as you start on this life-changing journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Felicia Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Felicia Martin
Senior Vice President of Inclusion,
Education & Community Engagement

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Chapter 1: *Education*



U.S. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The American academic system is likely very different than the education system in your home country. Therefore, this chapter focuses on basic information about U.S. higher education standards and metrics. The unwritten norms toward academic success will become clearer once you interact with faculty and experienced students in your field of study.

Academic procedures that are specific to your school will be explained by the school's academic affairs office and/or the academic advisor you will be assigned. Information is also available on your university's website, its publications and athletics department resources.

Official School Email

It is critical for you to register and activate your school-specific email. All school-related emails regarding events, communication from athletics staff, faculty members, international student services, etc., will occur through this email, not your personal email. Therefore, upon arriving on campus, connect with your athletics department/campus support staff to learn how to set up your school email.

Academic Year Schedule

In most cases, the U.S. academic year will start in August or September and will end in May or June. Most U.S. schools use the semester system, which usually consists of two terms (fall and spring) of 15 weeks. Some schools use the quarter system, which usually consists of four 10-week sessions. Depending on the system used at your school, the academic requirements to fulfill every term/academic year will be different. Refer to the continuing eligibility information through this handbook to learn about the requirements.

Your holiday and class schedule calendar for the academic year will be specific to your school, as well. Thus, it is recommended to discuss with your coach and academic advisor before making plans for visits home during the holidays.

In addition to enrollment in classes during the academic year, summer classes are also an option and should be discussed as needed with your academic advisor before making decisions.

Credits

In the U.S., academic credits (also called "credit hours") are a unit of measurement used to quantify the amount of work required to complete a course. Semester credits are the most common, with one credit typically equivalent to 15-16 hours of work per semester, including class time, homework and exams. At schools using the quarter system, one credit is typically equivalent to a third of a semester credit.

Credits are earned by successfully completing courses, with the number of credits earned per course depending on the number of contact hours per week, the difficulty of the course and the school's policies.

Credits are used to progress toward your degree. The number of credits required to earn a degree varies depending on the degree program. For example, a bachelor's degree typically requires 120 credits, while a master's degree typically requires 30 credits. Usually, one course is worth three credits.

If you transfer schools, you may be able to transfer some or all of your credits. The number of credits that can be transferred depends on the policies of the two schools involved, so it is wise to clarify this before transferring and get the summary in writing to avoid wrong assumptions.

At the end of each term, students who have achieved a passing grade in a course have earned its respective credits.



As a requirement of your international student status, you must carry a minimum number of credits each term that allows your enrollment status to be certified as a full-time student. The number of credits can only differ depending on your level of study (undergraduate or graduate) or if you are in your last term before graduation.

The Grading System

For graded exams, essays and other assignments that you complete as part of your daily or term work, there are generally four passing grades (A, B, C and D) and one failing grade (F). Each grade carries a designated number of points per credit.

A student's grade-point average, known as a GPA, is calculated by dividing the number of grade points earned by the number of credits earned. The cumulative GPA is the GPA a student has earned for all classes taken at the U.S. university for a degree program. Be sure to check the grading metric specific to your school and each of your classes.

Class Registration

You must enroll in a set of degree-applicable courses that align with your major/minor requirements each term. Due to visa restrictions, international students cannot typically take more than one online course per term. Before registering, meet with your academic advisor for consultation on a recommended course schedule.

Academic Advisor

An academic advisor is a professional who helps students navigate their academic journey. They can help students choose a major, plan their coursework and stay on track to graduate. Academic advisors can also provide guidance on career planning, financial aid and other academic-related matters.



Some schools have academic advisors who work specifically with the athletics department, but not all schools offer this. If you are unsure, it is recommended you reach out to your coach and/or teammates.

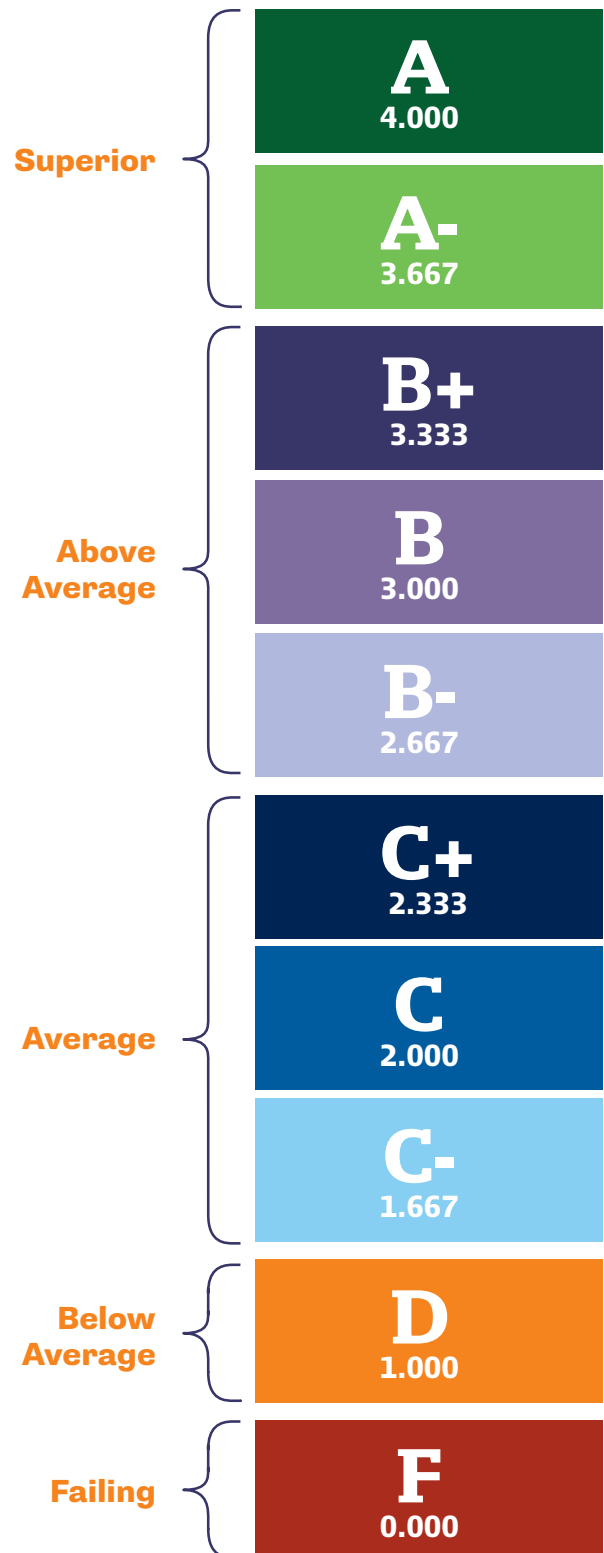
Academic advisors are usually trained staff members who are knowledgeable about the university's curriculum, requirements and available resources. Some of the topics that an academic advisor can help you with:

- **Choosing a major:** Assess your passions, strengths and interests, and determine which major is a good fit for you.
- **Planning your coursework:** Create a plan to meet academic goals that will be conducive toward graduation.
- **Staying on track to graduate:** Track your progress toward graduation and identify any potential roadblocks to avoid setbacks.
- **Career planning:** Explore potential career paths, develop a plan for after graduation and identify resources to help you with your career search.
- **Financial aid:** Develop an understanding of different types of financial aid that are available and how to apply for them.
- **Other academic-related matters:** Register for classes, solve academic issues, transfer credits, etc.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements specify the number of credits you must earn, the minimum GPA you must achieve and the distribution of credits you must have from differing departments or fields of study. In addition, it is necessary to apply for graduation when you near the time of completing your graduation requirements.

Grade-Point Values



This chart represents the typical breakdown, which may vary by professor/institution.



COMMON LEARNING METHODS

Syllabus

A document that is shared prior to/at the beginning of a class that summarizes all essential information about an academic course. It outlines a schedule with due dates, details how your grade will be calculated, lists topics, and defines expectations and other requirements of students.

Lectures

The most common method of instruction is the classroom lecture. These lectures are supplemented by classroom discussions, reading assignments and written assignments. Contributing to the discussions is important since classroom participation is often considered as a factor of your final grade.

Seminars

The seminar is a small class that is likely devoted to discussion. Students often are required to prepare presentations for the seminar, based on their independent reading or research.

Laboratories

Many courses require work in a laboratory, also often referred to as a “lab,” in which the theory learned in a classroom is applied to practical problems.

Term Papers

Writing a term paper (often simply called a “paper”) is frequently required. A term paper is based on study or research you have conducted in the library, classroom or laboratory. Your professor will usually assign a term paper early in the course. You are expected to work on it during the term and submit it near the end. The grade you receive on the term paper may constitute a significant portion of your overall course grade. It is wise to complete term papers ahead of schedule, to allow time for reviews and revisions. Your school’s writing center can assist with explaining needed citations, footnotes

and bibliographies. If you have questions, always ask the professor or teaching assistant (TA).

Examinations

Nearly every class has a final examination (often called an “exam” or “test”) at the end of the term, and many have a midterm examination around the middle of the term. Additional tests or quizzes are common, periodically. These are designed to ensure that students are performing the work assigned to them and to measure their learning progress.

There are two general types of exams: objective and subjective, and these are sometimes combined. An objective exam measures the students’ knowledge of particular facts. Methods such as multiple choice, true and false, and identification are commonly found on objective exams.

A subjective exam (sometimes called an “essay exam”) requires you to write an essay in response to a question or statement. This kind of exam will test your abilities to organize and relate your knowledge of a particular subject.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Using someone else’s ideas or work and presenting them as your own is forbidden and is considered plagiarism or academic dishonesty, commonly referred to as “cheating.” If you copy from a book/publication without proper citation or from a fellow student on an assignment, paper, quiz or examination, or let others copy your work, you likely will be penalized for plagiarism and have to face the consequences.

Academic Dishonesty

Students in the U.S. academic system are expected to do their own academic work and avoid plagiarism. This does not mean that classwork assistance is not permitted. It is permissible and recommended to seek academic help (often called “tutoring”) in understanding a topic that was covered in class or what a homework assignment requires, for example. However, the following are considered cheating:

- Copying other students’ assignments or answers to questions.
- Allowing another person to copy your answers.
- Taking notes or books to an examination and secretly referring to them for assistance while answering questions.
- Misrepresenting your contribution to a group project.
- Collaborating with others on a take-home examination when instructed not to do so.

- Reuse your own phrasing and ideas previously submitted in other course work (also known as self-plagiarism).

Possible Consequences of Dishonesty

Depending on the severity, a student caught cheating may face serious potential outcomes, including a failing grade for the assignment/examination, expulsion from the course, or loss of eligibility to participate in athletics competitions. In cases of severe/repeated violations, expulsion from the school is possible, as well.



If you are having difficulty understanding or managing your academic load or class materials, always communicate and seek help from your professors (during office hours or by setting up an appointment via email) or your academic advisors.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic support is available within the athletics department and/or on campus within your academic department. Use this resource to your advantage to enhance your academic experience in the U.S. Please check about resources that might be available to you like the following:

Athletics Academic Center

“One-stop shop” to get all academics-related support and help. Typically, available resources will include a writing

tutor, tutor for specific subjects, study hall space and writing cubicles, and exam preparation materials. This will vary by school.

Writing Center

This is where students receive assistance with drafting a class paper, proofreading, grammatical corrections, etc. Writing center staff will not write the paper for you but can provide guidance and support in the process.

Office Hours

Visit your professors during this time to ask any questions you might have about class or assignments. This is also a good time to get to know your professors and inform them about your athletics-related travel and any schedule constraints that may conflict with exams, etc.

Academic Tutors

Often, these are available within the athletics academic center or within the academic resource center on campus, by scheduling an appointment in advance.

Many schools offer resources for students who speak English as a second language. If you feel you need help improving your English, be sure to let your academic advisor or coach know about this need.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

On top of general U.S. academic standards and rules, student-athletes also need to meet NCAA continuing eligibility standards. The NCAA continuing eligibility standards are rules that student-athletes must follow to remain eligible to compete in NCAA Division I and II sports. The rules are to ensure that student-athletes are



academically successful and making progress toward graduation. The continuing eligibility standards include the following:

Academic Progress

Student-athletes must maintain a minimum grade-point average and complete a certain number of credits each year. The specific GPA and credit requirements vary, depending on NCAA division and the student-athlete's class year.

- In Division I, the minimum GPA requirement for:
 - First-year student-athletes is 1.80
 - Sophomores, 1.90
 - Juniors, 2.00
 - Seniors, 2.00
- In Division II, the minimum GPA requirement for all student-athletes is 2.00.
- In Division III, while there is no minimum GPA requirement, student-athletes must maintain good academic standing, as defined by the school.

Progress Toward Degree

Student-athletes must make progress toward completing their degree. This is measured by completing a certain number of credits each year, as well as completing a certain percentage of their degree by the time they are in their fifth year of eligibility. In Division I, student-athletes

must complete 40% of their degree by the end of their second year, 60% by the end of their third year and 80% by the end of their fourth year. In Division II, student-athletes must complete 24 term hours of degree credit each academic year.

Transfer Rules

Student-athletes who transfer from one school to another must follow certain transfer rules. These rules are designed to ensure that student-athletes do not transfer solely for athletic reasons. Speak with the athletics compliance staff at your current school or the school you plan to attend for information on how transferring might affect you.

NCAA Rules

Student-athletes must also follow all NCAA rules, including rules related to amateurism, recruiting and substance use. Violations of these rules can result in a variety of penalties, including ineligibility to compete, thus it is imperative to talk to the compliance support staff in your athletics department.

If you violate any of the continuing eligibility standards, you may be ineligible to compete in NCAA sports, so **staying on track to graduate** is vital. The specific penalties for violating the standards vary, depending on the violation.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding **staying on track to graduate**.



The background is a photograph of a university campus. A paved path leads through a row of large, mature trees on the left. In the distance, a building and a hill are visible under a clear blue sky. Several students are walking away from the camera on the path. Overlaid on the right side of the image are several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes: a blue triangle at the top right, a red and orange diamond below it, a cyan triangle below that, a green triangle below that, and a purple triangle at the bottom left. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

Chapter 2:
***Student Life and
Development***

CAMPUS SERVICES

While the following resources may have different names at different schools, the support and information should be available at every school. Students often use these resources when seeking support, a sense of safety and belonging, and guidance. This list is not exhaustive, as the level of resources available on your campus is dependent on the type and size of the school.

International Student Services Office

This office is often responsible for providing support programs, hosting community-building events, celebrating diverse cultural holidays, advising on immigration issues and offering a host of other support services to the international student community. Staff members usually strive to create a supportive atmosphere where students can live and learn effectively, and they promote international programs and services as a means of stimulating cross-cultural understanding and enhancing a sense of belonging.

In addition, this office typically provides pre-arrival correspondence, student orientation, general advising, counseling, and resources and referrals. Staff are also able to provide guidance on visits to the U.S. by international students' families, as well as on related topics.

Office of Student Affairs

This office is responsible for providing a variety of services and programs that support the academic, personal, social, intellectual, spiritual and social development of students outside the classroom. Upon arrival on campus, you are strongly encouraged to visit the office and learn more about the programs, events, activities and other resources they provide to support student well-being.

Campus Health Center

The staff here are trained to help students through times of adjustment. The health center often offers a broad range of professional services to all degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty. The physicians and staff are devoted to helping students with concerns such as medical issues and treatments,

emergency health conditions, sexual assault, anxiety, depression, alcohol/substance misuse, and eating disorders. The campus health center operates under an ethical and legal code of strict confidentiality, abiding by federal privacy regulations regarding **medical information** and **education records**. *Scan the QR codes below for more information.*

Campus Police

This fully authorized police agency resides on campus. Officers maintain a 24-hour patrol of campus daily. The size of this agency varies by school, but it typically encompasses an investigation unit, a crime prevention and technical services unit, a parking services unit, and a special event security unit. Campus police help support the mission of the school and ensure safety.

Call 911 in case of an incident or emergency. In addition, upon arriving on campus, be sure to obtain nonemergency contact information for your campus police.

Office of Student Financial Services

This office monitors and administers all student account transactions, including the issuance of monthly student account statements, along with processing payments, credits, refunds and charges. The office also manages scholarship funds and provides guidance and consultation on scholarship eligibility and application processes. Additional resources pertain to financial education and planning related to budgeting, building credit, engaging in the stock market, etc.

Office of Student Legal Services

This office is available to provide free legal advice on a variety of legal matters. If you have legal concerns or any questions about your rights in the U.S., this will be a good place to visit. The level of available support varies based on size of the school.

Title IX and Campus Title IX Office

All NCAA member schools are expected to abide by the requirements of Title IX, a federal law that supports equal opportunities in education. This federal anti-discrimination law pertains to multiple areas, including athletics and sexual harassment.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding **Medical Information**.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding **Education Records**.





“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

While the law is enforced by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, schools that receive federal funds are required to have a Title IX coordinator. Together with this office’s staff, the Title IX coordinator is charged with coordinating and facilitating the school’s compliance with the law and overseeing and maintaining records of all reports of sexual misconduct issues, which includes the review, investigation and resolution of any complaints. Staff are also responsible to advise any students, staff and faculty on issues related to sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence and to develop educational efforts and resources that will promote a safe and supportive environment for all. Additional offices on campus and within athletics may also support these efforts, including the athletics department collaborating to ensure an equitable athletics experience for all student-athletes.

Office of Student Conduct


This office helps sustain and enforce the school’s code of conduct, as well as supports the educational mission of the institution through educating students about their rights and responsibilities. Staff members are tasked with disciplinary efforts and with maintaining students’ awareness of the expectations of them as it relates to rules and behaviors, both academic and nonacademic. This is to ensure that everyone on campus can feel safe, respected and supported.

Disability/Accessibility Services Office

This office provides qualified students with accommodations to remove barriers and make their educational experience more accessible. Accommodations do not lower course standards nor alter essential degree requirements for those with disabilities, rather help ensure that students have an equal access in the educational setting. Students must register with this office and provide information about their situation. Additionally, if you feel like you are having difficulties adjusting to and/or learning within the set academic environment and curriculum, this office may refer you to a community provider who can evaluate for possible disabilities or other conditions.

STUDENT PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Certain departments within the student affairs office provide student leadership training, oversight for the branches of student government, support for planning special programs and events, and guidance in initiating and maintaining a student organization/club. Student groups seek approval of this department to post signs, notices and posters on campus, as well as reserve facilities and spaces on campus to host club meetings, programs and social gatherings. The student affairs office may also provide funding opportunities for student-led events or initiatives.



Participating in a student organization/club is a great opportunity for international students to find community and interact with others who share your culture, interests and talents. Clubs may support your academic interests, your passion for sports or your cultural or spiritual affiliation. They may even celebrate your country-specific traditions. Student clubs are organized and governed by interested students in collaboration with a faculty/staff advisor.

To develop a sense of belonging and for overall general well-being, international student-athletes are encouraged to engage with the campus community and build relationships outside of the athletics department. Involvement with campus events and activities can contribute to a more holistic experience at your school.

Student Government

Student government is a group of students who are elected by the student body to represent the interests of students to the school's administration. Student governments typically have a variety of responsibilities, including:

- **Advocacy:** May include lobbying for interests such as service improvements, tuition changes and student concerns.
- **Student services:** May include running the student union, organizing activities, efforts to obtain student discounts, etc.
- **Overseeing student conduct:** Day-to-day enforcement of the school's student code of conduct.
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion efforts:** May include initiatives, events or resources that enhance the sense of belonging of students of various backgrounds, cultures and identities.
- **Funding:** Efforts to secure funds for student organizations/clubs to ensure a wide offering of co-curricular activities.

Student governments vary in size and structure, from only a few dozen members up to hundreds, and may be organized by departments, by class year or by interest group.

This is a great opportunity to get involved with your peers, faculty and staff. You can positively impact life on campus, including on topics pertaining to international students, while developing leadership skills and advocating for causes you believe in.

Student Organizations and Clubs

Student organizations and clubs are groups of students who share a common interest or goal and provide students with the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills and get involved in their campus community. Some of the common types include clubs centered around members' shared interest in a particular academic subject, sport, social cause, culture or ethnicity. Involvement in organizations and clubs can yield many benefits, including making friends, having fun with like-minded people and helping others through volunteering.

Fraternities and Sororities

Often referred to as "Greek Life" due to the Greek letters in their names, these are membership-based social organizations that usually revolves around leadership, academics and/or community service, as well as a sense of community. Joining a "brotherhood"/"sisterhood" of this sort is a great way to connect with other students who share similar values or attitudes, and many times help form lasting relationships, as well as career opportunities. Fraternities and sororities are typically part of a national organization with chapters at schools throughout the country and have their own rules and specifications. Before joining a group of this sort, it is wise to ask around campus and to be aware of a group's culture and academic/disciplinary record, as well as on associated costs.

Student-Athlete Specific Organizations/Clubs

In addition to various clubs and organizations on campus, some athletics departments may offer different sources of support and run additional programs. Upon arrival, connect with your student-athlete development staff to learn more about their programming and community-building efforts.



Staff at the student affairs office or the international student services office can guide you in how to get involved with the student government or student organizations/clubs. In addition, a search of Google or social media channels may help you learn which clubs are available on your campus.

Student-Athlete Advisory Council

One student-athlete group that is present across all NCAA institutions is **SAAC**, a group of student-athletes who are elected by their coaches/peers to represent the interests of student-athletes to their school, conference and/or the NCAA. SAAC members serve as student-athlete liaisons

who monitor and discuss happenings on campuses, within conferences and at the national level.

The national Division I, II and III SAACs are composed of representatives from the conferences in each division. They meet throughout the year to discuss issues affecting student-athletes, such as academic progress and well-being, while providing input to the NCAA on a variety of matters, including rule changes and policies.

SAAC is the platform through which student-athletes express their voice, engage with the NCAA, and convey ideas and concerns. On the campus level, SAAC may consist of small working groups or committees that engage in different activities and tasks as a team, such as community engagement, event planning, etc. SAAC involvement is considered a substantial resume builder for student-athletes as they develop their career path.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding **SAAC**.



STUDENT CAREER SERVICES CENTER

The student career services center is a school department that is focused on career readiness and provides students with resources and assistance in job searching. Staff members are trained to help students develop a personalized career plan and are knowledgeable about available resources.

The center's wide range of services includes:

- **Career counseling:** Helping students explore different career options, expand their resume, draft cover letters and prepare for interviews.
- **Job search assistance:** Connecting students with potential internships or job openings, including on-campus.
- **Workshops and seminars:** Teaching about resume writing, interview skills or other career-related topics.
- **Career fairs:** Connecting students with employers who are recruiting for entry-level positions and internships.
- **Networking opportunities:** Offering students the chance to meet and engage with alumni and other professionals in a specific field.

Study Abroad

Although as an international student you are already studying abroad, this opportunity is still relevant to you. Some schools offer classes that incorporate a visit to another country that counts toward a major and adds to your total credit hours. Your campus' study abroad office or your academic advisor should have more information about such offerings, as well as on available scholarships.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that due to federal immigration policies, job placement for international students is different than for domestic students, and that the resources provided by your school might not always be useful to you. Upon meeting a career counselor, always let them know your visa status in the country. Accordingly, the counselor can educate and guide you through the internship and job search process.

Your athletics department also may have a career preparation program or support staff to assist student-athletes. In addition, the department may connect you to a network of alumni, former coaches and administrators who may support or guide you.

Chapter 3:
**Immigration
Regulations,
Benefits and
Services**



IMMIGRATION SERVICES

One of the most important considerations during your time as an international student in the U.S. is maintaining your lawful immigration status. Your school's international student services office will educate and remind you and your family members about immigration rules and responsibilities, deadlines and benefits, yet it is your personal responsibility to stay on top of this matter.

Designated School Official

Every school has staff who are recognized and authorized by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to advise, counsel and assist international students. Specifically, the DSO provides information regarding relevant federal law and regulations and is tasked with submitting/maintaining the forms and data related to international students.

The DSO will advise you on immigration matters and may offer information sessions or workshops, produce informative publications/forms/applications, and process immigration requests (travel signatures, work authorizations, etc.).



Remember that any questions or concerns about studying and working in the U.S., traveling outside of the U.S. or the general regulations surrounding your lawful immigration status should be addressed with the DSO to ensure you are getting accurate information.

Consult the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website for additional information on [how to navigate the immigration system](#) and [how to contact your embassy or consulate](#).



Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.

Newsletters, Emails and Information

You will regularly receive communication from the DSO related to your experience as an international student, such as updates about maintaining your lawful immigration status, job opportunities and the process of getting work authorization, or reminders about travel requirements as the university holidays approach. Many international student services offices will distribute newsletters with useful information, as well as opportunities to interact with other international students. Be sure to read these emails or newsletters carefully and attend sessions or workshops to ensure you are staying up to date.

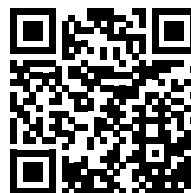
STUDENT IMMIGRATION RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The immigration regulations for international students can be quite complex and change periodically. You are responsible for remaining informed regarding the rules surrounding your individual immigration status, as it varies depending on country of origin and visa type. Any questions should be addressed to your international student services office and/or designated school official.

When applying for your U.S. student visa, you confirmed that you read and understood the terms and conditions of your immigration status and that violations may result in a change in your immigration status. Students may be subject to deportation, ineligibility for benefits such as curricular practical training or optional practical training, cancellation of visa, and/or restrictions on returning to the U.S. as a student or as a tourist. Thus, it is imperative to avoid any violation of the regulations set forth by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Transferring Schools

If you decide to transfer from your current school to a new one, you will need to contact the international student services office to ensure your I-20 transfers to your new school. In some cases, resubmission of supporting documentation might be required.



[Navigating the Immigration System](#)



[Contacting Your Embassy or Consulate](#)

You must also contact the international student services office at your new school, to inquire about transfer procedures, documentation for your new I-20/DS-2019, and any limitations that might apply. The transfer procedures will differ from school to school.



Current U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services regulations require all F-1 students to register with the international student services office at the new school within 15 days of attendance to complete the USCIS transfer process on time. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your lawful F-1 status.

If a student completes a degree at one U.S. school and plans to enroll at another U.S. school for another degree, this student must also submit a “Transfer Out Request” form for immigration purposes even though this is not considered an academic transfer. For F-1 students, the transfer out must be requested within 60 days after the student completes the degree at the first school. For J-1 students, the DS-2019 from the new school must be issued before the expiration date on the current DS-2019.

Additional information on transferring as a student-athlete:

- [NCAA Guide for Four-Year Transfers.](#)
- [NCAA Guide for Two-Year Transfers.](#)

Employment

During the academic year, international students can typically work up to 20 hours on an on-campus job. During summer and winter breaks, there are no restrictions on the number of work hours. To work off campus, you must apply for a **curricular practical training** permit through your international student services office/DSO. Before doing so, it is important to apply for your U.S. Social Security number. To find out about on-campus jobs,

connect with your student affairs office and/or browse through your university job website and apply directly.

BASIC IMMIGRATION TERMS

Passport

Your passport is your home country’s government permit for you to travel internationally. The U.S. government requires international visitors to always keep a valid passport while in the U.S. This means that when nearing six months from your passport’s expiration date, you should request an extension or renewal, while considering it may take longer to process your renewal, depending on your home country’s processing times. Your passport may be extended only by your home country’s government. You will need to contact your U.S. Embassy or consular office and ask about the forms, fees, procedures and time necessary to extend or renew your passport.

Note that if your visa is still valid and you will be issued a new passport, you should request the return of your expired passport for the continued use of the visa. By keeping the old and the new passports together, the valid visa can be used for reentry to the U.S. Otherwise you will need to reapply for a new visa, which can only be done outside the U.S.

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System is an online system developed for the tracking and reporting of F-1/J-1 visa students, exchange visitors and dependent information. SEVIS requires schools to transmit electronic data to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of State throughout a student’s stay in the U.S. The system reflects international student activity, such as



[NCAA Guide for Four-Year Transfers](#)



[NCAA Guide for Two-Year Transfers](#)



[Curricular Practical Training](#)



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

admission at a port of entry, full- or part-time enrollment, address changes, major or degree-level changes, employment authorizations, status violations, and other details.

F-1 and J-1 Visas

Your F-1/J-1 visa is the stamp placed in your passport with your photo, which allows you to enter the U.S. The visa is issued at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate when you present your I-20/DS-2019, financial certification and other required documents. The visa notes the purpose of your visit to the U.S. (student, exchange visitor, etc.), the last date you can enter the U.S. and the number of entries permitted. Some visas are valid for the entire duration of your studies, and some are issued for a shorter period, depending on reciprocity laws between your country and the U.S. It is not necessary to maintain a valid F-1 or J-1 visa while you are in the U.S., but you **MUST** have a valid visa if you plan to leave the U.S. and reenter for the continuation of your studies.

F-1 and J-1 visas cannot be obtained or renewed within the U.S. They can only be obtained from U.S. consulates/embassies outside the country. Please contact your international student services office if you will need to apply for a new visa soon.

I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status)

This is a document used to obtain the F-1 visa, enter the U.S. and transfer from one school to another. In this document, the school certifies your academic level, major field of study, expected completion date, financial support, etc. A new I-20 should be requested from your international student services office if any errors are

discovered, when any changes occur, when beginning a new level of study (moving from a master's to a doctoral degree, etc.), when changing or declaring your major, or when extending beyond your program completion date.

A student who plans to transfer to a new school must also obtain a new I-20 from the new school for transfer purposes. The I-20 is an important document that becomes your permanent record of all immigration-related matters while you are in the U.S. You should always keep any I-20s ever issued to you as a complete record of your stay in the U.S. You **MUST**

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement		I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1655-0038	
SEVIS ID: N0004720633			
SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME Sample		GIVEN NAME Student	Class of Admission F-1 ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME Student: Sample, II		PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH LAOS		COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP LAOS	
DATE OF BIRTH 16 NOV 1995		ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON COURTESY ATTENDANCE		LEGACY NAME	
SCHOOL INFORMATION			
SCHOOL NAME SEVP School For Advanced SEVIS Studies		SCHOOL ADDRESS 9002 Nancy Lane, Ft. Washington, MD 20744	
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Belene Robertson		SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE BAL214F44444000 03 APRIL 2015	
PROGRAM OF STUDY			
EDUCATION LEVEL Bachelor's	MAJOR 1 History and Philosophy of Science and Technology 54.0104	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000	
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE 14 APR 2015	
START OF CLASSES 11-2016 2016	PROGRAM START/END DATE 04 MAY 2016 - 30 MAY 2020		
FINANCIALS			
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR 9 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR 9 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 15,000	Personal Funds	\$ 15,000
Living Expenses	\$ 4,000	Scholarship From High School	\$
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	Scholarship From Another Source	\$
Other	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$
TOTAL	\$ 19,000	TOTAL	\$ 15,000
REMARKS			
SCHOOL ATTESTATION			
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me, or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of course taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received by the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(b)(6). I am a designated school official of the designated school and am authorized to issue this form.			
SIGNATURE OF School Official Belene Robertson, SEVP	DATE ISSUED 04 May 2015	PLACE ISSUED Ft. Washington, MD	
STUDENT ATTESTATION			
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from any records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.			
SIGNATURE OF Student Sample	DATE		
SIGNATURE OF Parent or Guardian	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country)	DATE
ICE Form I-20 A-B (3/31/2018) Page 1 of 3			

carry all I-20s with you while traveling. A valid I-20 signed within the past 12 months will be needed to reenter the country as a student. The I-20 will also be needed to prove work eligibility to prospective employers.

DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status)

This is a document used to obtain the J-1 visa, to enter the U.S. and to transfer from one school to another. In this document, the school certifies your exchange visitor category (for example, student, scholar or professor), your field of study, expected completion date, financial support, etc. You should request a new DS-2019 from your international student services office if any errors are discovered, when any changes occur, when beginning a new level of study (moving from a master's to a doctoral degree, etc.) or when extending beyond your program completion date. A student who plans to transfer to a new school must also obtain a new DS-2019 from the new school for transfer purposes.

The DS-2019 is an important document that becomes your permanent record of all immigration-related matters while you are in the U.S. You should always keep all DS-2019s ever issued to you. You **MUST** carry the DS-2019s with you while traveling. For J-1 students, a valid DS-2019 signed within the past 12 months will be needed to reenter the country.

Duration of Status

This is the period for which you have been admitted into the U.S. For F-1 students, this is defined as the time during which you are pursuing a full course of study, with a valid I-20, and any authorized period of practical training, plus a 60-day grace period in which you may depart the U.S., change to another status or transfer to another school.

For J-1 students, "duration of status" is defined as the time during which you are pursuing a full course of study, with a valid DS-2019, and any authorized period of academic training, plus a 30-day grace period in which you may depart the U.S. or change to another status.

Port of Entry

The place where you first enter the U.S. and check in with the immigration officer. Upon your arrival at the port of entry, you will need to present all traveling and immigration documents. You should always carry all your documents with you in your hand luggage (not checked luggage), as you will need to present everything to the Customs officers.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Record (I-94 Card)

The last step in your arrival process at your port of entry before going through to baggage claim is completing the [Form I-94 automation process](#), as instructed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers. You will need this form to request a U.S. Social Security number or driver's license and should plan to print it at the earliest possible convenience.

Full-Time Student Status

F-1 students must be enrolled full time each term. For immigration purposes, full-time status is generally defined as 12 credits for undergraduates and nine credits for graduate students. Although there are a few exceptions to the full-time rule, you must first consult with your international student services office to receive **PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL** before dropping below full-time status. Failure to receive prior written approval from your school's DSO may result in the loss of your lawful immigration status.

J-1 students are required to be enrolled full time, generally meaning nine term hours for graduate students and 12 for undergraduates. Some exceptions are allowed and should be documented. Contact the international student services office to discuss any of these matters.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Your team will likely travel throughout the U.S. and possibly internationally. It is your personal responsibility to discuss overseas travel with your coaching staff, as you may need to apply for a tourist visa. For domestic travel, verify with your team administrators which travel documents are needed or recommended to carry. It is important that you keep all of your documents safe, especially your passport.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding [Form I-94 Automation Process](#).



U.S. Reentry

When returning to the U.S. from any overseas travel, you should have all your immigration documentation accessible (not packed in a suitcase) to ensure a smooth and hassle-free reentry. You are encouraged to make copies of important documents and get them notarized/certified (this can often be done on campus or through your banking institution) so if originals are lost, you have a verified copy, which can make it easier to get replacements. Keep the copies in a safe place, separated from the original documents. Documents you are encouraged to copy:

- The passport pages that include your picture and personal information.
- The passport page with the visa stamp on it.
- Both sides of your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record.
- All pages of your I-20 if you are an F-1 student.
- The front of your DS-2019 if you are a J-1 student.

Notifying Your Home Country's Consular Services

When moving to the U.S., it is wise to notify your home country's consular services. This ensures that your home country's representatives in the U.S. are aware of who you are and where you reside and can contact you in case of an emergency.

U.S. IMMIGRATION LAWS, ENFORCEMENT AND BENEFITS

The federal agency responsible for administering the U.S. immigration system is the Department of Homeland Security. DHS is divided into three branches, each with a different responsibility:

- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** is responsible for processing immigration benefits, such as employment authorization and change of status applications.

- **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement** is responsible for enforcing existing immigration laws and regulations.
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection** is responsible for maintaining the security of U.S. land, sea, and airports and controlling the movement of people and products in and out of the country.

For administrative purposes, DHS's three branches maintain several offices in various regions and districts around the U.S. It is not the responsibility of the university to enforce immigration laws.

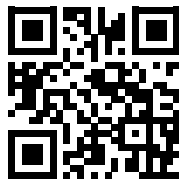
Through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, the school is required to notify governmental agencies (the DHS and Department of State) when students or exchange visitors have failed to maintain their status or are no longer attending the school. In general, the university's responsibility is to help educate and remind students about their immigration responsibilities, so that they can maintain their lawful status and complete their degrees. University staff members are not employed by the DHS or any other law enforcement agency.



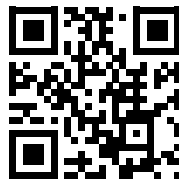
Additional information about immigrants' rights and responsibilities can be found on the website of [The American Civil Liberties Union](#).



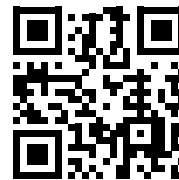
Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



[U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)



[U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)



[U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)



[The American Civil Liberties Union](#)



Chapter 4:
***Well-Being and
Daily Life***

HOUSING

On-Campus Housing

Living on campus usually means living in dormitories (also called “dorms” or residence halls) for enrolled students. A typical dorm room is designed for two to four students, without a private bathroom. Students usually are required to use the school’s meal plan when they live in a dorm.

It is important to look at the on-campus housing eligibility and requirements for your school and to communicate with coaches and athletic staff of the desire to live on campus. Some coaches might also mandate on-campus living for first-year students. On-campus living may or may not be included in a scholarship, and talking about cost of living is important when choosing where to live.



Off-Campus Housing

Renting/leasing an apartment or a house off campus (particularly with one or more roommates) is also common. Costs for utilities often are not included in the monthly rent. Below are important aspects to consider about living off campus:

- **Lease:** A written agreement that describes the rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and landlord. Some of the tenant responsibilities include minimal care of the rented property and monthly rent for a stated period. When the stated period is close to an end, both sides can discuss extending the agreement. When declining to sign a new lease, the tenant usually needs to give a notice of intent to vacate, informing the landlord of the desire to leave and end the lease. It is important to understand if the agreement contains any provisions concerning an early termination.

- **Co-signer:** Another person, usually related to the tenant, who signs the leasing contract as an assurance that the monthly costs will be paid. Most apartment complexes require a co-signer and request that the co-signer prove a source of income that is two to three times higher than the rent and/or that the co-signer lives in the U.S.
- **Move-in and Move-out Property Checklist:** After the tenant signs the lease but before settling in, the tenant will have to carefully complete this form to document the condition and content of the property, such as furniture and electric appliances. This is to avoid disputes upon expiration of the lease.
- **Renter’s Insurance:** A paid service that protects both the tenant’s belongings and some content that the property might have against losses caused by fire, theft or vandalism. Some apartment complexes may require a specific value for the insurance or suggest a specific insurance; however, tenants can conduct their own search and might be able to find the required coverage at a lower cost.
- **Cleaning and Trash Disposal:** While living in a leased apartment or in an on-campus dorm, it is important to keep a clean living space. It is crucial to understand the expectation of your landlord/roommates/campus, as well as local procedures. For example, you should know the frequency of trash collection in your area, whether there are mandatory recycling regulations, or what should or should not be put into a garbage disposal in kitchens that have one.

TRANSPORTATION

Bicycles

Depending on your location, bicycles may be a common mode of transportation. Campus police departments may also be able to register the bicycle’s serial number, which may help recover the bicycle in case of theft. When using a bicycle, make sure to use a lock and leave it only in designated or authorized parking spots.

Public Transportation

Many schools have buses as a main way to travel around campus, which is often free or offered at a low cost with a student ID. Some schools may offer ride-sharing options (often called “carpooling”), which are usually bound to a destination many students will try to travel to at a specific time, such as the local airport, a sporting event, etc. Off-campus public transportation is considered more affordable than taxi or ride app services, but it is a good idea to verify with friends about its safety and accessibility before using for the first time.

U.S. Driver's License

A driver's license is required for using a motor vehicle and can serve as an identification document when traveling domestically with your team. To get a driver's license, you first need to talk with your designated school official about the driving rules and regulations and about your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System status (must be active). Once you schedule an appointment at your local department of motor vehicles, you must pass a vision examination, a written test and a driving test to get a license. Documents you must bring to your department of motor vehicles appointment:

- All I-20 versions.
- Updated I-94 form.
- Valid passport with visa.
- Usually two proofs of residence (the department of motor vehicles website will have a list of documents that fit this requirement).
- If you have optional practical training, bring Form I-766.
- The letter issued by the university international student services office.

Buying a Vehicle

When buying a car/scooter, whether from a dealership or a previous owner, it is crucial to be accompanied by someone who is knowledgeable and can help you with the purchase. To buy a car, you must have the certificate of ownership signed over to you and immediately seek a state title through the department of motor vehicles. Depending on the state, if you do not complete it within a certain period of time, a fine or additional title fee might be imposed. It is important to consult with department of motor vehicles to learn what documents you are required to bring when you are acquiring a state title.

Renting a Car

This service is typically for people over the age of 25 who have a driver's license.

Car Insurance

Offerings are available online and through local agencies, as well as through some banks. Cost will depend on the value and mileage of the vehicle, the age of the driver(s), past driving record(s) of the driver(s) and other factors. Compare several policies before purchasing the insurance. It is critical to be aware of the steps to follow if your vehicle is in an accident or if it breaks down on the roadway. For more information, consult your local department of motor vehicles driver's handbook or insurance company.



BASIC FINANCE

Banking

There are many types of banks available in the U.S. They offer savings and checking accounts, online services and loans to qualified customers. When creating a bank account, note that interest rates and fees may apply. Some banks may offer lower or no interest rates for students, so an in-person visit to the bank to talk with a representative can help you understand the different options. Some requirements may apply, such as a minimum initial deposit, monthly balance or limited number of monthly transactions.

Debit Cards

A debit card can be issued upon creating a bank account. Unlike a credit card, debit card charges are immediately subtracted from your bank account balance.

Credit Cards

You can apply for a credit card through your bank or a credit company. Some credit cards are also offered by specific stores. It is crucial to keep track of all credit card expenditures and to meet periodic bill due dates. Credit card accounts have a set limit of expenditure, and this limit may be increased if you continue to pay your bills in full and on time. When not paid in full, credit card bills will be rolled over for the next month, along with compounded interest. If payments are late, fees might be added.

Credit Score

The American system is very different than in other countries, and developing a basic understanding of its credit score method is critical. U.S. financial institutions use this score, which is based on a history of purchases, debt and missed payments, to predict one's financial behavior and likelihood to pay back a loan on time. Your credit score will affect your ability to be eligible for loans and can determine the rate you will pay for some services.



Penny	Nickel	Dime	Quarter
\$0.01	\$0.05	\$0.10	\$0.25
1 cent	5 cents	10 cents	25 cents



Writing a Check

A personal check is an official paper slip used to order the bank to issue a payment on your behalf. You fill in details such as the amount and date of the transaction. Once you sign the check and hand it to someone as a form of payment (for example, to the owner of an apartment you are leasing), it can be cashed, and the amount will be subtracted from your account balance. If the balance is insufficient to cover an issued check (often referred to as a dishonored or “bounced” check), penalty fees are usually assessed. Forging a check or knowingly issuing a check that cannot be honored is considered a crime and can lead to serious legal issues.



Seeking guidance and knowledge about finances is of utmost importance for international students in the U.S., as the financial system is likely different than in your home country. While your school and/or athletics department likely offers support in this field, being proactive will help you maintain a healthy financial status and avoid issues or complications.

Paying Bills

It is crucial to track your bills and ensure you have sufficient funds to pay bills in full and on time. Many bills can be paid online or via phone, but be sure to make trusted transactions only. Inability to do so may affect your credit score or may lead to inconveniences or even legal issues. In some instances (for example, with a hospital bill) speaking to a company representative in advance can

facilitate an agreement on a payment plan, in which you will pay a smaller portion of the debt over a period of time.

MEDICAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Unlike other countries with national-level medical care programs, the U.S. has no government-subsidized universal health insurance, thus individuals are responsible for their own medical costs. The cost of receiving health care can be expensive. While you will have to acquire health insurance (likely through your university), student health insurance plans do not cover all medical expenses.

As a student-athlete, you will likely have cost-free access to sports medicine staff, who will be your first point of contact when experiencing a health issue. If you have a health issue and need to see a physician outside of your athletics department, make an appointment or find a walk-in clinic. In case of an emergency, call 911 or visit a hospital's emergency room (often referred to as “ER”), which operates 24 hours. Another option is an urgent care clinic, which usually has lower costs but might not have all the resources to deal with an emergency.

Health Insurance

As an international student, you will be required to have health insurance throughout your undergraduate or graduate programs. Schools usually offer insurance plans that meet the minimal requirements, and you'll have the option to expand coverage at an additional cost. Some athletics departments might be able to cover the cost of an insurance plan, and it is important that you talk with your coaches about it at an early stage, or during the recruiting process. If health care expenses exceed the amount covered by the insurance plan, delayed payment plans are a common option. Also, financial assistance through the hospital/clinic might be available, pending an application process.

When selecting an insurance plan, it is important to first familiarize yourself with terms such as “**deductible**” (the amount you pay out of pocket for covered services before your insurance plan starts to pay) and “**co-payment**” (a fixed charge you pay for a covered health care service after you’ve paid your deductible), along with other terms. Additional information can be found on the [U.S. government’s health care website](#).

Campus Health Services

All campuses have a health center, where you can usually get free or affordable care if you have the university’s insurance. Your student ID card and health insurance information will typically be required to receive care. If a health issue cannot be treated at the university health center, staff will likely refer you to a local clinic that accepts your insurance. Campus health centers usually have a pharmacy, which may offer students lower costs.

Mental Health

This is an important aspect of overall health. All NCAA member schools are required to provide mental health services and resources consistent with the [NCAA Mental Health Best Practices](#). Athletic departments may refer to affordable mental health services through the school’s counseling center, and some schools might also have clinicians within the athletic department who can offer these services. Relocating to a new country is challenging, including from a mental health aspect. It is of utmost importance to ask for help in case of feeling stressed, depressed, homesick or with any other concerns. On top of resources that are likely available at your

athletic department, the NCAA also have many [different resources](#), including on [improving your mental wellness](#).

Nutrition

With nutrient intake being a key factor of overall health and athletic performance, developing the ideal food and fluids intake plan is essential for your well-being. It is important to remember that nutrition in the U.S. is likely different than in your home country. This may include food and drinks that are high in sugar, salt and saturated fat; preservative ingredients in everyday grocery products such as bread, eggs and milk; and even genetically engineered fruits and vegetables.

In relation to other countries, high intake of processed food is common in the U.S., and the affordable cost and easy access to unhealthy fast-food options may lead to excessive intake of such offerings. Thus, you should develop a basic awareness of how the American cuisine is different than that of your home country, as well as of the negative impact an unbalanced diet can have on your well-being. Furthermore, nutritional/dietary supplements, including vitamins and minerals, are not well regulated and may cause a positive NCAA drug test. As a student-athlete, you should review all nutritional/dietary supplements with your sports medicine staff before consuming.



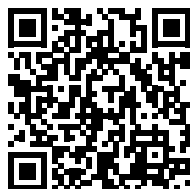
Upon first arriving to your new campus, it is a good idea to check where the nearest hospital and urgent care clinics are located.



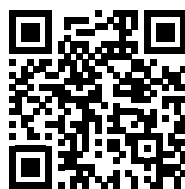
Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



Deductible



Co-Payment



U.S. Government’s
Health Care Website



NCAA Mental
Health Best
Practices



NCAA Mental
Health
Educational
Resources



Improving Your
Mental Wellness

Chapter 5: ***Safety and Security***



POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. police may have different roles than police in your home country. Their main roles are to perform certain law enforcement and social services for residents. You can turn to the police for help in situations such as disruptive neighbors or suspicious activity in your surroundings, as well as in any case of violence or a crime being committed.

A police officer's main responsibility is to enforce local ordinances and laws. If someone is convicted of violating a law, including when the violation is minor, it will be documented in this person's police record. For international students, any police record must be reported to the university and may result in issues with your immigration status in the U.S.

Campus Law Enforcement

Most schools have a certified campus police department with safety officers who carry firearms, make arrests and assist with emergencies. These officers are tasked with protecting anyone on campus and in the surrounding community and area.

Reporting a Crime

Campus police are on duty 24 hours a day throughout the year. In any case of emergency or suspicious behavior, dial 911. You should also obtain the direct nonemergency contact information for campus police, as well. In any case of a crime being committed, including if you have witnessed one, you should inform the police.

Reporting Sexual Violence

If you or someone you know is a victim of a sexual assault, immediately contact campus police, the campus Title IX Office or the nearest police authority, seek medical attention if needed and preserve all evidence. You may also call the

National Sexual Assault Hotline's confidential line at 800-656-4673 to be connected with a trained service provider.

Domestic Violence

According to the [U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women](#), domestic violence is "a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions or threats of actions or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone." If you or someone you know is a victim of a sexual assault, immediately contact campus police or the nearest police authority, seek medical attention if needed and preserve all evidence.



Proactive prevention of sexual violence and ensuring an environment free of any sexual harassment or misconduct should always be the goal at your athletics department. If you do not feel that is the case or if an incident made you feel unsafe, report it in the appropriate channels or communicate it to a coach, administrator or faculty member you trust. For more information, see the [NCAA sexual assault and interpersonal violence resources](#).



Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



[U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women](#)



[NCAA Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence Resources](#)



[U.S. Department of Justice](#)

Reporting Hate Crimes

According to the [U.S. Department of Justice](#), hate crimes are “crimes committed on the basis of the victim’s perceived or actual race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.” However, the definition can vary by state laws. If you believe that you or someone you know has been the target of such a crime or if you witnessed someone else committing such a crime, report the incident promptly to campus police.

Reporting Identity Theft

Precautions should always be taken in safeguarding official documents and account numbers, especially when making online transactions. Be cautious if you receive an unfamiliar request via email or the phone for personal details. If you suspect that your driver’s license, bank account or passport numbers have been stolen and used to commit fraud, immediately report it to campus police.

University Disciplinary Procedures

In most instances where law enforcement officials have determined that a student has violated the law, the case will be referred to the school for further review, either in addition to or in lieu of proceeding with charges in the context of a civil or criminal court.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program regulations state that if an international student is dismissed/expelled from a school due to violating school policy or committing a crime, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security must be notified.

If Stopped/Detained/Arrested by Police

If you ever find yourself involved with the authorities, you should be aware this may impact your current or future immigration status, as well as lead to disciplinary action by your school. If needed, consider contacting an attorney for assistance, as well as your home country’s embassy/consulate.

To avoid any escalations, follow these sound practices when dealing with law enforcement:

- Always be responsive, calm and respectful. Respond to questions and maintain a polite attitude. Do not walk away if asked to stop.
- Do not make quick, surprising movements once at a halt.
- Do not reach into a bag or any other concealed space without asking the permission of the police officer.
- If in a car, roll down your window and keep your hands visible (on the steering wheel if driving and on your lap if you’re a passenger).
- Be ready to provide your ID, or if in a car, your license, car registration and proof of insurance.

PERSONAL SAFETY

It is wise to always take precautions to protect yourself and your property and to stay informed on which areas in your city have higher crime rates than others.

General Safety Measures

- When leaving your home or car, even if for a moment, always keep your doors locked.
- If someone comes to your door, do not open without verifying it is safe to do so.
- When requesting maintenance service at your apartment or dorm, ask for the name of the representative in advance and then ensure the maintenance person presents identification.
- While away after dark, leave some outside or inside light on to see your surroundings when you return home.
- Always obey traffic signals when driving, walking or biking, especially at night and in inclement weather (rain, snow, fog).
- Avoid walking alone at night in isolated places or areas that are not well lit. A safety escort might be available by your campus police.
- Many schools have emergency call stations positioned around campus to call security/police, and telephones are located at the main entrances of all residence halls.

When Going Out

- It is illegal to consume alcohol under the age of 21.
- If you can legally drink alcohol, never leave your drink unattended or accept an open drink that is handed to you (by someone other than bartenders).
- Never drive while intoxicated.
- When out with a group, designate a driver for the night. Always watch out for your friends and ask them to watch out for you.

Protecting Valuables

- Do not leave your belongings unattended, even briefly. Take your backpack, coat and other valuable possessions with you, or remove valuable possessions such as your wallet from your backpack if you are going to leave it unattended.
- If you own a bicycle, be sure that you secure it to a bicycle rack with a sturdy lock and chain.
- When away from campus, arrange for a trusted friend to check your home every day. Many burglaries occur during holidays break or when thieves notice that no one is at home.
- Retain proof of your major purchases by keeping receipts.
- Consider purchasing renter’s insurance to protect your valuables.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

While social customs and laws related to substance use may be different in your home country, in the U.S. there are serious penalties imposed for substance-related offenses. An alcohol- or drug-related arrest or conviction may affect immigration status and/or lead to disciplinary action by your school. For more information, see [NCAA doping and substance misuse resources](#).

Alcohol Consumption

The legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21, and it is against the law to provide alcohol for anyone under that age or drive while under the influence of alcohol. Depending on state law, it also may be illegal to carry open alcoholic beverages in public and/or be disorderly in public. It is important to understand and abide by your state law and school policy.

Although alcohol is involved in many social gatherings in the U.S., frequent intoxication and overconsumption are considered both a health risk and a danger to the community, especially when combined with driving.

Marijuana Consumption

While recreational or medical use of marijuana is decriminalized in some states, possession or use of it remains illegal in many other states, as well as at the federal level. Schools are required to provide student-athletes with drug education, including the [NCAA list of banned substances](#) and education about products that might contain banned substances. Student-athletes are responsible for everything they ingest. Additionally,

member schools are recommended to incorporate a harm reduction approach to the prevention, identification and management of student-athletes with problematic cannabis use at the local level.



In order to reduce substance-related harm, some schools may utilize screening methods, to identify student-athletes who may be experiencing problematic cannabis misuse.

Performance-Enhancing Substance

The NCAA bans the use of performance-enhancing and recreational substances to protect the health of college athletes and to ensure fair play. The risks for student-athletes using these substances are high; a positive drug test will result in loss of eligibility and suspension from sport and could negatively impact health and the integrity of competition. Exceptions may be allowed for the legitimate medical use of some banned substances with a documented medical history that demonstrates the banned substance is needed as part of an approved medical treatment or therapy plan.

For more information, see [frequently asked questions about drug testing](#).



Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



[NCAA Doping and Substance Misuse Resources](#)



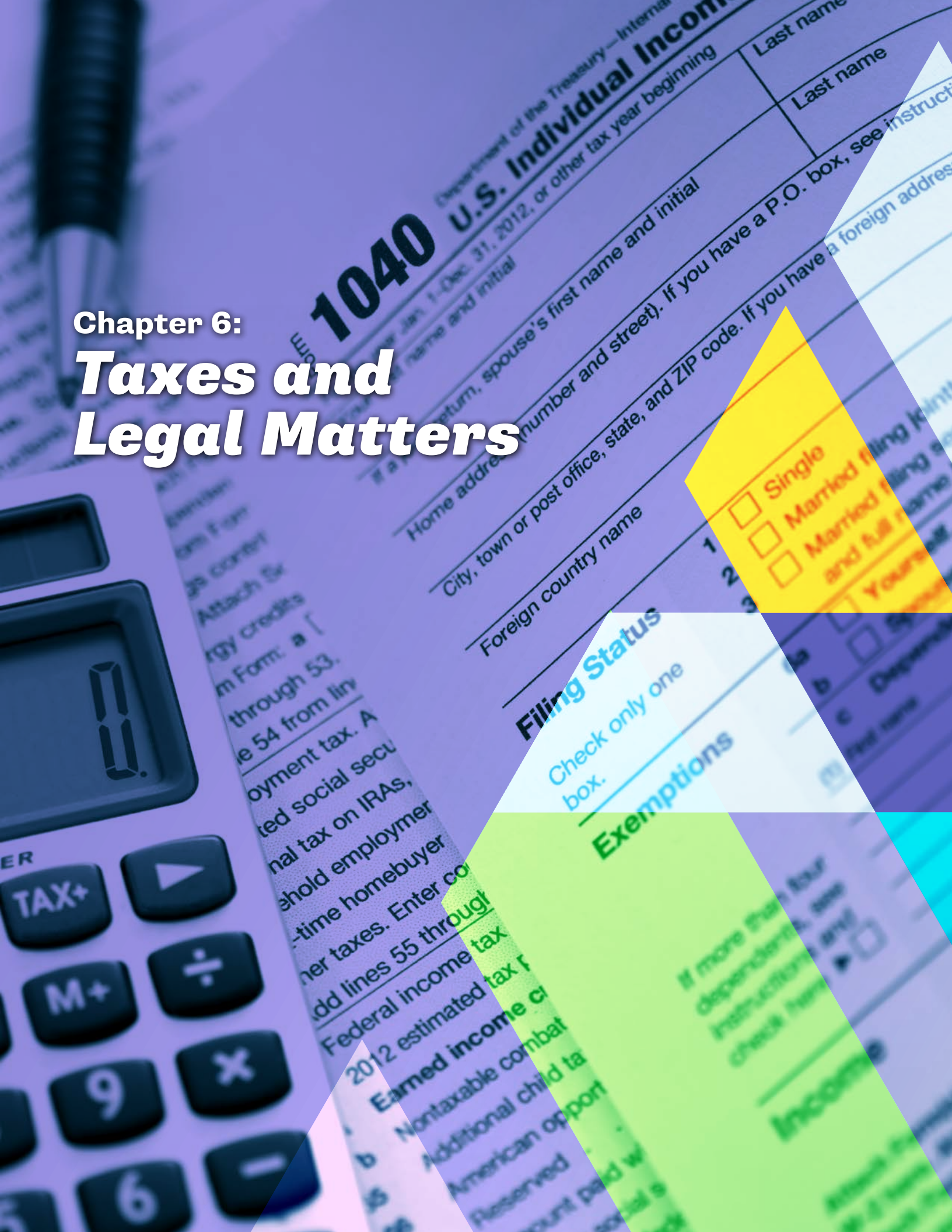
[NCAA List of Banned Substances](#)



[Frequently Asked Questions About Drug Testing](#)

Chapter 6:

Taxes and Legal Matters



IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

ID/Travel Documents

While a U.S. driver's license or a state-issued ID are sufficient for domestic travel, a passport is required for any international travel. Additionally, when leaving the U.S., it is also essential to have a signed I-20 from your designated school official, so you can legally reenter. Always save your I-20s in case you are ever asked to present them in front of an immigration officer.

Locally, such as at your bank or when picking up medications from a pharmacy, you may need identification that bears your name, picture and address. It is recommended to use a state-issued ID or driver's license instead of carrying your passport. Your student ID is often only valid on campus and will not be accepted as a form of identification in the local/national region.

Social Security Number

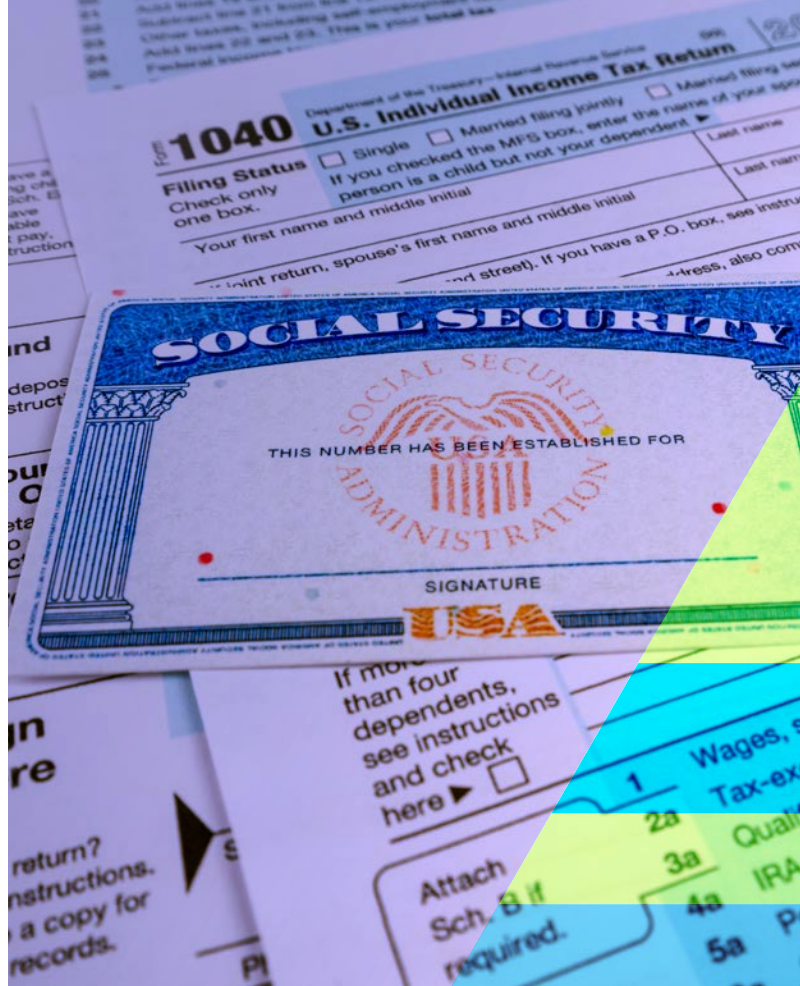
A Social Security number is a unique nine-digit number issued by the Social Security Administration to identify individuals in the U.S. A Social Security number is used to track earnings over a worker's lifetime and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. International students who are authorized to work in the U.S. will need an SSN for on- or off-campus employment, as well as for optional practical training. When applying for a position, visit your campus international student services office to start the process of getting an SSN.



If you are not eligible or don't need an SSN, you can apply for an individual taxpayer identification number for the purpose of filing taxes.

Applying for an SSN requires an in-person visit to your local Social Security Administration office. Bring the following documents:

- Your passport.
- Your I-20 or DS-2019 forms.
- A letter from your school stating that you are authorized to work.
- Proof of identity (such as a driver's license or birth certificate).
- Proof of age (such as a passport or birth certificate).



Your SSN can be used for a variety of purposes, including:

- Employment.
- Filing taxes.
- Opening a bank account.
- Applying for a loan.
- Getting a credit card.

U.S. INCOME TAX

For tax purposes, international students are considered nonresident for their first five calendar years in the country. This means that you will only be taxed on your U.S.-source income, such as income from employment or scholarships. After five years, you may become a resident, pending individual circumstances.

International student services offices on some campuses do email periodic tax education materials and instructions, and some host information sessions during the spring term (i.e., tax season). Check with your athletics department if related support is available.

Taxable Income

Includes all income from U.S. sources, such as wages, scholarships (in some cases) and rental income, as well as revenues from overseas sources that are effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business.



Every international student must file taxes every year, provided they are living in the U.S. It is crucial to seek guidance from your DSO on the proper process/time frame to file federal and/or state taxes.

Helpful information can be found on the [IRS international student tax guide](#), as well as on various offices on campus. Be sure to ask for assistance!

Tax Rates

International students pay a tax rate that is similar to U.S. citizens and residents. However, there are some special tax provisions that may apply to you, such as the foreign earned income exclusion and the foreign tax credit. It is also wise to check whether your home country might have any treaties with the U.S. that might impact your tax filing requirements. Consult your international student services office for more information.

Name, Image and Likeness

As part of the current U.S. federal immigration policy, international student-athletes with an F-1 visa are prohibited from engaging in NIL deals while on U.S. land. Although engaging in NIL activity while outside of the country is generally not considered a violation of F-1 visa terms, it is best to first consult with your athletics compliance officer, DSO and/or an immigration lawyer prior to such activity or when considering a change to your F-1 visa status to a P-1, O-1 or EB-1. Questions can also be addressed to the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program at SEVP@ice.dhs.gov.

U.S. LAW

The U.S. is considered a “litigious society,” meaning that people rely heavily on lawyers and courts to formalize and enforce agreements, mediate disputes, and obtain restitution for injuries and injustices. If ever pursuing a complaint or grievance, or accused by someone else, reach out to your athletics department or campus legal staff for assistance.

Examples of Potential Legal Issues

- Traffic accidents involving uninsured drivers who face negative financial and perhaps legal consequences.
- Dishonest transactions, such as overpriced used car/product, or purchases that turn out to be defective.
- Disputes with landlords who fail to maintain health and safety standards in leased apartments.
- Being subjected to cons or salespeople who apply pressure to agree to a deal on the spot.
- Divorces and arranging child guardianship or custody.
- An arrest for shoplifting, driving over the speed limit, public intoxication, etc.

To avoid dishonest people taking advantage of you, always ask questions, consult someone local and trusted, or take the time before making a purchase or signing any sales agreements. Remember that signing your name to any contract legally binds you to its stated terms and conditions.



Many schools include access to basic legal consultation as part of student tuition and fee packages. Make sure to ask about such access before your initial enrollment.



Scan the QR code for more information on regulations regarding [IRS International Student Tax Guide](#).



Sound Practices to Avoid Disputes

- When buying a used car, have someone knowledgeable and trusted evaluate its condition and asking price. Purchase insurance and keep it valid.
- Do not drive someone else's car, unless certain it is insured, including for other drivers.
- Before signing a lease, contract or any agreement, be sure you fully understand its terms and be prepared to abide by those terms.
- Compare prices and options with various vendors before making a big purchase and avoid committing to transactions you do not fully understand.
- Avoid sharing your Social Security number or credit card details, as well as texting pictures of personal documents.
- Do not present a false identification card to enter a place from which you may be barred on account of your age.
- Never use any form of violence toward anyone. What may be an acceptable means to discipline a child or settle disputes in some countries could be illegal in the U.S. and result in an arrest.
- If you have children, make sure they are always adequately supervised. While it might be relatively safe in your home country, leaving children unsupervised in an apartment, car or public place might be unsafe and even a violation of the law.

Know Your Legal Rights

Many U.S. constitutional rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, protection from unreasonable searches and seizures, and other protections, are not dependent on immigration status. If ever in doubt regarding your legal status or the consequences of certain actions, paperwork, etc., always reach out to your DSO and international student services office for assistance.

NOTARY SERVICES

A notary public is a public official who is authorized to certify a signing of documents. Notaries public also can provide other services, such as taking affidavits and certifying copies of documents. International students may be required to use notarial services when opening a bank account, applying for a loan or credit, or upon request to verify their overseas diploma by a potential employer.

The cost of having a document notarized varies but is typically not expensive and sometimes free. Beyond notary public offices, the service is also offered in many banks, post offices, libraries and courthouses. A list of available services can be found online or through your local authorities.





Chapter 7:
***Cultural Aspects
and Opportunities***

ADJUSTING TO A NEW CULTURE

For international students, it does not take long to notice the ways in which your home country's culture is different from and similar to the culture in the U.S. Food, language, basic interactions and countless other daily aspects are all part of a culture. It is normal to be simultaneously excited, stimulated and overwhelmed by such differences, and/or by the distance from your family and friends. It also is not uncommon to have difficulties interacting with others during the initial adjustment period, as getting comfortable with a new language and operating in a new environment does take time.

Like any other country, U.S. society comprises many different locations, ethnicities, religions and faiths, upbringings, and so on. Accordingly, almost any attempt to define one type of "American" custom and behavior will be an overgeneralization. With that in mind, the following guidelines and situations may help guide you through general interactions with people in the U.S.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

Introductions and Greeting

People often shake hands and share their names upon meeting someone for the first time. It is respectful to say, "It's nice to meet you." A common exchange includes asking, "How are you?" This question indicates basic kindness, rather than an invitation to share a long story about yourself. The most common response is to say, "Fine, thanks. How are you?"

Names and Titles

American names are usually formed by first, middle and last (family) names. If you are unsure what name to call someone, it is wise to ask, "What is your preferred name?" In interactions with someone older or in an official setting

(for example, during a job interview), it is respectful to use a courtesy title before the last name, such as Ms. (pronounced "miz") for women or Mr. (pronounced "mister") for men.



While English does not include a gender-neutral pronoun, remember that not everyone identifies as a woman or a man. Some individuals may identify as nonbinary or transgender and may not wish to be addressed as Ms. or Mr.

As a general practice, it is best to ask how someone would like to be addressed. If individuals ask you to use their first name rather than a prefix, it is polite to address them as they have requested.

Professional titles usually refer to an occupation, such as "ambassador," "doctor" or "dean." When someone has a doctorate, you may address the person as doctor. For example, you would refer to "Jane Doe, Ph.D.," as "Dr. Doe." Some people also mention their pronouns upon introductions, to share their gender identity (i.e., "he/him," "she/her" or "they/them").

Tipping Service Providers

In places such as restaurants, bars, beauty salons or taxi rides, service providers will expect a tip, also known as service charges or a gratuity, which customarily ranges from 10% to 20% of the total bill. For deliveries of food, groceries and other items, delivery drivers will usually expect a tip between \$2 and \$5. It is not customary to tip at fast food restaurants or cafeterias, where you order at a counter.

Personal Hygiene

Standards of general cleanliness, whether personal or at the public level, differ across cultures. Countries may have varying attitudes toward sterility and hygiene. For example, cultures that consider body odor as natural and cultures that consider it unmannerly are both common. Thus, it is important to learn about the typical basic standards in your new surroundings. Beyond preventing illness, hygiene is also a factor on the social level.



Brush teeth
twice a day



Shower
daily



Use
deodorant



Shampoo your
hair regularly



Wash your
hands often



Wash clothes



Cover mouth
when sick

Punctuality

Showing up on time to scheduled meetings, calls or appointments is important in U.S. culture, as being late can be viewed as unprofessional, rude or disrespectful. For appointments with a physician, dentist, therapist, etc., it is expected you arrive at least 15 minutes early, since usually there is paperwork to complete. If you do not show up or arrive significantly late, you may be charged for the canceled visit.

Dress Code

In the U.S., it is common to have certain attire associated with different occasions or purposes. Since sometimes this expectation is not communicated explicitly, an

understanding of the typical norms for various events or activities may help, as in some events, the dress code can be strict and inflexible.

While many students usually wear casual clothes to class, it is a good idea to wear business attire or business-casual clothes when participating in professional activities, such as career fairs, engagement with guest speakers in class, or job interviews. Attire can affect how you are perceived and can be associated with your ethics. Many schools have a dress code policy, which usually revolves around an expectation to avoid wearing items that are too revealing or contain offensive messages.



Although some interactions may be virtual (for example, a job interview or a guest speaker in class), it is important to dress appropriately if your webcam is expected to be on.

ACTIVEWEAR

Sporting clothes suitable for practice, exercise or casual interactions.



CASUAL

Comfortable and informal, yet clean and put together.



BUSINESS CASUAL

Fitting for professional realm encounters, but not formal. Typically acceptable at the workplace.



BUSINESS

Most formal level of professional dress. Typically expected at job interviews, important events, etc.



Student Discounts

In most college towns, businesses often have discounts for those with a valid student ID. When you go to a museum, theater, sporting event or popular eatery, check to see whether there are student discounts available. There are also many online discounts that you can take advantage of. A simple search engine query (i.e., “best student discounts”) will list many more options, including which streaming services and stores have student/education discounts available!

FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Intricacies of relationships differ from culture to culture. In the U.S., there is a clear distinction between social and professional interactions, with the latter being much more formal. In any setting, always treat people with respect, regardless of their identity. In class, your instructors will expect you to be on time, to ask questions when you do not understand something and to communicate any difficulties or needs in advance.

In the social realm, developing long-lasting friendships can take time. The word “friend” can be used by Americans to describe a close friend or just an acquaintance. It is common to build relationships with your teammates, classmates or through campus life, which offers many different groups and activities to be a part of.

When people in the U.S. have a romantic interest in someone, it is common to invite the person on a date, which expresses a desire to get to know them and spend time together. Accepting an offer to go on a date does not express consent for any type of sexual involvement. Whether in a romantic or friendly setting, always respect people’s boundaries and expect that your boundaries will be respected, as well.

Diversity

The U.S. population is highly diverse in many aspects, including in regard to race or ethnicity, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. It is likely that you’ll interact with individuals or populations who may not be well-represented in your home country, or who may speak, dress, or behave in a manner you haven’t experienced before.

It is important to educate yourself on the culture and populations of the area in which you reside. Always show respect to others, including people who are different from you. Curiosity about differences is natural and encouraged, and it is a good idea to think about the appropriate way to explore it. One option is to start by asking a friend about something you may not understand. Another option is to visit campus offices that specialize in particular identity groups. It is also expected that you treat everyone as equal. It is not acceptable to discriminate or make any derogatory comments against people who hold different identities from you.



U.S. HOLIDAYS

On top of fall and spring breaks, which are given at different dates across different schools, there are four national holidays that all universities provide a break from school activities:

- **New Year's Day** (Jan. 1).
- **Independence Day** (July 4).
- **Thanksgiving** (the fourth Thursday in November).
- **Christmas Day** (Dec. 25).

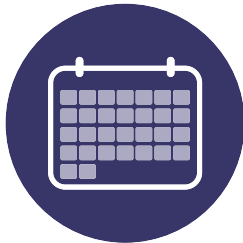
Additional common holidays are listed below, although some schools may not observe these with a day off:

- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** (the third Monday in January)
- **Washington's Birthday** (the third Monday in February).
- **Memorial Day** (last Monday in May).

- **Juneteenth National Independence Day** (June 19).
- **Labor Day** (first Monday in September).
- **Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day** (second Monday in October).
- **Veterans Day** (Nov. 11).

It is important to obtain your school's holiday calendar and review your class syllabuses, which also provide information about when classes will be canceled. If planning to visit home or travel internationally, do not purchase tickets until verifying your exam dates, as faculty are not obligated to make any adjustments to fit your travel plans.

It is also important that you find out what your school's policy is regarding dorm closures during vacations/holidays and ask what options international students typically have when the school is closed.



U.S. Holidays

January	Jan. 1 New Year's Day	Third Monday Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February		Third Monday Washington's Birthday
March		
April		
May		Last Monday Memorial Day
June		June 19 Juneteenth National Independence Day
July		July 4 Independence Day
August		
September		First Monday Labor Day
October		Second Monday Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
November	Nov. 11 Veterans Day	Fourth Thursday Thanksgiving
December		Dec. 25 Christmas Day

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME IN THE U.S.

As a student-athlete, athletic and academic demands will keep you busy; however, you will also have many opportunities that can benefit you in the future. Since it is not feasible to participate in every opportunity available on campus or through your athletics department, it is wise to assess in advance what activities fit best with your schedule. While connecting with people from your own country is natural, be sure to explore connections with local students, as well, to learn about American culture, to improve your English and to tap into opportunities you may not be aware of.

Sound Practices to Enhance Your Experience

- Find an advisor who is interested in working with international students to improve your chances of academic success and/or connect with a professor in your field of study to discover opportunities in a specific industry.
- Make an effort to participate in voluntary community service. Remember to add that to your resume, as it can help with a future job search.
- Try to acquire practical experience related to your major or your field of interest through summer internships.
- Participate in networking events and join professional organizations.
- Ask your local peers to recommend sites and activities that are unique to the area/state.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

It is common to think about plans for advanced degrees during your junior year (third year of a bachelor program) since the application deadlines for many graduate programs are during the fall term of your senior year. Depending on what you want to pursue, you can often

apply for master's programs or doctoral programs. For the former, many schools require that you take the Graduate Record Examination, known as the GRE. You can schedule and take the test in a short period of time, but it is important to study and to know that it can be costly. Also, some programs in fields such as law or medicine may require additional specific tests.

When searching for graduate programs, start by looking at schools that fit your professional goals. Other than your resume and academic achievements, a key factor to being accepted is receiving sound guidance from professors in the field you are pursuing.

Graduate programs can be costly, so having an assistantship or earning a scholarship through the school or the NCAA may be options for you. [The NCAA Market website](#) lists open positions for assistantships within athletics departments. The NCAA also provides different postgraduate scholarships, with [requirements and eligibility details listed online](#).

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

As an international student, you can work in the U.S. for 12 months after every completed program (undergraduate and graduate schools) through [optional practical training](#). Students who graduate with a major in a science, technology, engineering or math field can request a 24-month STEM extension, for a total of 36-month OPT. It is important to start thinking about OPT during the year before you graduate, as you can apply for OPT 90 days before your graduation and 60 days after it. However, there are some requirements you must satisfy to be eligible to apply. For more information about on-the-job learning opportunities, visit the [Homeland Security Resources for Students webpage](#).



Scan the QR codes for more information on the links above.



[NCAA Market Website](#)



[Requirements and Eligibility Details Listed Online](#)



[Optional Practical Training](#)



[Homeland Security Resources for Students](#)

Chapter 8:

NCAA Eligibility Resources



Amateurism

This term, which is not commonly used in the club sports models that are customary around the world, is crucial for NCAA student-athletes' eligibility. As an international student-athlete, you must comply with amateurism standards to compete at an NCAA member school. To understand why and how you must maintain and abide by the amateurism standards set by the NCAA, visit [this NCAA Eligibility Center Amateurism Resources page](#) or the links below.



NCAA Eligibility
Center Amateurism
Resources



GENERAL ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION



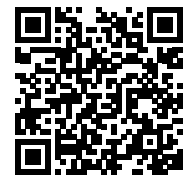
Initial-Eligibility Steps
for International
Students



International
Initial-Eligibility
Standards



Registration
Checklist



Country-Specific
Information
for Eligibility



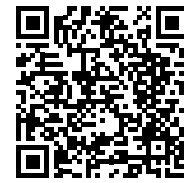
NCAA Guide to
International
Academic Standards
for Athletics Eligibility



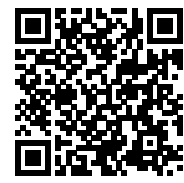
Non-English
Language
Resources



Submit International
Documents



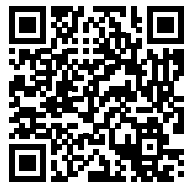
Become an
International
Student-Athlete



NCAA Eligibility
Center International
Contact Form



Division III
Amateurism
Standards



NCAA Rules and Regulations are being updated all the time. The most up-to-date NCAA manuals for each division are available [here](#).

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INCLUSION

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