WHAT’S NEXT?
ISSS AND THE ROAD TO
VANDERBILT!
ABOUT US

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
ISSSS STAFF

• Our staff members bring their years of experience in higher education and intercultural environments to the mission and goals of the office.
ASSIGNED ADVISOR

Your primary point of contact in ISSS is your assigned advisor. You will receive an email from your assigned advisor with their direct contact information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you are a student in this program:</th>
<th>Your ISSS advisor is:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Research Education &amp; Training (BRET)</td>
<td>Andrea Pietrzyk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair School of Music</td>
<td>Radhika Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts &amp; Science</td>
<td>Jillian Hautman (undergraduates); Julie Wilbers (graduates)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Science</td>
<td>Jillian Hautman</td>
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<td>Divinity School</td>
<td>Andrea Pietrzyk</td>
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<td>School of Engineering</td>
<td>Radhika Reddy</td>
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<td>Law School</td>
<td>Andrea Pietrzyk</td>
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<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>Julie Wilbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>Jillian Hautman</td>
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<td>Peabody</td>
<td>Andrea Pietrzyk</td>
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WHAT WE DO

Help you navigate your non-immigrant status:

• We advise and support students and scholars attending Vanderbilt in F and J status. Through walk-in advising, appointments, workshops, and other ways, we help you understand your non-immigrant status and what you need to do to maintain it.

Advocate for you:

• We work with campus partners to raise awareness throughout the Vanderbilt community of issues important to international students and scholars.

Adjustment support:

• We offer programming and person-centered advising to help you during your transition to Vanderbilt and throughout your time here.
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

We understand the visa process can be difficult to navigate, but we are here to support you along the way.

Although we cannot give definite answers to all of your questions, we are here to assist in any way that we can.

Any updates to the fall semester, F-1/J-1 visa status, pre-arrival information, and other important information will be communicated to you.

If you are in another visa status that already allows you to study, you will be asked to provide documentation to our office. You are more than welcome to join our newsletter and community.
MORE WAYS THAT WE SUPPORT YOU

• **Facebook group** for newly admitted students:
  https://www.facebook.com/groups/1223153198490876/

• **Connections to the local community:**
  • First Friends and EAT!

• **Programming and social connection:**
  • Thanksgiving Dinner and Winter Staycation
  • International Education Week / International Student Month
  • Social events to explore local destinations

• **Employment Authorization Workshops:**
  • Curricular Practical Training (CPT) & Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 students; Academic Training (AT) for J-1 students
MORE WAYS THAT WE SUPPORT YOU

• **Immigration attorney workshops**
  • Immigration options after OPT/AT with an immigration attorney
  • Can I do that? What is and isn’t employment?

• **Examples of other workshops**
  • Can I work? Employment options for F and J students.
  • What is a STEM extension and do I qualify?

• **Monthly newsletters**
  • Highlighting reminders and updates from our office
  • List of events sponsored by ISSS, University offices, and the community

• **GroupMe** connecting you with other international students/scholars
PROCESS FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
PROCESS OVERVIEW

Accept your admission.

Claim and activate your VUnet ID.

Check your Vanderbilt email for instructions.

Submit your I-20/DS-2019 request in the ISSS portal.

Download, Print and Sign your form I-20 or DS-2019

Keep us posted on your visa progress.
HOW DO I REQUEST MY I-20 (OR DS-2019)?

• Check your Vanderbilt email for the I-20/DS-2019 request instructions

• Use your VUnetID and password to log into the ISSS Portal and complete your Initial I-20/DS-2019 Student Request.

• The application in the ISSS portal will ask you to upload a digital copy of the following:
  • Admission letter
  • Financial support documents
  • Passport identification page
  • Current immigration documents if in the U.S., including SEVIS transfer form
HOW WILL I GET MY I-20 (OR DS-2019)?

• Current guidance from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) allows us to issue I-20s electronically.
• ISSS will upload an electronic version of your I-20 to the Attached Documents area of your Academic Objective once it has been processed.
• You will receive an email notification. Please review it for accuracy, then print and sign your document.
• Keep this I-20. You will need it for your visa interview and travel.
• If you request a DS-2019, we will send the DS-2019 to you via FedEx with the original signature. At this time, electronic DS-2019s are not permitted.
WHAT IF I AM ALREADY IN F-1 OR J-1 STATUS?

Current School

- Keeps your SEVIS record until you finish the term
- You request a SEVIS transfer to Vanderbilt

Vanderbilt

- Receives your SEVIS record on your transfer release date.
- Issues your Transfer Pending I-20 (or DS-2019)
PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

• After you receive your I-20 or DS-2019, we will send you an email with a link to a request that allows you to view comprehensive pre-arrival information to help you prepare for your travel to the U.S.

• This includes information regarding:
  • SEVIS I-901 Fee Information
  • Applying for Your US Visa
  • Health Insurance and Wellness Support for International Students
  • COVID Considerations for Initial Students and Exchange Visitors
  • Completing your SEVIS Check-in with ISSS
  • Housing Information
APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA

- Your I-20 or DS-2019 will have the SEVIS ID and the school SEVIS code, which you will need to pay your SEVIS fee and schedule your visa interview.
- Make sure to pay your SEVIS I-901 fee **before** your interview!
- It is always safest to apply for the visa in your home country. Applying for a visa in a U.S. embassy in another country can be riskier.
- Keep ISSS updated about your situation. If you face any delays or issues, let us know.
- Refer to [tips for applying for non-immigrant visa](#).
PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL TO NASHVILLE

• Travel is more complicated due to COVID-19. As you make your plans, consider the following:
  • Are you transiting through any countries? If so, do you need a transit visa? Are there COVID-related requirements for those countries, even for travelers who are transiting?
  • Does the airline that you are using have any additional requirements?
  • Are you going directly to Nashville, or will you be spending time in other U.S. states or territories first?

• Requirement to obtain negative COVID test taken within 1 day of departure.

• Requirement to provide evidence of COVID vaccination. For more information visit here.
SEVIS CHECK-IN & ORIENTATION

• You will be required to complete a check-in and orientation with ISSS after you arrive.

• ISSS is planning to continue to host orientation information virtually for graduate students, while also providing a social meet and greet.

• More details soon!
WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU SOON!

Until then, please contact your assigned advisor if you have questions:

Andrea.H.Pietrzyk@vanderbilt.edu
Jillian.Hautman@vanderbilt.edu
Radhika.Reddy@vanderbilt.edu
Julie.Wilbers@vanderbilt.edu

Schedule an Appointment here: https://go.oncehub.com/Vanderbilt_ISSS
Phone: 615-322-2753
QUESTIONS?