2014-15

Handbook for
International Students
and Scholars
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to Southern Miss .................................................................3
  Important Notice

Welcome to the United States...............................................................5
  Tick Tock Goes the Clock
  The Stages of Cultural Adjustment
  Attitudes and Values
  Customs and Courtesies
  Relations with the Opposite Sex
  Date Rape
  Common Questions About Life in the United States
  Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication
  People from Other Cultures May Think That...
  The United States and Southern Miss Education – Features
  Tips for Academic Success
  Southern Expressions
  Hattiesburg
  Bicycle Safety Tips
  How to Buy a Used Car

The University ......................................................................................24
  Important Dates
  University Facilities

Administrative Information .................................................................27
  What is SEVIS?
  Immigration Matters
  Immigration Terminology
  VISA Stamp
  I-94 Arrival/Departure Record
  How to Maintain Your F-1 or J-1 Student Status
  Consequences of Falling Out-of-Status
  How to Return to Student Status
  Reduced Course Load Form
  Travel Reminder
  Employment Issues
  F-1 Employment Options
  J-1 Student Employment Options
  Common Questions About Immigration Regulations
  Health Care
  Legal Information
  Taxes
  Academic Information
  Southern Miss ID Card
  Obtaining U.S. Social Security Number

Miscellaneous Information.................................................................52
  Conversion Table
  Hurricane Preparedness Information
  Severe Weather Awareness Information (Tornadoes)
  Emergency Telephone Numbers
WELCOME TO SOUTHERN MISS

Welcome to Hattiesburg and to The University of Southern Mississippi! Founded in 1910, The University of Southern Mississippi is a comprehensive doctoral and research-driven university with a proud history and an eye on the future.

A dual-campus university, Southern Miss serves students on campuses in Hattiesburg and Long Beach, in addition to six teaching and research sites in Mississippi.

All new international students and scholars face similar situations upon their arrival at the university, including finding a place to live, registering for classes, making friends, and learning where things are located. Please remember that there are many people here at Southern Miss to answer your questions. We want you to know that the ISSS staff is here to serve as your compass and guide during your stay at Southern Miss.

This book has been prepared especially to help international students and scholars in the adjustment process. It has information about the various services, policies and programs at Southern Miss. Please read it carefully, and then ask questions if you need further assistance.

We look forward to working with you!

Dr. Denis Wiesenburg, Provost
Aubrey K. Lucas Administration Building, Room 204

Dr. Daniel Norton, Associate VP
Office of International Education
International Center, Room 401

Ms. Barbara Whitt Jackson, Administrator
Office of International Student and Scholar Services
International Center, Room 411

Ms. Elizabeth C. Shoemake, Assistant Manager
Office of International Student and Scholar Services
International Center, Room 411

Ms. Gina Barker
Information Systems Specialist
Office of International Student and Scholar Services
International Center, Room 411

Ms. Chrissy Gill
Administrative Secretary
Office of International Student and Scholar Services
International Center, Room 411
CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is the responsibility of every international student and scholar to keep the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) apprised of any changes in your local address. U.S. immigration regulations require that we have both your mailing address and your residential address. Any time you move, you must tell us. Forms for this can be obtained from the ISSS office or online at www.usm.edu/iss.

If we do not have your correct address, you will

A) not receive important notices from the university or ISSS office and
B) not be reported correctly to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

Failure to supply us with your correct mailing address could cause severe problems for you through missing important mailings from Southern Miss and USCIS. If your address changes at any time, please inform us.

Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.
Welcome to the United States! Going to a new country can be an exciting experience and an opportunity to study in a new environment, learn new skills, experience different ways of doing things, and be exposed to new ways of thinking. It can also be a time in which you experience the phenomenon of "culture shock" as the excitement of the first few days wears off and you begin to notice the challenges of your new environment. You may become lonely and homesick.

Americans also experience culture shock when they travel abroad. It is a normal reaction when one is confronted with new or different sets of values and behavior patterns. The best way to handle it is to keep an open mind; remember that the people in this culture are operating in accordance with their own history and their own set of values. Try not to judge them by the standards and expectations of your own country. What may seem to you as unfriendliness or rejection may simply be the accepted way of behaving or speaking in your new setting.

If you have questions as to why Americans behave or respond a certain way, feel free to ask the staff in the ISSS office. Understanding the American culture may help you feel more comfortable and less confused about what is going on and what is expected of you.
TICK TOCK GOES THE CLOCK

Citizens of the United States are among the most notorious in the world for living a fast-paced style of life. Time, and the effective use of it, is very important to them. Time is considered valuable, something not to be wasted, and Americans feel that achieving goals depends on the productive use of time. As a result, you will probably find that the society is efficient and progress-oriented; however, this sometimes occurs at the expense of developing interpersonal relationships.

The way most Americans view time is both a direct and underlying reason for the structure of their society. You will find that technology has helped "instantize" the United States so that banks, restaurants, business offices and supermarkets are all devoted to getting people in and out quickly. Even meals have gone "fast." Fast food and microwave meals at home have become a substantial part of the average citizen's diet. In fact, most people carry calendars with them throughout the day, and very few do not wear watches! Therefore, it is important that if you make an appointment with someone, you arrive promptly. While running five minutes late would not be inexcusable, 15 minutes probably would. Many professors will not give credit for attendance to students who arrive in their classes after the lecture has begun. Although Americans are usually informal people, you will find that schedules are very important to them, and their lives are highly structured.
THE STAGES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

STAGE ONE: ENTHUSIASM AND EXCITEMENT

The individual is very positive about the culture.
• is overwhelmed with impressions
• finds the culture exotic and is fascinated by it
• is largely passive, doesn’t confront the culture

STAGE TWO: WITHDRAWAL AND LONELINESS

The individual begins to interact with the culture.
• finds the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable
• begins to react to the behavior and dislike the culture
• begins to withdraw
• begins to criticize the culture and people
• wants to go home

STAGE THREE: RE-EMERGENCE AND ADJUSTMENT

The individual begins to understand the behavior of the people.
• feels more comfortable living and encountering the culture
• feels less isolated
• regains sense of humor

STAGE FOUR: ACHIEVEMENT AND ENTHUSIASM

The individual enjoys being in the culture.
• functions easily in the culture
• prefers certain host country behavior to that of own culture
• adopts certain behaviors

SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK
• homesickness
• instability
• boredom
• hostility toward locals
• lethargy
• irrational thoughts/behavior
• anger withdrawal
• excessive sleeping
ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Citizens of the United States are proud of their democratic origins and tend to believe strongly in egalitarian ideals; therefore, your birthplace may not be as important to an American as your individual values, achievements and goals. Americans like for every person to have equal opportunities, and you might discover that rigid hierarchies are uncommon in this country. The competitive culture of the United States encourages personal accomplishments; people are viewed as individuals rather than as collective group members. Consequently, independence is a highly valued characteristic, and privacy is considered an essential part of life. Change is generally viewed as a positive force; mobility is equated with progress. As a result, you will find that the United States is a largely transient society in economic, social and geographic terms.

Freedom of speech and the right to privacy are values cherished by the majority of Americans and carefully protected under the U.S. Constitution. You will probably hear people criticizing the government and its leaders during your stay, and perhaps even laughing at the country's weaknesses. You will also hear people exchanging their opinions on a variety of subjects, and they may ask you for yours. Americans openly challenge one another about their ideas, and this is considered an integral part of society; do not be shocked if you hear someone say, "I couldn't disagree with you more," before launching into an impassioned speech about his or her ideals. As long as criticism does not take the form of a personal attack, it is not considered improper. Students frequently challenge professors in the classroom about something that has been said, and as long as questioning is done diplomatically and not with contempt, professors generally will take the time to address the student's query. What you may feel to be a sign of open disrespect is often the norm because many people in the United States do not feel restricted by social status.
CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Conversation

Americans tend to be frank people and place great value in eye contact with others. When introduced to someone new or when greeting a person in a formal situation, they will generally smile, look the other party straight in the eye, and offer a firm handshake while saying such phrases as, “How do you do?” or the more contemporary, “It's nice to meet you” or “A pleasure to meet you.” If contact between two people is made on an informal, continuous and frequent basis, a handshake is not always used in greeting, but a simple “Hello.” Many people also say to each other in passing, “How are you?” Usually this is not an invitation to discuss your life in detail but a different way of saying, “Hi.” The common response to “How are you?” is “Fine, thanks,” or “Great, and you?” Oftentimes, good friends or relatives will hug or kiss when they see each other after an absence of some time.

In conversation, social norms decree that people stand about two feet (or more) away from each other. Personal space is important to Americans, and if you violate the realm of an individual's personal space, you may find that he or she will unobtrusively back away from you. Many people "talk with their hands" because of a generally open, frank attitude toward the world; lots of expressive hand and facial gestures may be common in conversation. For the most part, American culture is informal, and posture is often casual. Some hand gestures are considered offensive in the United States; you should avoid using them.

When You're Invited Out

Because many Americans maintain a busy lifestyle, eating out is a frequent occurrence both for social enjoyment and because cooking at home may be time-consuming. In a restaurant in which you are waited on by a waiter or waitress, a tip (service charge) of 15 percent or more is expected. At a fast-food establishment, you don't need to leave a tip, but do clear your table before you leave. If you are invited to dine out with friends, plan to pay for your own meal (called “splitting the check”) unless explicitly invited to eat out at the host's expense. Generally, this will be worded as, “This is on me,” “I'd like to treat this time,” or “I'd like to take you out to lunch.”

Never accept an invitation unless you plan to attend. If you cannot or do not want to go, it is polite to say, “Thank you, but I won't be able to go.” If you do accept an invitation and a problem arises that will prevent your attendance, contact your host and explain. When invited to someone's house, you should arrive promptly. If you are unsure of the dress code, it is perfectly acceptable to ask the hostess/host about the attire: “Will the dress be casual or formal?” It is not necessary to take a gift to the host, but it is not inappropriate. If you stay with someone for a few days or more, a small gift and letter of thanks is a polite way of letting your host(s) know that you enjoyed your stay.

If you observe dietary restrictions, let your host know in advance; cultural preferences and dietary restrictions are understood and respected.

Americans like for people to “make themselves at home” during visits and will generally show a visitor all over the house and emphasize where guest towels, water glasses and other items are located. If you are staying for a substantial length of time, you should not expect your host or hostess to pour you a glass of water whenever you are thirsty; you will be expected to get it yourself. To Americans, who place value in independence and autonomy, this is a way of making you feel comfortable in their home so that you are not obliged to depend on your hosts for your every need. If you are living with a host family, guidelines vary as to
what you will be expected to do around the house, but you will probably be considered a part of the family and asked to help in the home as any other family member.
RELATIONS WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX

In the United States, relations between the genders tend to be somewhat casual. There are few strictly defined gender roles, and men and women often share household chores with little regard for previous notions of what is a "man's job" and what is a "woman's job." Today, half of all working Americans are women; they expect the same professional respect as that given to men. Men are playing a larger role in child-rearing than they did before the 1990s.

In the U. S., views on sexual relations differ from person to person. From an outside perspective, it may seem that Americans have a relaxed or liberal view of sexuality; in reality, particularly in the South, sexuality is a very personal issue, and the individual makes her or his own choice.

It is acceptable for men and women to ask each other out, either as friends or in a relationship. However, under NO CIRCUMSTANCES is there any obligation or expectation to have sexual contact with that person; dating does not indicate a willingness or desire for sexual involvement or for a long-term commitment. You have a right to say, “YES” or “NO.” Any form of sexual harassment, from verbal commentary to physical touch, is socially and legally unacceptable. If you have questions dealing with these issues, you can get advice from the ISA office.
DATE RAPE

What is “date rape?” Date rape is the act of forcing sex on a date. Date rape is sometimes called “social rape,” “silent rape” or “cocktail rape.” The rapist could be anyone you go out with -- an acquaintance, classmate, co-worker, supervisor, ex-spouse, family member or a neighbor. He could even be your boyfriend or fiancé.

Rape is a serious crime and should be a concern of all students. Most people imagine the typical rapist as a psychotic stranger lurking in an alley. In fact, many rapes are committed by a seemingly “nice guy” whom the woman may know quite well. No matter whom the rapist is, rape is an act of violence and a violation of a person’s rights. It can cause great emotional and physical injury.

If you are raped, please do the following:

- Go to a friend’s house or any place where people can give you emotional support, or call a rape crisis hotline at 601.264.7777.
- See a doctor immediately for treatment of injuries and for other tests, which can provide important medical evidence. Don’t bathe, shower or change clothes before you go.
- Report the rape to the proper authorities. If the rape occurs on campus, call the campus police at 601.266.4986. If the incident occurs off campus, call 911. Remember, reporting sexual assault is an important part of ending sexual violence. Nevertheless, you should be comfortable with the decision.
- If you choose not to report the rape or participate in legal action, you should consult a trained counselor at a crisis intervention center such as the Shafer Center for Crisis Intervention at 601.264.7777, Pine Grove at 601.288.4800, or go to the nearest hospital. If you are not interested in talking with any of the above-mentioned individuals, feel free to discuss this issue with a staff member of ISSS.

This information has been provided from a Scriptography publication.
COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

1. **Most Americans seem very friendly; they smile and speak to me but do not seem to want to become friends. Am I doing something wrong?**
   Probably not. Remember that the Americans you see on campus have probably been at Southern Miss for some time and have already established friendships with others. Because many Americans are involved in a number of different activities, and because many must work to support themselves while they are enrolled at Southern Miss, they may feel that they do not have much free time and may not engage in lengthy conversation. You might find that becoming close friends with Americans takes a while because American friendships tend to develop over time with repeated contact between parties. A number of Americans will be interested in getting to know you and learning about life in your home country. Be patient, and do not assume that you are doing something wrong if it takes time to build friendships with Americans.

2. **I hate the university. I hate the United States. I hate my roommate. What should I do?**
   Adjusting to a new country, a new university and new people is often very difficult, and sometimes students think they have made the wrong choice in coming here. The most important thing to do is talk about your feelings or problems with someone who can find some answers. The ISSS staff, the university’s Counseling Center and your friends can help. Do not make any quick decisions—talk with someone first, and you may find that things are not as bad as they seem. Conversations with the Counseling Center and ISSS staff are confidential.

3. **A person in my class is nosy and asks rude questions about my personal life. I am very offended by this and do not know what to do.**
   Americans tend to be more casual about details of their private lives than some cultures. Most feel comfortable in discussing their families, where they are from, what they are studying, their career goals, their political inclinations, their religious affiliation and certain aspects of their personal relationships (such as "I'm dating this guy from Louisiana, and we like to go fishing on weekends"). They may question you about some of these topics as a way of getting to know you and do not mean to insult you or make you feel uncomfortable. Please remember that in this society, queries of this nature are **not** considered unusual or intrusive. If you feel that your privacy is being invaded, you might explain that you are unaccustomed to talking about these things because, in your country, they are considered private topics.

4. **I was walking in the park and saw two people kissing. I was very embarrassed and upset; in my country, this behavior is considered terribly inappropriate.**
   Attitudes toward displays of affection in public vary not only from country to country but also from one person to the next. Some American people may find nothing wrong with such behavior; others might be offended. While there are social norms that regulate touching behavior outside the privacy of one's home, few laws prevent people from engaging in contact with each other (one such law is indecent exposure, which prohibits the exposure of certain parts of the anatomy in public). Your best option is simply to ignore the people and continue on your way.
STUMBLING BLOCKS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

1. ASSUMING SIMILARITY INSTEAD OF DIFFERENCE

Both the foreigner and the host can easily fall into this trap. Especially when people dress appropriately and speak some of the language, it is easy to believe that they basically have similar ways of communicating nonverbally and similar thoughts and feelings.

2. LANGUAGE

This seems obvious, but language refers not only to vocabulary, grammar, idioms and slang, but also to understanding the meanings that are intended and implied by the words people say. For example, in some languages and cultures it is common to use sarcasm, irony or plays on words, while in others it is not.

3. NONVERBAL MISINTERPRETATION

People from different cultures live in different “sensory realities;” that is, they only see, hear, feel and smell things that have meaning or are important to them. Some nonverbal signs and symbols -- gestures, posture and body movements -- are relatively easy to observe, and with effort, understand. Less obvious cultural meanings, values or significance can be found, for example, in the use of time and space. These cultural differences are much harder to notice.

4. THE EXISTENCE OF PERCEPTION AND STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes interfere with looking at things objectively. In other words, once stereotypes or preconceived ideas are formed, we are less likely to look for clues to help us understand someone else’s “reality.”

5. THE TENDENCY TO JUDGE OR EVALUATE

The tendency to approve or disapprove of the words or actions of the other person or group is common, and this reduces a person’s ability to try to understand the feelings and thoughts that are being expressed by the other person and to try to find ways to look at the world from their perspective.

6. HIGH ANXIETY

These blocks are based on the fact that people in intercultural situations are often anxious. Anxiety makes all of the other stumbling blocks worse. It is common to be tense or anxious in cross-cultural experiences because they are full of uncertainties, and this makes it necessary to constantly be alert.

Recognizing the stumbling blocks is a first step toward finding ways to reduce misunderstanding and increase learning. There are skills that can be improved in order to try to make cross-cultural experiences more satisfying and rewarding. An important first step is to realize that there are stumbling blocks that exist and will need some effort to be overcome.
The skills that are usually listed for people who want to be able to communicate effectively in intercultural situations are the following:

- open-mindedness
- flexibility
- curiosity
- tolerance for differences and for ambiguity
- a sense of humor
- low goal and task orientation
- an ability to fail

Robert L. Kohls, in *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, chooses the last three as the most important. Clearly, what is most important for you depends on your situation and the kind of encounters or interactions you face.
PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES MAY THINK THAT…

Americans are disrespectful because . . .

- Their greetings are short and casual.
- They seldom address people by their titles.
- They call almost everyone by their first names.
- They immediately ask if you are married and how many children you have.
- They do not walk you to your car or to the bus stop when you leave their house after a visit.
- They prefer to entertain guests at home rather than at a restaurant.
- They talk all the time and are seldom still.

Americans are too direct and too blunt. They will tell you the truth even if it may not be what you want to hear.

American friendships are shallow because they call many, many people “friends”—people they have just met as well as those they have not seen in years.

Americans are not modest. They will often acknowledge a compliment by saying, “thank you.” A man will even admit to having an attractive spouse.

Americans are easily intimidated. They will stand meekly in line to buy a ticket, board a bus or cash a check; drivers will stop for a stop sign out in the country when there are no other cars in sight.
U.S. universities in general reflect the U.S. Constitutional values of freedom of speech, which emphasize political and cultural democracy, competition, participation and standards of “fairness” for all.

**Course Load**
For undergraduate students, the minimum full-time course load is 12 semester hours. For graduate students, the minimum full-time course load is nine hours. A typical undergraduate student course load ranges from 15-18 hours, while a typical graduate course load is 12 hours.

**Attendance Policies**
Most classes will have attendance policies outlined in the syllabus presented by the professor at the start of the semester. Pay attention to these – failure to attend classes can result in a failing grade. When it’s necessary to be absent from class, courtesy dictates that you inform the professor or instructor, although this will vary with each individual professor.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism occurs when one uses another’s words or ideas without acknowledgement of their source. In the United States, it is not acceptable to incorporate the words of other scholars into one’s work without clearly documenting it. The consequences of plagiarism can be severe (a failing grade, expulsion from the class or the university). If you are unsure about when or how to document borrowed words or ideas, ask your instructor. You can find more information online about plagiarism in The University of Southern Mississippi Handbook on page 47.

**Class Instruction**
Methods of instruction vary according to individual, department and nature of the class. Often lower-level classes will employ formal lecturing methods, whereas many upper-level classes may have seminar-style discussion formats. Professors usually expect students to ask questions during or at the end of the class. Those that do not will tell you.

**Assessment/Evaluation**
Assessment involves a variety of methods, ranging from multiple-choice exams to essay questions. Instructors retain the authority in their classes over the assignment of grades. Student performance should be evaluated according to academic criteria made available to students early in the semester. When a student disagrees with the final grades given by an instructor, fair play requires the opportunity for orderly appellate procedure.

**Class Participation**
In the U.S. classroom, discussion is often considered a vital part of the learning process, and students are encouraged to participate by contributing their ideas and opinions. Some courses will count participation in the classroom as part of the final grade.

**Tips for Academic Success**
- Introduce yourself to professors and instructors.
  - Seek help when you need it.
- Keep up with out-of-class assignments.
SOUTHERN EXPRESSIONS
(OR COLLOQUIALISMS)

1. Y’all  short for “you all” or “all of you”
2. Stick with it  keep going until you finish the job
3. Hang in there  do not quit
4. What’s up/what’s new?  How are you doing?
5. Feel free to  make yourself welcome
6. Plug away  keep at it busily
7. See to it  make sure it is done
8. Take care of  to do something
9. Get around to it  do it when you get the opportunity
10. Lost your mind/lose your mind  to go crazy/to be confused
11. Lose sight of  to lose perspective
12. Looking forward to  anxious about
13. Check it out  look at with close scrutiny
14. Uptight  upset or anxious
15. Dead last  at the very end
16. Shut up  be quiet
17. Out of line  out of one’s place
18. Hang on  don’t give up/hold on
19. Look ahead  think about the future
20. Blow it off  forget about it
21. Strangle hold  a tight hold/grip
22. Alongside of  beside/together with
23. Offhand  not at one’s primary grasp
24. Bat an eye  blink an eye
25. Irregardless  no such word (regardless)
26. Kick in gear  to get prepared
27. End of line, road, game, etc.  the very end
28. Head start  beginning first
29. Ahead of the game  out in front/ahead of the rest
30. Jump right in  begin at your own pace
31. Strung out  very busy
32. Hard pressed  very busy with very little time
33. Hold back  to keep back voluntarily
34. Out of sync  not with the ordinary pace
35. Zeroed in/zero in  to get a good grasp of the situation
36. Pull up a chair/take a seat  sit down
37. Out of whack  out of the ordinary/broken
38. Keep an eye out for you  watch for you
39. Sharp eyes  very perceptive
40. Straighten out/up  to correct an error
41. Watch your step  be careful
42. Headstrong  stubborn
43. Step out of line  to get out of one’s place
44. In the nick of time  perfect timing
Southern Expressions (continued)

45. Keep in touch                                   continue contact/correspondence
46. Look into it                                   regard with close scrutiny
47. Slammed                                       busy, overwhelmed
48. Take in stride                                 to receive information calmly
49. You bet                                        of course
50. Holding on for dear life                       holding tightly
51. On the phone                                  having a phone conversation
52. Scared to death                               extremely frightened
53. Come again                                    return later
54. Crazy about                                   to like extremely
55. See you around                                to meet later
56. Bullheaded                                    stubborn
57. Smart critter                                 intelligent person
58. This neck of the woods                        in the area
59. I’m fixing to                                 I’m about to
60. Brand new                                     just bought/just purchased
61. To reckon                                      to guess
62. To get a hold of someone                      to reach them
63. Over yonder                                   over there
64. To chase after someone                        to try to reach them
65. A good ways off                               a long distance
66. Hey                                           Hello/Hi
67. My bad                                        my mistake
68. ASAP                                          as soon as possible
69. Common sense                                  natural intuition
70. To count on someone                           to rely/depend on someone
71. Coke                                          Sprite, Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Dr. Pepper (any soda)
72. Getting a bug                                  catching a virus on your computer or a physical illness/cold
HATTIESBURG

Hattiesburg is a relatively small city located in the southeastern part of Mississippi. It has a population of 50,000 and, over the years, rapid growth in health care and manufacturing has made Hattiesburg the medical, educational, commercial and retail center for more than a quarter of a million people throughout the southeastern part of the state. It is also the home of The University of Southern Mississippi, which has a student population of approximately 17,000.

The county seat of Forrest County, Hattiesburg, is the site of city and county governments as well as the Federal District Court. The year 1993 marked the beginning of several new and expanding projects for Hattiesburg. The area now boasts three Wal-Mart Supercenters and a Sam's Club. In addition, there is Turtle Creek Mall located on Highway 98 West and numerous strip malls such as Turtle Creek Crossing, also located on Highway 98 West. Relatively new to the city is the Longleaf Trace walking and bike trail with a station or access entrance point on the university’s campus directly behind the Century Park North residence complex off of W. Fourth Street. Hattiesburg has a Family YMCA and a $5.6 million city library that opened in spring 1996.

With its many creeks, forests, parks and sports complexes, and with its proximity to the nearby Gulf Coast and New Orleans, Hattiesburg offers a variety of recreational opportunities. A student may be strolling through the New Orleans French Quarter one day and canoeing down the Okatoma River the next. A number of museums, art centers and theaters provide visitors with the chance to participate in indoor cultural activities. Hattiesburg is also host to local festivals, such as HUBfest in the spring, FestivalSouth in the summer and Octoberfest in the fall. During the holiday season, you could enjoy the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony held in historic downtown Hattiesburg.

For more information on Hattiesburg, go to www.hattiesburgms.com or read the enclosed guide, “Here’s Hattiesburg.”

Again, welcome to Hattiesburg and enjoy your stay!
BICYCLE SAFETY TIPS

1. Mark the bike with your driver’s license state and number, and register your bike with the University Police.

2. Always park your bike next to an immovable rack and lock it. For maximum protection, invest in a heavy, U-shaped lock. At minimum, buy a case-hardened steel cable or chain and padlock to prevent theft.

3. Cross sewer gratings and railroad tracks at an angle.

4. Stay in a single-file line when riding with others.

5. Walk your bike across busy intersections.

6. Wear protective shoes to avoid getting your toes caught in moving parts.

7. Avoid long skirts or flared pants. Clasp pants to legs with clips or leg bands.

8. Wear safety equipment at all times. This includes bright clothing, protective helmet, safety goggles, etc.

For traveling on campus, University Police suggest the following safety tips:

1. Never ride your bicycle on the sidewalk.

2. Always watch for pedestrians and motor vehicles while crossing streets.

3. Always wear a standard protective helmet.

4. Always remain alert while bicycling.

5. Always follow the flow of traffic.

6. Remember that a person operating a bicycle is under the same rules of the road as a motor vehicle operator.

EcoEagle Bike Program

The EcoEagle Bike Program is a first-in-the-state program where students can apply to borrow a bike for a semester and cycle instead of drive. Up to 40 bikes are available with plans to increase that number to 75. For more information, contact the Office of Sustainability located in Hickman Hall, room 222, at 601.266.5687.
HOW TO BUY A USED CAR

Before you consider buying any used car, be sure to read the Blue Book NADA (National Automobile Dealer’s Association) Official Used Car Guide. This book, which is available free of charge at most banks, automobile insurance offices and libraries, as well as online at www.nada.com, describes the price range for any year, make, model and type of car. You should expect to pay a sum of money close to the price listed in the Blue Book.

There are three types of sources for used cars available for purchase:

New Car Dealers - Some new car dealers also sell used cars. These cars can be slightly used “demos” or trade-ins. Dealers usually keep the best cars for trade-ins and sell the cars that are older or need repairs to auctions, wholesale buyers and used car dealers. The new car dealers usually sell their used cars with a limited warranty and have the facilities to service the cars they sell. They also generally sell these cars for more than the Blue Book price.

Used Car Dealers – Used car dealers get their cars from new car dealers. These cars are older models that the new car dealer got as a trade-in and was not able to sell. This type of dealer usually does not offer any type of repair services or warranties.

Private Cars - You can also buy a car directly from an owner. These are usually advertised in the “Classified Ads” section of the newspaper. You may also find used cars online or in the student newspaper.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING A CAR

What is the car’s condition? What is the mileage? Be aware of the illegal practice of “setting the mileage back” on the odometer. Has it ever been in an accident? What were the damages? Why are they selling the car? The reason the car is being sold may indicate the need for some repairs. You should get the vehicle identification number and go online to find the history of the car before you make a purchase decision. There are numerous online services available; www.carfax.com, for example, is a reliable source to use.

PROBLEMS TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING A USED CAR

LEAKS - Look at the pavement under the car for dark stains or puddles. This may indicate that the oil or brake fluid is leaking, which can be expensive to repair.

BODY - Look for any type of rust or “bubbling” under the car’s paint. Also, check the wheel wells, door edges and trunk floor and lid. Bring a small magnet and try attaching it to different exterior areas of the car’s body. If it will not stick, this might indicate that the car was hastily repaired with a temporary plastic part because of an accident. Ask the seller what happened.

STEERING - Before turning on the ignition, unlock the steering wheel and turn it. There should not be a lot of motion or “play.” When driving, there should not be any vibration in the steering.

ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION - The car should start and accelerate smoothly. If there is any bucking, skipping, hesitation or noise, the car will probably need expensive repairs. Check the gears; they should shift smoothly and quietly.
TIRES - Bald tires or different brands of tires on a car whose odometer only says 10,000 miles can mean that the odometer has been “rolled back” or disconnected. Also, check for uneven tire wear, which can indicate an accident or alignment problem. Remember to examine the trunk for spare tire equipment. Make sure all the necessary parts of the jack are there and that there are not any leaks in the trunk.

SUSPENSION - Push and pull the top of each front tire. If it moves or makes a noise, the bearings or suspension joints could be badly worn. Push down with your body weight on each fender and make the car bounce up and down a few times. Then give the car one more downward push to release it. The car should bounce back up and stop moving; if it does not level off and continues to bounce, it may need repairs or new shock absorbers.

INTERIOR - Be sure to check window controls, safety belts, seat adjusters, warning lights, wipers, washers, radio, heater and air conditioner. Check the seats for comfort, broken springs and torn seat covers. Have a friend stand in front of, and then behind, the car while you turn on the headlights, turn signals, parking lights and brake lights. Everything should be in good working condition. Look at the rubber pedal pads; if they are greatly worn or new and the car has low mileage, ask questions. Also, check along the window seams for water leaks.

ALIGNMENT - Drive straight, through a puddle of water (if possible), with a friend standing outside the rear of the car. The front and rear wheels should follow each other in a straight line. If it moves, even slightly, to one side, then it was probably in an accident and has a bent frame. This is very expensive to repair. Do not buy the car.

BRAKES - Drive the car at 45 mph on a quiet road and apply the brakes firmly without locking them. Do this three times: the car should come to a quick stop without swerving, and the brakes should not vibrate or grab. When you stop the car completely, push the brake pedal down. It should stop well off the floor. If not, and it goes down close to the floor or feels spongy, there may be a leak in the brake fluid or problems with the master cylinder. These repairs can be very expensive.

OIL USE - After the engine has warmed up, drive the car at highway speed and take your foot off the gas pedal for a few seconds. Then, press the gas pedal down hard for two seconds and have a friend look for exhaust smoke. Blue smoke means that the car is burning oil. Repairs for this can be very expensive. Black smoke means that the fuel system may need a minor adjustment.

It is a good idea to test-drive the car. Pay attention to how the car handles. Listen for any noises. Take the car to a mechanic for a complete inspection. If he finds anything that needs a repair, take the estimate to the owner and ask for a price reduction relative to the repairs needed.
THE UNIVERSITY

Important Dates

For information on important dates and deadlines, please refer to your Class Schedule Guide, which contains a calendar of events for the year. You can find this information online at www.usm.edu/registrar/class_schedule_guide/index.php. This information is updated weekly.

University Facilities

Business Office: Located in Forrest County Hall, this office is open Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is a student bank available with simple deposit and withdrawal services. The Business Office is where you will go to pay any fees incurred on campus.

Post Office: Full postal services are available, such as stamps, money orders and post office boxes for receiving mail. The post office is open Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is located on the ground floor of the Thad Cochran Center.

Food Services: There are several places to eat on campus, all operated by Southern Miss Eagle Dining. The Fresh Food Company located in the Thad Cochran Center is the main cafeteria, with multiple meal lines. A student may purchase a seven-day or a five-day meal plan. On-campus residence hall students are required to purchase a meal plan. If you live off campus, you can purchase a full meal plan, or you can purchase a limited meal plan (called the "commuter" plan). Hours of operation vary with each food service location. Student meal cards, as well as your credit cards, may be used at the various on-campus dining sites.

Seymour's: Seymour’s is a small café located in the Union, which houses both Chik-fil-A and Subway restaurants.

The Agora: A small restaurant situated on the ground floor of the International Center, The Agora features a range of menu options for breakfast, lunch or dinner. The Agora features fresh sushi made on site by our specially trained sushi chefs, an exhibition station serving freshly prepared international and regional cuisine and, of course, Einstein Bros. famous sandwiches, soups and salads.

Starbucks: Located inside of Cook Library, Starbucks is a very popular coffee shop that originated in Seattle, Washington. This is a very popular place to study and enjoy coffee. Southern Miss’ Starbucks facility is the largest in the state. Their operating hours are Monday–Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – midnight; Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; and Sunday, noon – midnight.

Power House Restaurant: Located across from Cook Library, the Power House is the newest attraction to the Southern Miss campus. This old landmark has been renovated from its 1934 look and given a new makeover. Its menu has many attractive items from salads and sandwiches to soups. Students may use their meal cards or major credit cards at this restaurant. Their hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 9 p.m., and Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cook Library: Books may be checked out for three weeks with a one-week renewal. Please see the Cook Library newsletter (available in the library) for details on various services provided. Library hours are posted at the entrance of the library. The Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) is located on the second floor of the Cook Library. The LEC contains a video and film library, along with the equipment on which to view them.
**McCain Library:** This library is located across the plaza from the Cook Library. In this library is the Mississippi Room, the archives for Southern Miss theses and dissertations.

**University Counseling Center:** Personal, social and marital counseling are provided, and everything said during a counseling interview is regarded as confidential. No information is released to any individual except with the approval of the student/scholar. The center is located in room 200 of Kennard-Washington Hall. It is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Barnes and Noble Bookstore/Textbook Center:** The Barnes and Noble Bookstore and Textbook Center are located in the Thad Cochran Center. The Bookstore offers gifts, cards, posters, school supplies, books and Southern Miss clothing. It is open Monday through Friday.

**iTech:** iTech is responsible for maintaining the university’s computer systems. iTech’s Information Services Support Unit provides technology support to students, faculty and staff for email, Internet, telecommunications, student information, administrative and desktop computing needs. The Customer Services office (Help Desk) is located on the second floor of the Cook Library, room 209, and it provides a central point of contact for iTech and adds value by matching technology resources with technology needs on campus.

**Career Services and Student Employment:** This office, located in McLemore Hall, room 125, provides employment and Career Services information. The Student Employment Division offers you the opportunity to obtain part-time employment on campus while enrolled as a regular student at Southern Miss. International students who are maintaining legal immigration status may work up to 20 hours per week on campus; however, international students do not qualify for work-study jobs.

The Cooperative Education Program assists students in securing off-campus jobs related to the student's major. Co-op jobs require that a student take a semester off from school; there are special U.S. Immigration regulations relating to co-op jobs that must be observed. You can pick up information sheets on these regulations in the ISSS office. The Placement Center is a division of Career Services. It provides assistance to graduating seniors, graduates and alumni in obtaining employment upon or after graduation. Students seeking employment should register with the Placement Center and establish a credentials folder. International students are eligible for 12 months of optional practical training employment. Instructions on how to apply for this type of employment authorization are available in the ISSS office.

**Office of Disability Accommodations:** This office provides a variety of programs and services to students with any type of temporary or permanent physical disability. New students are encouraged to call the office at 601.266.5024 or visit them in Bond Hall, room 114.

**Student Health Services:** The university’s Student Health Services Clinic provides a wide range of services, such as laboratory testing, x-rays and a pharmacy. The clinic employs full-time physicians, part-time physicians and a nurse practitioner who provide medical care. Each student is assessed a clinic fee at registration. This fee entitles you to free consultations with the physicians and nurses. Research scholars, however, are required to pay for services, as they do not register for classes. There are nominal fees for the lab testing, x-rays and pharmacy. The clinic is located north of Kennard-Washington Hall and west of Pulley Hall. Operating hours for fall and spring semesters are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; summer semester hours are 8 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. (Thursdays, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.). Walk-in services are available except on university holidays. After-hours emergency services are provided by the After-Hours Clinic (601.261.5710) on Highway 98 across from Popeye’s; NAN Family Health Care (601.288.8004) located on Lincoln Road in the Lincoln Center, Suite 302; Immediate Care (601.261.3737) located next to Stewarts Camera; and Immediate Care (601.570.0300) located by Wal-Mart on Highway 49 South. For extreme emergencies only you can visit the emergency room. If
you are participating in the university’s group insurance plan, go to the university’s clinic first in order to receive a waiver of the deductible (see “Health Care” section).

**International Programming and Services:** The ISSS office provides a variety of services for international students and scholars. These include orientation, cultural adjustment counseling, some personal and academic counseling, advising on immigration regulations and assistance with health insurance. The ISSS office offers programs throughout the academic year in conjunction with the English Language Institute. Programs include the annual International Student Fair, participation in various community projects such as HUBfest (a community-sponsored arts and crafts fair), special speakers, field trips and other activities.

The ISSS office welcomes volunteers to help with new students each semester and to visit local schools and community civic groups to speak about your home country. This office is here to serve you, the international student and scholar. Any time you have a question or problem, come see us. Our staff will gladly assist you.
WHAT IS SEVIS?

SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is a Web-based system for maintaining information on international students and exchange visitors and their dependents in the United States. This program is administered by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and utilized by the United States Border Protection (CBP), the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS) and the United States Department of State (DOS). SEVIS is designed to keep our nation safe while facilitating the entry and exit process for foreign exchange visitors coming to the United States. SEVIS monitors the immigration status of those nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors on F, J and M visa classifications.

SEVIS also enhances the legitimacy of the forms through the use of encrypted 2-D barcodes generated only by SEVIS and alleviates document control issues experienced by I-20/DS-2019 issuance by multiple organizations to single individuals. SEVIS tracks who is issuing forms and to whom, and is able to invalidate all extraneous forms. USCIS is working closely between its SEVIS and inspections systems as well as DOS systems in order to ensure data share opportunities.

Due to the nature of the use of SEVIS, it is imperative that you maintain a close relationship with the ISSS office. ISSS must be advised of any changes that will directly or indirectly affect your immigration status. In addition, ISSS must be notified if you wish to transfer schools, as this matter is closely monitored in SEVIS.

Do not hesitate to direct any questions regarding your immigration status to the ISSS office.
IMMIGRATION MATTERS

We expect each international student and scholar to take personal responsibility for compliance with the regulations and guidelines established by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). Failure to comply with these regulations may result in loss of status and removal from this country.

For detailed information on USCIS regulations, contact the ISSS office. The ISSS office serves as your contact with the USCIS and is aware of any regulatory changes that might affect you. You may also visit their website at www.uscis.gov.

Do not rely on your friends for advice about immigration. They rely on rumors, speculation and what happened in someone else's case. The smallest detail can make your case different.
Always keep your passport in a safe place. It is your most important document. Most passports are valid for only a limited period of time. The law requires that you have a valid passport in your possession during your entire stay in the United States. It is your responsibility to remember when your passport will expire and to contact the nearest consulate or embassy of your home country (ISSS can provide you with the address). You may also find the most updated information about your consulate or embassy online. The amount of time required for passport renewal varies from country to country. It is recommended that you begin the process for renewal of your passport at least six months prior to the expiration of your passport. You may have to allow as much as several months for this process so please plan ahead.
The visa stamp placed in your passport at the American Consulate/Embassy is for permission to enter the United States for a specific purpose and period of time. This stamp must be obtained outside the United States at an American consulate/embassy whose governing body is under the authority of the United States Department of State. Students are usually given an F-1 visa. Spouses and children of F-1 visa holders are assigned an F-2 visa. J-1 visas are assigned to researchers, scholars and students who are sponsored by an agency or organization that has been designated as an exchange visitor sponsor by the Department of State, Exchange Visitor Program. Spouses and children of these visitors are assigned J-2 visas. Some researchers and professors are given H-1 visas. Their dependents are assigned H-4 visas. Since the visa is only important for entry or re-entry into the United States, there is no need to worry if this stamp expires while you are here. If you need to leave the United States temporarily, an ISSS staff member will advise you on how to obtain a new visa stamp for re-entry into the United States.

People often confuse the term “visa,” which gives a person permission to apply for entry into the United States, and the terms “I-94,” “Arrival Departure Record” or “Permission to Stay.” The latter terms refer to a person’s permission to remain in the United States after having entered.

Other terms that may be confused with “visa” are “status” or “classification.” The “visa” is stamped in the passport and is used for entering “classification.” The type of visa stamped in the passport may not always be the same as the status or classification you hold in the United States. For example, a person may enter the country on a B-2 visa and subsequently have his/her “status” changed to F-1 student. A change of status is therefore noted on the I-94 card, but the “visa” stamp in the passport will not reflect this change. Therefore, the individual will have one type of “visa” in their passport and hold another type of “status.” The visa stamp does not determine how long a foreign national can remain in the United States. This is determined by your I-9.

Students in F-1 visa status may need to consider other factors when considering the validity of their visas in relation to their status and breaks in studies. Do not hesitate to contact ISSS if further elaboration is needed on this issue.
As of April 30, 2013, the I-94 Form became an automated process. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will only give the paper form of the I-94 to a traveler in limited circumstances. To obtain a paper version of your I-94 card go to www.cbp.gov/I94. CPB will provide each traveler with an admissions stamp that will be annotated with the admission, class of admission, and admitted until the date in your passport. You will only be able to obtain your electronic record of admission online along with your I-94 admission number. It indicates how long you may remain in the United States. In addition, this form provides proof that you legally entered the United States. If you are a F-1/J-1 visa holder, your I-94 should be marked “D/S.” This stands for “duration of status,” which means that you may remain in the United States as long as you are studying full time at the school USCIS has authorized you to attend. However, it is important to periodically check the ending date on your I-20 or DS-2019 form. Please do not allow your immigration document to expire.

Under the new guidelines, you can replace your lost I-94 form by simply going to www.cbp.gov/I94. This directive applies to students who have been issued I-94 forms between April 26, 2011, and April 26, 2013. All others with I-94 cards issued before this date must file for replacement documents with the Department of Homeland Security. You must have this form in your possession when you travel throughout the United States in case you are stopped by a Customs and Border Protection Officer.

When exiting the United States, the traveler will not need to do anything differently. If you have been issued the paper form I-94, you should surrender this information to either CBP or the commercial carrier upon departure. The departure information will be recorded electronically by the carrier or CBP.

For any further information on the new I-94 form, feel free to visit www.cbp.gov/I94.
IMMIGRATION TERMINOLOGY CONTINUED

I-20 FORM: This document verifies your eligibility for the F-1 visa. Do not lose this document; keep it in a safe place. If you leave the United States for vacation and want to re-enter as an F-1 visa holder, you will need to take your I-20 to the ISSS office for revalidation and signature. Do this before you leave. PLEASE NOTE: See “Travel Reminder” section.

DS-2019 FORM: This document verifies your eligibility for the J-1 visa. You should keep your DS-2019 form in a safe place so that it will not be misplaced. If you leave the United States for vacation and want to re-enter as a J-1 visa holder, you will need to take your DS-2019 form to the ISSS office for revalidation and signature. Do this before you leave. PLEASE NOTE: See “Travel Reminder” section.

EXTENSION OF STAY: Pay special attention to the completion date in item 5 on your I-20 or item 3 of your DS-2019 form. If you have not completed your degree or research program by the given completion date, you must request a program extension. To do this, you should visit ISSS and request an “Extension of Stay” information packet. If you go beyond the completion date given on your I-20 or DS-2019 form without requesting an extension, you will then be considered as out-of-status. A request to USCIS for reinstatement to status costs $300. Detailed information is available in the ISSS Office.

FULL-TIME ACADEMIC LOAD: Nonimmigrant students are required by the USCIS to carry a full-time load. Full-time enrollment is defined as a minimum of 12 hours for undergraduates and nine hours for graduates. There is one exception to this regulation: Students enrolled in their last semester may take only those hours required to graduate. Students enrolled in the spring semester with plans to enroll in the upcoming fall semester are not required to enroll in the intervening summer session.

SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT: A spouse (wife or husband) or dependent (child) may join a student here in Hattiesburg. The spouse or dependent of an F-1 visa holder should request an F-2 visa at the United States embassy or consulate. The spouse or dependent of a J-1 visa holder should request a J-2 visa. If you wish to bring your family to Southern Miss, bring the following to the ISSS office: your I-20 or DS-2019 form; a bank statement or sponsor letter showing financial support in addition to your own support; and the name, date of birth and country of birth of each family member. An I-20 or DS-2019 form will then be prepared for your family member(s). However, student I-20/DS-2019 forms receive priority, and when there are many student I-20/DS-2019 forms to be processed, the family/spouse forms will not be readily available.

F-2 dependents are not eligible to pursue a degree. However, the law allows F-2 dependents to engage in courses periodically that are considered a hobby or avocational or recreational. Those F-2 dependents wishing to pursue full-time studies must apply to the Immigration Service for a change-of-status to F-1. The change-of-status process takes approximately 90 to 120 days. PLEASE NOTE: This rule does not apply to F-2 dependents attending elementary, middle or high school on a full-time basis.

F-2 dependents are not eligible to engage in employment of any type. Assistantships, stipends, tuition waivers and teaching positions are considered as employment. Therefore, if you are in F-2 status, you are not eligible to receive any financial assistance. Individuals in F-2 status must first apply for and receive an approval notice for F-1 status before being eligible to receive any financial assistance from Southern Miss. The normal processing time for this type of application is 90 to 120 days. Those individuals who wish to receive financial assistance from Southern Miss must plan in advance prior to beginning classes. Individuals who wish to begin classes...
prior to receiving the approval from USCIS cannot be paid back wages (this includes the payment of tuition and fees) for any services rendered prior to approval of their new status.

**SCHOOL TRANSFER:** Visa holders who wish to transfer from Southern Miss to another school must receive an I-20 form (for F-1 students) or a DS-2019 form (for J-1 students) from the new school. Before you leave Southern Miss, go to the ISSS office and leave a forwarding address. You must also clear your account with the Business Office. Also you must be sure to follow all established transfer procedures.

**CHANGE OF MAJOR:** If you change your major at Southern Miss, tell the ISSS office. A new I-20 or DS-2019 form must be prepared to reflect your new major.

**ONLINE ENROLLMENT:** F-1 students are prohibited from enrolling in the equivalent of one class or three credits per semester of online courses to meet full-time enrollment to maintain status. This regulation is strongly enforced. Students who fail to adhere to this regulation may be found in violation of their lawful F-1 status. PLEASE NOTE: Those students in language programs are not allowed to enroll in online classes.
HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR F-1 OR J-1 STUDENT STATUS

Maintaining status means you are here in the United States legally and are eligible for all the benefits available to the international student.

Easy Steps to Maintaining Student Status

1. Have a valid passport at all times.

2. Attend the school that you are authorized to attend. If you entered the United States on Southern Miss’ I-20/DS-2019, you must abide by the guidelines established by this institution before you will be permitted to transfer to another school.

3. Carry a full course load of study as specified by the school catalog:
   a. Graduate students: 9 hours, fall and spring semesters, 3 hours during summer
   b. Undergraduate students: 12 hours, fall and spring semesters, 9 hours during summer

4. You must make normal progress toward your degree objective. You should notify ISSS if you are unable to complete your degree program by the completion date specified on the I-20/DS-2019. Also notify ISSS of any change in your educational level (e.g., change of major or change of degree level).

5. You must notify ISSS if you intend to transfer to another school. This process is very stringent under the new guidelines.

6. Adhere to USCIS regulations by not engaging in more than 20 hours per week of on-campus employment while school is in session. During breaks and vacation, you may work full-time.

7. Do not engage in any unauthorized employment or work off campus without the proper authorization by the Immigration Service or ISSS.

8. Obey state and federal laws.

9. Depart from the United States in a timely manner according to the grace period based on your situation.
CONSEQUENCES OF FALLING OUT-OF-STATUS

1. You are here illegally.

2. You will be ineligible for any work authorization (i.e., on campus, off campus, practical training, etc.).

3. ISSS will not be able to provide any services to you, such as certification letters of enrollment for military or tax purposes.

4. You could be removed from the United States or barred from returning if the USCIS determines that you are in the United States illegally.

HOW TO RETURN TO STUDENT STATUS

You will need to meet with the administrator of ISSS to discuss your options.

1. You can depart the United States voluntarily, return to your country of nationality, obtain a new visa stamp, and re-enter with a new I-20/DS-2019.

2. You can apply for a return-to-student status through the USCIS. This procedure requires that you prove to the USCIS the reasons you fell out of status were beyond your control. If the USCIS approves your request, you are reinstated. If, however, the USCIS denies your request, it will issue orders to have you removed from the United States. PLEASE NOTE: The new federal guidelines allow very little room for error or mistakes. The current cost for this procedure is $290. Please do not hesitate to come to the ISSS to discuss your status and the various options that may apply to it.
REDUCED COURSE LOAD FORM

PLEASE NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO REGISTERING FOR LESS THAN A FULL COURSE OF STUDY OR DROPPING BELOW A FULL COURSE LOAD.

__________________________________________________  ________________________________________
(Student’s Name – Please print.)                   (Student ID)

Academic Adviser’s Name ___________________________________________________________

Today’s Date __________________________

Requested term for reduced course load: Semester: Fall _____ Spring_____ Summer ______
Year: 20 ______

ACADEMIC ADVISER CERTIFICATION FOR F-1/J-1 STUDENTS TAKING LESS THAN A FULL COURSE OF STUDY DUE TO ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

This student is in the United States in F-1/J-1 status, and is bound by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations that require full-time study during the academic year. Full-time study is defined as 12 semester hours of registration for undergraduate students and nine semester hours for graduate students.

There are circumstances that justify enrollment for fewer hours, but students must be enrolled at least half-time (five to six credits for graduates or six for undergraduates). PLEASE NOTE: During the course of study within one program level, a student can only be authorized one occasion to reduce his or her course load due to academic difficulties. An exception may apply to students with a confirmed medical condition.

Since you are in the best position to supply information about this student’s academic situation, we are asking you to indicate which of the following situations, if any, explains why the student is not currently registered for a full course of study. Please check the item that applies. If you wish to add comments, do so on the bottom of this sheet. Quotations are from 8CFR 214.2 (f)(6)(iii), which includes justifications that are open to interpretation.

I recommend that this student be considered engaged in less than a full course load for the following reason:

_____ He/she is expected to complete all degree requirements this semester.
_____ He/she has initial difficulty with the English language or reading requirements.
_____ He/she is unfamiliar with U.S. teaching methods.
_____ He/she has been advised to drop a course because of improper course level placement.

Academic Adviser’s Signature, DSO/International Adviser’s Signature
Comments: _____________________________________________________________
GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR COURSEWORK

Graduate students engaged in preparation for comprehensive examinations or thesis/dissertation activities after completion of coursework must have this form endorsed by their academic adviser, department chair and foreign student adviser. If approved, students must be enrolled but are not required to take a full course load.

_____ is preparing to take a comprehensive examination (i.e. qualifying examination before progressing to thesis/dissertation – not GRE, GMAT or other extraneous examinations).

_____ has completed all course work and is engaged in thesis or dissertation activities.

________________________________________
Academic Adviser/Supervising Professor

________________________________________
Department Chair

________________________________________
DSO/Foreign Student Adviser

Comments: ___________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Students having a confirmed and documented medical condition may be authorized a reduced course load for a period not to exceed an aggregate of 12 months while the student is pursuing a course of study at a particular program level. A student may be authorized a reduced course load for a reason of illness or medical condition on more than one occasion while pursuing a course of study, so long as the aggregate period of that authorization does not exceed 12 months. Students must attach a written recommendation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist.

_____ He/she has a medical condition documented by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy or licensed clinical psychologist.

________________________________________
DSO/Foreign Student Adviser

Comments: ___________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
TRAVEL REMINDER

If you plan to travel outside the United States, contact ISSS at least two weeks prior to your trip. If you have an emergency visit home, ISSS will do everything possible to make sure you have all the necessary documents prior to your departure. ISSS will need to see your passport and your I-20/DS-2019.

**If the visa stamp is valid**, an ISSS staff member will need to sign the third page of your I-20 or the front of your DS-2019.

**If the visa stamp has expired**, an ISSS staff member will need to issue a new I-20 or DS-2019 and provide a letter of good standing showing that you have been enrolled as a full-time student here at Southern Miss. You will need to take these documents with you to the American consulate or embassy in your country and apply for a new visa stamp to re-enter the United States. In addition, you should take with you proof of financial support in case the visa-issuing officer asks to see your financial documents. It is also recommended that you take an updated transcript showing proof that you have actually attended courses at this institution. In addition, this will show proof that you are making good academic progress toward your degree objective.
EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

FACTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CONSIDERING EMPLOYMENT

1. You must contact ISSS first before beginning any form of employment. Assuming that you are eligible for employment without first contacting a staff member of ISSS could cause future problems with your immigration status.

2. To maintain eligibility for all types of employment, you must be in, and continue to maintain, lawful F-1 or J-1 status and good academic standing.

3. Maintaining eligibility for employment means you must not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.

4. Working improperly or without work authorization is considered a serious violation of your immigration status. If you are caught working illegally, you could be removed from the United States.

5. International students do not qualify for U.S. government federally funded work-study jobs. These jobs are reserved for U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

International students may accept on-campus employment without authorization from USCIS. Permission must be granted by USCIS for any off-campus employment of nonimmigrant students. Off-campus employment without permission is illegal. Those caught are subject to deportation.

There are limited options available to international students for off-campus employment. Currently, there is curricular practical training, optional practical training and off-campus employment due to economic hardship for those in F-1 status. Because some of the immigration regulations concerning employment are continually being revised, the specific regulations and instructions for off-campus employment will not be covered in this book. For more detailed information about this, see the ISSS administrator. Information sheets containing the updated regulations are available upon request.

F-2 and H-4 dependents are not eligible to engage in employment of any type. Assistantships, stipends, tuition waivers and teaching positions are considered as employment. Therefore, if you are in F-2/H-4 status, you are not eligible to receive any financial assistance. F-2/H-4 dependents wishing to pursue studies in order to receive assistantships, etc., must first change their status to F-1 student. ISSS will be happy to further discuss this issue.

J-2 visa holders may apply to USCIS for permission to work. However, J-2 visa holders cannot engage in employment until an employment authorization document has been issued by the USCIS.
F-1 EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

On-Campus Employment

- Work on the school premises that issued the I-20
- Work on school premises, employed by on-campus commercial firm (e.g., Burger King, Taco Bell, McDonalds, etc.)
- Work at an off-campus location that has an educational link to Southern Miss
- Students are eligible to work 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- Students may be employed full-time during breaks and vacation periods (21 hours or more).

Advantages
- No application fee
- No formal authorization required
- No special permission required
- Work does not have to be related to field of study

Practical Training

- An F-1 student may engage in temporary employment to gain practical experience in his/her field of study.
- Two types of practical training are available:
  - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
  - Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year (exceptions vary due to major)
- Must be an integral part of an established curriculum in your field of study
- Employment is employer-specific
- Must have an offer of employment
- Use of full-time CPT for a year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Advantages
  - Authorized by DSO (no fee required)
  - Can be processed onsite within three to five working days

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Temporary employment related to your field of study
- Must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year. Those students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) may qualify for an additional 17 months of OPT. This is not an open-ended guarantee to all STEM students. This is very selective and depends on your major.
- Must apply for the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the Immigration Service via assistance from the ISSS office
- Processing fee of $380 required
- Student cannot begin employment until EAD has been received.
- OPT has four options:
  - Part-time or full-time during vacations
- Part-time while school is in session
- Part-time or full-time after completion of graduate course requirements, excluding a thesis or dissertation
- Full-time after completion of study

Off-Campus Employment Based on Economic Hardship

✓ Must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year
✓ Must apply for the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the Immigration Service via assistance from the ISSS office
✓ Processing fee of $380 required
✓ Must be able to prove that severe economic hardship has been caused by circumstances beyond your control
✓ Limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session, can be full-time during vacation and school breaks
✓ Advantage: Work does not have to be related to field of study.
J-1 STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Type of “Student Employment” (See approval notice in boxes below.)

Type 1: “Student Employment” pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship or assistantship
Type 2: “Student Employment” on the premises of The University of Southern Mississippi
Type 3: “Student Employment” off campus, necessary because of serious, urgent and unforeseen economic circumstances that have arisen since the student acquired exchange visitor status

Conditions

- The student must maintain good academic standing at Southern Miss while employed.
- Except during official school breaks and the student’s annual vacation, the student’s employment may total no more than 20 hours per week, and he/she must continue to engage in a full course of study while employed.
- This approval will be withdrawn automatically if the student’s program is terminated.
- The responsible officer must approve the specific employment in advance and in writing.

Advantage

The current law allows work authorization to be granted by the director or assistant director in the ISSS office. It usually takes three to five working days for processing. **PLEASE NOTE:** As a J-1 visa holder beginning on-campus employment, you must first have authorization from the ISSS. Authorization will be given on your DS-2019 form.

**ATTENTION J-2 VISA HOLDERS**

J-2 visa holders must request work authorization from the USCIS. However, it may take up to 90 days to receive this authorization from the USCIS. Current cost is $380.

ISSS will be happy to assist J-2 visa holders with this application process.
COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

1. My passport will be expiring. How can I renew it?
   Each country has its own regulations for the renewal of the passport. The ISSS office can give you the address and telephone number of your country's embassy and consulate in the United States, or you may find this information via the Internet. Contact your embassy and consulate directly for information on passport extension. **Do this before your passport expires.**

2. I want to apply for employment permission, extension of stay, etc., but my passport has expired. Does this matter?
   You cannot apply to the USCIS for anything with an expired passport. Any permission you request will not be granted, and you could face additional problems. As the law states, you must always have a valid passport. The validation of your passport is a condition of your lawful F-1/J-1/H-, etc., status. In addition, if you are employed on campus, you will be removed from payroll. **Do not allow your passport to expire.**

3. I have lost my passport. Help!
   If every possible effort does not result in finding your passport, you should do two things: notify the police in the area where you think you lost it and telephone your consulate/embassy for instructions on how to obtain a new one. Passport replacement is much easier if you know the passport number, date and place from which it was issued. For this reason, the ISSS office keeps a copy of your passport on file; if you have not yet taken your passport in for copying, do so immediately.

4. a) I have lost my I-94. What should I do?
   If you entered the United States before August 26, 2011, you must apply for a lost document by completing the form I-102 (available in the ISSS office). This request will be submitted to the USCIS for a replacement of your lost I-94 form. The charge for this service is $330 (fee subject to change). If however you entered the United States after April 30, 2013, you can go to [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html) and replace your I-94 card by following the simple instructions listed on the website.

   b) I have lost my I-20/DS-2019 student copy. What should I do?
   Contact the ISSS office for a replacement. Do not leave the United States without having your I-20/DS-2019 in your possession. This may cause a delay in your travel.

5. My wife/husband/daughter/son is very bored and tired of staying at home. He/she would like to work, and I am on a J-1 visa. Is employment a possibility?
   A J-2 visa holder may apply for permission to work by filing the request with the USCIS. Employment request forms (the I-765) are available in the ISSS office from the administrator.

6. My wife/husband is on the F-2/H-4 visa and would like to work. Is this possible?
   Under no circumstances can an F-2/H-4 visa holder work. There are no exceptions.

7. I am on a J-1 visa and want to apply for an extension of my stay in the United States. I have not completed my teaching or research and am still within the limit of the total amount of time I am allowed to remain in the United States. How do I apply for an extension of stay?
   If you are going home and will not be returning until after the last date on your current DS-2019, you should take a new form home with you. If you need a new visa stamp, make an application with this
form. When you re-enter the United States, simply present the DS-2019 to the official at the immigration counter. The form will be validated, and it should be returned to you. You should be given your original DS-2019. If you will be remaining in the United States, you should request a new extension document from the ISSS office. ISSS will also extend the status of your J-2 dependents. There is no charge for this service.

8. I want to work on campus and see many advertisements for "work-study" students. Can I be a work-study student?
   Unfortunately, no. Work-study jobs are for students who qualify for federally sponsored financial aid; international students do not qualify for federal funds. You can, however, take campus jobs advertised as non-work-study or "wage" jobs.

9. I want to take summer courses at another school. Whose permission do I need?
   USCIS does not require you to attend school in the summer if you were enrolled in spring and plan to re-enroll in the fall. However, if you do want to go to summer school, you may do so without special permission. Any F-1 student attending Southern Miss, for example, in the spring, can enroll in another school in the summer and return to Southern Miss in the fall without having to change SEVIS I-20 forms for summer school.

10. I am graduating, and I think I want to stay and work. When can I go to the USCIS and tell them this?
    Unfortunately, much as you might want to stay here forever, this may not be possible. The process for becoming a permanent resident can be quite complex -- too complex to explain in this handbook. Each semester, the ISSS office sponsors an immigration workshop. At this workshop, an attorney who specializes in immigration law explains the entire process. Notices announcing the workshop are emailed to each enrolled international student and scholar -- another reason to be sure we have your correct mailing and email addresses.

11. I am going to visit another country this summer, and I have a job there. Can I take it?
    If you meet the qualifications for employment in another country, your status in the United States is unimportant.

12. My mother wants to come to the United States with me when I come back from summer vacation. Can she get the F-2 or the J-2 visa?
    Only your dependents (wife/husband/children) are entitled to the F-2 or J-2 visa. Your mother and other relatives may come to visit, but they will need to apply for the B-2 (tourist) visa.

13. In order to get my passport renewed or to have funds sent from home, I need proof that I am a student. How can I get this proof?
    Letters certifying your status as a Southern Miss student and letters stating your estimated expenses may be requested from the ISSS office. Allow three to five days for preparation of these letters.

14. I have many questions about immigration matters, and my friends and professors give me different answers. Whom should I ask?
    The best place to start asking questions about immigration matters is at the ISSS office. The ISSS administrator is not a part of the immigration service but does have current information on the student and scholar regulations. While friends and teachers may be trying to help you, incorrect information can cause problems.
HEALTH CARE

The United States does not currently have a national medical insurance plan, as some countries do. Health care in the United States can be very expensive (as much as $1,500 to $2000 per day for hospital and doctor). You have already invested a considerable amount of time, energy and money to come to the United States to study. A major medical problem could use up your money very quickly. For this reason, international students and scholars at Southern Miss are REQUIRED to have health and accident insurance coverage. Do not depend on never getting sick or not having an accident. An illness or accidents can happen even to the most careful person, and the cost of the insurance is small when compared with the thousands of dollars you could potentially owe a hospital.

Each semester you register at Southern Miss, you will automatically be enrolled in the Southern Miss International Group Insurance Policy. The cost of the insurance plan will be charged to your student account in the Business office along with your tuition and other fees. On the fee invoice, it may be listed as "International Student Health Insurance" or as "insurance fees." Sometimes the insurance charge is combined with lab fees. If you are uncertain as to the charges on your fee invoice, come to the ISSS office, and we can review the charges on the computer.

J-1 research scholars will be provided insurance information, as required by the Department of State regulations. Scholars covered by Southern Miss' faculty and staff insurance will be required to purchase supplementary repatriation insurance (available through the Southern Miss International Group Policy).

If you currently have your own insurance policy, you may request a waiver of participation in the Southern Miss International Group Policy. In order to request a waiver, you must show that your policy is comparable to the Southern Miss policy and includes repatriation-medical evacuation. The waiver request must be submitted in writing, along with a photocopy of your personal policy and an English translation of your policy, to the ISSS administrator or assistant manager within two weeks of registration each semester you are enrolled.

Copies of the Southern Miss International Group Policy are available in the ISSS office. If you receive medical treatment, you need to notify the insurance company and request payment from them. This is called "filing a claim." Claim forms for the Southern Miss International Group Policy are available in the ISSS office. We do not have claim forms for any other insurance companies.

IF YOU GET SICK

You should first go to the university’s Student Health Services Clinic if you are sick during the clinic hours (given below). At the clinic, consultation with a physician or nurse is free for students and on a fee-basis for scholars. You will be charged a nominal fee for medicine, X-rays and laboratory work. The Southern Miss insurance will fully cover these expenses, and the clinic will collect their fees from the insurance company.

If you go to a physician or clinic off campus you should show your insurance ID card, and the clinic or physician's office will claim their fees from your insurance company. You may be required to pay your deductible and/or co-pay at the time of the visit.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES CLINIC: The clinic services include diagnosis and treatment, lab, x-rays and pharmacy. There is no charge for the doctor's services for registered Southern Miss students. J-1 scholars pay on a fee-per-service basis (still less expensive than a private clinic). Spouses and children of students must pay as regular private patients. The clinic is located north of Kennard-Washington.
Hall and west of Pulley Hall. Operating hours for fall and spring semesters are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; summer semester hours are 8 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. (Thursdays, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.). Walk-in services are available except on university holidays. The clinic does not offer dental services, but they will recommend a dentist if you need one.

**IMMEDIATE CARE:** There is an Immediate Care clinic (601.261.3737) located next to Stewarts Camera and an Immediate Care clinic (601.570.0300) located by Wal-Mart on Highway 49 South.

**FORREST GENERAL HOSPITAL:** The hospital is located one-half mile from Southern Miss on Highway 49 South. It offers full care and emergency service.

**WESLEY MEDICAL CENTER:** The hospital offers full care and emergency service. It is located three miles on Highway 98 West across from Hardee’s and Taco Bell.

**NOTE:** Emergency services of hospitals are generally more expensive than the Immediate Care centers.

Some health insurance policies require that you notify them before you enter the hospital or, in case of an emergency, within 72 hours. Be certain you understand the policy restrictions before you go to the doctor. No health insurance will cover illnesses that began before the effective date of the policy.

Please notify an ISSS staff member if you, your spouse or your child must enter the hospital for treatment of an illness or as the result of an accident.
LEGAL INFORMATION

CAMPUS POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND FIREARMS: Alcohol on campus is prohibited by law. Firearms, ammunition, dangerous weapons and dangerous chemicals are not allowed on campus.

ALCOHOL IN THE CITY OF HATTIESBURG: The legal age for the purchase and consumption of alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) is 21. If you are under 21 years of age, do not even try to buy alcohol, or you will have problems with the police.

You can be arrested for driving a vehicle while intoxicated. You can also be arrested for possessing an open bottle or an open can of alcoholic beverage on the streets of Hattiesburg.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED
If you are arrested by the police, you should be aware of your rights. First, you are not required to answer questions except to identify yourself and give your address. It is best to cooperate with law enforcement officials but to protect your rights in the process.

You have the right to know what charges you are accused of, the right to remain silent until you are questioned in the presence of your own attorney (if you do not have one, the court will provide one for you), and the right to a hearing in court the day following your arrest except on Saturdays and Sundays.

Remember that anything you say may be used against you in court. You are allowed one phone call. Call the ISSS administrator or call a friend and ask the friend to notify the ISSS office of the situation immediately.

NOTE: The administrator will not post bail for you. However, assistance will be provided in contacting a friend to post bail for you.

VIOLATION OF THE LAW AND DEPORTATION: Usually, you will not be deported for a single misdemeanor or other minor offense (such as disturbing the peace or drunkenness); however, if an international student is convicted of a crime for which he/she is sentenced to jail, then deportation is a real possibility.

If you violate the rules of the university and are disciplined by suspension or dismissal, this may cause problems with your immigration status. As a result of the university’s decision, you may be in violation of your legal status in this country. Therefore, you may be subject to deportation or removal from the United States.
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; this is true for everyone who earns income, not just U.S. citizens. At the orientation program, you will be given a form titled “Foreign National Information Form.” This form must be completed and returned to the ISSS 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 through a tax analysis prior to the receipt of payment. If you work off campus, your employer should provide you with this information.

Your tax liability status will be determined using your passport, immigration document (I-20, DS-2019, etc.) and your I-94 card, which should be stapled inside your passport. Your status must be determined even if you have worked in the U.S. before and already have a Social Security number.

Certain countries have tax treaties with the United States. If you are from one of these countries, you may be exempt from federal tax. Each year, the Internal Revenue Service issues Publication 901, which summarizes the benefits of these treaties and how they affect 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.

A federal tax return must be submitted before April 15, for the preceding year. Tax return forms for international students and scholars (1040NR or 1040NREZ) will be available in the ISSS office each February-April. If federal tax was withheld from your wages, then you must submit a tax return form (the 1040NR or 1040NREZ). All international students are required to file a tax return even if they have not been employed.

Each year the ISSS office makes available to international students forms 1040NR and 1040NREZ (with instructions), IRS Publication 519 (Tax Guide for Aliens) and IRS Publication 901 (Tax Treaties), or you can visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov/formspubs/ for further information and forms.

** ALWAYS MAKE COPIES OF THE TAX FORMS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THEM TO THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS).**

**THE ISSS OFFICE PROVIDES INFORMATION AND FORMS EACH YEAR IN A SERIES OF TAX WORKSHOPS.**
ACADEMIC INFORMATION

GRADES
At the end of each semester, your grades will be posted on your academic transcript by the University Registrar. You may view your grades online via SOAR. In addition, you may also request an actual original copy of your grades from the University Registrar’s office located in Kennard-Washington Hall, room 110. If you are an undergraduate student and make less than a 2.0 grade point average, you will be placed on probation. If you are then unable to improve your grades, you will be on academic suspension from Southern Miss. If you are suspended, you will not only have an academic problem but also an immigration problem since you are required to be a full-time student. If you are a graduate student and make low grades, the department has the right to dismiss you from the graduate program. Again, if you are dismissed from the university, you not only have an academic problem but also an immigration problem.

THE BUCKLEY AMENDMENT
There is a law in the United States (called the “Buckley Amendment”) that limits the kind of information the university can release about any student. We are allowed to release directory information (name and address) upon request. You may request a "privacy flag" for your file; this restricts the university from releasing even directory information about you without your permission. The request for a privacy flag can be made in the office of the University Registrar.

NEW DEGREE PROGRAM
If you arrived in one degree program but want to immediately change to another, contact the ISSS office. Allow two weeks for your file to be circulated to the new department; the decision to approve it may take as long as two weeks. In addition, there are other administrative procedures associated with a change in degree program that may complicate this process. PLEASE NOTE: Graduate students must complete at least one semester in their admitted degree program before they can change graduate programs.

If you are completing one degree program and want to apply to a new one, see the ISSS office coordinator at least three months before your graduation from the current degree program.

There is no application fee for a second degree program.
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 Southern Miss-related documents.

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

Not all F-1/J-1 students qualify for the issuance of a Social Security number. You must have a valid employment offer in the United States to qualify for issuance for a Social Security number. To apply for a U.S. Social Security number, you must go to the Social Security Administration (SSA) located on 1911 Broadway Drive, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Be sure to take your passport, I-20/DS-2019 and I-94 form with you. The ISSS office will provide additional documents you must take with you to the SSA. It usually takes two weeks for the Social Security card to be mailed to you. The process for applying for a Social Security number will be explained at the orientation. Please note: If you are unable to access your I-94 form at www.cbp.gov/I94, the SSA should be able to retrieve your information electronically in the SAVE database. Be sure to check with the ISSS office before visiting the SSA. You must have several valid days of stay in the United States before visiting the SSA office.
METRIC CONVERSION TABLES (Abbreviations are included in parentheses.)

- 1 inch (in.) = 2.54 centimeters
- 1 centimeter = .39 inches
- 1 foot (ft.) = 30.48 centimeters
- 1 meter = 39.37 inches or 1.1 yds.
- 1 yard (yd.) = 3 feet = .91 meters
- 1 kilometer = .62 or 5/8 of a mile

- 1 quart dry (qt. also = 2 pints) = 1 liter
- 1 liter = .91 quarts dry or 1.06 fluid quarts
- 1 quart fluid (qt.) = .95 liters
- 1 gallon (gal. also = 4 quarts) = 4.4 liters

- 1 ounce (oz.) = 28.35 grams
- 1 gram = .035 oz.
- 1 pound (lb. also = 16 oz.) = .45 kilograms
- 1 kilogram = 2.2 lbs.

TEMPERATURE CONVERSIONS

CENTIGRADE (C) TO FAHRENHEIT (F): Multiply C degrees by 9, divide by 5 and add 32.

FAHRENHEIT TO CENTIGRADE: Subtract 32 from degrees of Fahrenheit and multiply by 5, then divide by 9.

BOILING POINTS: 212 F or 100 C
FREEZING POINTS: 32 F or 0 C

OVEN TEMPERATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fahrenheit</th>
<th>Centigrade</th>
<th>Oven Heat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300 degrees</td>
<td>150 degrees</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>moderately hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>very hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>very hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>extremely hot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KITCHEN MEASURES (approximate)

- 1 cup (c) = 250 grams
- 1 tablespoon (T or Tbsp) = 15 grams
- 1 teaspoon (t or tsp) = 5 grams
CLOTHING SIZES: Even with a size-conversion chart, you may need to try the clothing on; most stores have dressing rooms for this purpose. If for some reason you cannot try the clothing on in the store, you may purchase it and try it on at home. Always keep the sales receipt so that if it does not fit, you can return the item with the sales receipt for a refund of your money or an exchange for another item.

CLOTHING SIZES - WOMEN

Blouses and sweaters
American  32  34  36  38  40  42  44
British   35  36  38  40  42  44  46
Continental 40  42  44  46  48  50  52

Dresses and suits (misses sizes)
American  10  12  14  16  18  20  22
British   32  34  36  38  40  42
Continental 38  40  42  44  46  48

Dresses and suits (junior miss sizes)
American  9  11  13  15  17
British   30  31  32  33  35
Continental 34  36  38  40  42

Stockings
Amer./Brit. 8  8.5  9  9.5  10  10.5
Continental 0  1  2  3  4  5

Shoes
American  6  6.5  7  7.5  8  8.5  9, etc.
British   4.5  5  5.5  6  6.5  7  7.5
Continental 36  37  38  39  40  41  42

CLOTHING SIZES - MEN

Suits, sweater, overcoats
Amer./Brit. 36  38  40  42  44  46  48
Continental 46  48  50  52  54  56  58

Shirts
Amer./Brit. 14  14.5  15  15.5  16  16.5
Continental 36  37  38  39  40  41

Socks
Amer./Brit. 9.5  10  10.5  11  11.5  12
Continental 39  40  41  42  43  44

Shoes
American  7  7.5  8  8.5  9  9.5  10, etc.
British   6.5  7  7.5  8  8.5  9  9.5
Continental 38  39  40  41  42  43  44
SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS INFORMATION

Tornadoes

National Weather Service defines a tornado as "a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and pendant from a thunderstorm." In other words, a thunderstorm is the first step in the creation of a tornado. Then, if other conditions are right, the thunderstorm could spin out one or more tornadoes.

The three key conditions required for thunderstorms to form are as follows:

- Moisture in the lower to mid-levels of the atmosphere.
- Unstable air—that is, air that will continue rising once it begins rising from near the ground (Related information: Air stability)
- A lifting force—something needed to cause the air to begin rising. The most common lifting force is heating of air near the ground. As the air warms, it becomes lighter and begins rising. Advancing masses of cool air, which force warm air upward, also trigger thunderstorms.

When all the conditions are present, humid air will rise high into the sky. This rising air is called an updraft. As air rises, it cools, and the moisture in it begins condensing to form a cloud.

The combination of conditions that cause tornadoes are common across the southern U.S. in the early spring. As the season goes on, tornadoes are likely farther and farther north on the Plains and in the Midwest, but in April and May tornadoes are common in both the South and on the Plains and in the Midwest. Often, a large storm system can create tornadic conditions for several days in a row. Also, please keep in mind that tornadoes can be formed from any storm during any time of the year.

There is a difference between a tornado warning and a tornado watch. A tornado warning is an alert issued by weather services to warn that severe thunderstorms with tornadoes may be imminent. It can be issued after a tornado or funnel cloud has been spotted by eye, or more commonly if there are radar indications of tornado formation. On the other hand, a tornado watch is issued when weather conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms that are capable of producing tornadoes. A tornado watch, therefore, implies that it is also a severe thunderstorm watch. A tornado watch must not be confused with a tornado warning. In the South, we often experience severe weather and should be prepared when the weather becomes severe. Please become familiar with the weather advisories.
HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION

Hurricane season begins June 1, and ends on November 30, of each year. Here’s what you can do to prepare for such an emergency.

Know What Hurricane Watch and Warning Means

- **WATCH**: Hurricane conditions are possible in the specified area of the WATCH, usually within 36 hours.
- **WARNING**: Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the WARNING, usually within 24 hours.

**PLEASE STAY INDOORS!**

The following is a list of items you should have on hand in case of power outage:

- Flashlight
- Battery-operated radio
- Extra batteries
- Do not include candles, which cause more fires after a disaster than anything else.
- Three (3) gallons of water per person minimum, in a food-grade container
- Additional water for sanitation purposes
- Ice (to keep food fresh if electricity goes out)
- A three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Documents including driver’s license, Social Security card, birth certificate, passport and other immigration documents, etc.

For a complete list of other items you should have on hand, visit weather.com at [www.weather.com/safeside/supplykit.html](http://www.weather.com/safeside/supplykit.html). We recommend you shop for necessary items today! Some stores could run low on supplies. You do not want to be without food and supplies!

If you feel the need to go to a safety shelter, call the Red Cross at 601.582.8151.

Stay tuned to WDAM (channel 4 on local cable) for updates on more shelters that may open. WDAM will also keep you informed on university closings and class cancellations.

The best source of news of an actual hurricane will be WLOX (channel 2 on local cable), The Weather Channel (channel 8 on local cable) and local radio stations. These stations should alert you to the closings of campus and cancellations of classes (if any).

If you need assistance, and you live on campus or off campus, call the University Police at 601.266.4986. They will direct you to the proper authorities, or they will contact us if necessary.

You may also go to the American Red Cross website for further information at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

**Most importantly, pay close attention to instructions given in the email message sent from ISSS.**
**EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Police</td>
<td>601.266.4986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattiesburg Police (Emergency)</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattiesburg Police (Non-Emergency)</td>
<td>601.544.7900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattiesburg Fire</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison Control Center</td>
<td>601.264.4235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Crisis Center</td>
<td>601.264.7777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All emergency services are available 24 hours a day. If you cannot remember a number, dial 0 for operator assistance and tell the operator the emergency and your location; the operator will then contact the proper department.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a serious emergency after 5 p.m. or during weekends or holidays, call the University Police (UP) number listed above. UP will notify an ISSS staff member of your emergency, and we will try to accommodate you in every way possible.