

PRE-ARRIVAL UPDATE

CAREFULLY READ ALL OF THE INFORMATION BELOW. Instructions are provided which will assist you upon arrival in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM

All new and transferring students are required to attend the “mandatory” International Student Orientation Program before being allowed to register for classes.

The mandatory international student orientation programs have been scheduled as follows:

Students beginning classes **Fall 2009** must attend the orientation scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2009, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Baptist Student Center located at 214 North 31st Avenue on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi.

Students beginning classes **Spring 2010** must attend the orientation scheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 2010, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Baptist Student Center located at 214 North 31st Avenue on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi.

PLEASE NOTE: You must have your passport and immigration documents with you when you check-in.

You will receive your registration packet when you check-in at the scheduled orientation program.

PLEASE NOTE: You must visit ISSS to receive information concerning registration if you fail to attend the scheduled orientation listed above.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

All students are assigned a six-digit identification number. This number is known as your “Empl ID.” Your Empl ID will be listed on your student identification card. This is the number that will be placed on your USM related documents.

University policy prohibits the distribution of any University funds to an international student, employee, visitor, or independent contractor without first obtaining an U.S. Social Security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). This policy is strongly enforced. Therefore, you will not receive any compensation from Southern Miss without following proper procedures. You are encouraged to obtain your Social Security number as soon as possible.

To apply for a U.S. Social Security card, you must go to the Social Security Administration located in the Federal Building on Main Street. Be sure to take your passport, I-20/DS-2019 and a letter of authorization from ISSS and letter of employment from your university department to obtain your social security card. It usually takes two weeks for the social security card to be mailed. Your social security cards will be mailed directly to the ISSS Office. We will notify you once your card is received.

HOUSING

There is a shortage of on-campus housing at Southern Miss. There is a possibility that you will not receive on-campus housing if you have not already applied for housing and received a room assignment. You should be prepared to find accommodations off-campus.

There is also a shortage of low cost temporary housing in Hattiesburg. If you do not have an on-campus housing assignment when you arrive, you should make arrangement to stay at a local hotel. Be sure to request the Southern Miss student rate when you check-in at the hotel. A listing of available hotels can be found in the Pre-Arrival Brochure.

TAXES

F-1 and J-1 visa holders who receive any income (e.g. scholarships, tuition waivers, fellowships, assistantships, or wages from employment) may have federal and state taxes withheld from this income. At the orientation program, you will be given a form entitled "Foreign National Information Form." This form must be completed and returned to the International Student and Scholar Services Office during the first week of classes. The information from this form will be used to determine your tax liability status. Your tax liability status must be determined prior to the receipt of payment.

Certain countries have tax treaties with the United States. If you are from one of these countries, you may be exempt from federal tax withholdings. Each year, the Internal Revenue Service issues Publication 901, which summarizes the benefits of these treaties and how it affects students. IRS Publication 901 is available for review in the ISSS Office. If, according to a tax treaty, you are exempt from federal tax, you must submit a tax report (called a "tax return) in order to benefit from the treaty.

Your questions concerning taxes will be addressed at the orientation program.

IMMUNIZATIONS

This information is found in the Pre-Arrival Brochure.

PLEASE NOTE

On numerous occasions throughout your program of study, you will be asked to display items from your home country. Therefore, we encourage you to bring items that may be displayed at the various events sponsored by the university. You may choose to wear you native dress in a fashion show or you might have an opportunity to prepare native dishes, do entertainment (dancing, singing, etc.). Please keep this in mind as you prepare to come to the United States. ISSS promotes diversity and encourages students to showcase their homelands as a means of sharing cultures and promoting cultural understanding.

**FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ISSS AT
(601) 266-4841 or visit or website at <http://www.usm.edu/iss>**



AA/EOE/ADA

