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*This Handbook is intended to provide you with the basic information necessary for your smooth transition to the FIU community. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to stay informed about any regulatory changes affecting your status and any legislatives changes that may bring about additional changes. SEVIS Regulations are implemented & administered directly under the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE). SEVIS entry procedures are handled by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP), and all benefit applications are adjudicated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).*
International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) is under the Division of Student Affairs of FIU. ISSS has offices at both the Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay Campuses with comparable services.

The Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) provides advising services to international students and scholars on immigration, legal, personal, cultural, social, and financial issues.

ISSS is committed to enhancing the academic, social, and personal interactions of our international students and scholars.

ISSS will provide the necessary support to our students and scholars so they may achieve their educational objectives.

There are more than 2500 international students from 125 different countries pursuing degrees at FIU. Because they serve such a large population, ISSS advisors CANNOT generally meet with you on a "walk-in" basis. To best serve you, students must make appointments to see an advisor. Appointments can be made in person or by phone. Please make sure you bring your passport, visa, I-94, and I-20 or DS-2019 with you at the time of appointment.

The advisors at ISSS are experts in F-1 and J-1 regulations affecting the legal status of most FIU international students. The advisors DO NOT work for the Department of Homeland Security or any of its immigration units (USICE, USCBP, USCIS). Their job is to explain the law and regulations and advise you of the options and benefits available to you as non-immigrant students. However, it is ultimately YOUR responsibility to make sure you are maintaining valid legal status in accordance with U.S. federal laws and regulations.
Services Provided by ISSS

I. Immigration Information and Procedures
ISSS can advise you on immigration law and regulations and assist you with the following immigration procedures:

a. Immigration Regulations Updates
b. School Transfer/Level Transfer
c. Reinstatement
d. Change of Status
e. Program Extension
f. Employment

Since your principal purpose for being here is to study, employment options are limited. Our F-1 Employment Online Workshop, available on our website at http://isss.fiu.edu/workshop.htm, can provide you with relevant immigration regulations and ISSS procedures regarding employment options (on-campus employment or practical training).

II. Issuance of Documents

To request a new I-20/DS-2019 or a letter from ISSS, you will need to submit a DOCUMENT REQUEST FORM (see following page) along with any additional required paperwork, depending on the type of request.

A. Issuance of I-20 or DS-2019
Note: I-20's FOR NEW STUDENTS are issued and sent out by the OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS for undergraduate students and by the GRADUATE ADMISSIONS OFFICE for graduate students.

An I-20 or DS-2019 for continuing students may be issued by the ISSS office for:

a. Change of Major (Undergraduate students only)
b. Change of Program/Level (Graduate students only)
c. Extension
d. Reinstatement or Restart of F-1 Status by Travel
e. Visa Renewal
f. Use by dependents (“dependent” status is limited to spouses and children below 21 years of age)

When requesting a new I-20 or DS-2019, you may be required to present current financial documents demonstrating availability of funds (e.g., when requesting the document to obtain a new F-1 or J-1 visa at a U.S. consulate abroad).

B. Preparation of Letters & Certifications
ISSS can provide letters certifying your status and enrollment at FIU. U.S. law requires that we receive written authorization from you before we can release any information about you. By submitting a Document Request Form, you are providing this authorization.

The following letters and certifications can be requested:

a. Full-time Enrollment Letter
b. Social Security Letter – available after on-campus employment is secured (a letter from the on-campus employer must be submitted with the request)
c. Dollar Exchange Letter (estimate of expenses)
d. Approval for Concurrent Enrollment (with schools such as MDC, BCC, etc)
e. On-Campus Employment Certification (for use by department and HR at FIU)
f. Change of Address
g. Government Forms – form must be in English

III. International Student and Scholar Services programs and workshops:

a. Immigration Orientation (Mandatory)
   Presented by ISSS staff for new international students each fall, spring, and summer term. Important information is given during these orientations regarding medical insurance, school transfer, immigration rules and regulations, and policies and procedures for the university and ISSS.

b. Library Skills Workshop
   Conducted by a University Librarian and geared toward acquainting new students with the basic research skills, tools, and resources available.

c. Welcome Dinner/International Welcome Reception
   A bi-annual event where students get the opportunity to meet new and continuing international students over food and music.

d. International Peer Mentor Program
   A program that assists students with adjustment to FIU and college life.

e. F-1: It’s About Your Status
   Presents more in-depth coverage of the regulations governing students in F-1 status and gives new and continuing students a chance to ask questions in a more informal setting than the general orientation.

f. Job Search Strategies for International Students
   Conducted in collaboration with Career Services to provide basic guidelines on resume writing, interviewing tips, and job search trends as well as various employment options and/or visa categories.

g. Options after Graduation (with an Immigration Attorney)
   Addresses the concerns of graduating international students and details the various non-immigrant visa categories which are available after the completion of F-1 visa status, focusing primarily on the H-1B category.

h. IRS Non-Resident Tax Workshop
   Conducted either under the Educational Outreach section of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or through a local Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and offers a general overview of non-resident tax laws, tax forms and filing instructions.

V. Student organizations advised by ISSS staff:

a. International Student Club (ISC)
   A student organization that seeks to foster friendships and understanding among international students as well as American students.

b. Phi Beta Delta – Zeta Alpha Chapter
   The first International Student & Scholar honor society at FIU. Applications are available on both campuses during the fall term for spring induction.
DOCUMENT REQUEST FORM

File at: ___MMC ___BBC

Panther ID#: 

LAST NAME FIRSTNAME

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Visa Type: Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): ___/___/____

Local Address: Phone:

City/State: Zip Code: Email:

Academic Plan/Major(s):

Degree Level: ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Doctorate ☐ Certificate ☐ Scholar (J-1)

PLEASE INDICATE DOCUMENT NEEDED (Processing takes 4-5 business days):

Immigration Documents

☐ I-20 (COMPLETE REVERSE SIDE) ☐ DS-2019 (COMPLETE REVERSE SIDE)

Letters & Certifications

☐ CADIVI Letter & Dollar Exchange Certification Letter (ONLY VENEZUELAN STUDENTS)
  • Attach student account summary.

☐ Concurrent Enrollment Approval – SCHOOL: TERM: ___FALL ___SPRING ___SUMMER
  • Attach academic advisor’s letter and/or FIU Transient Student Form.

☐ Dollar Exchange Certification Letter (estimate of expenses)

☐ Full-time Enrollment Certification Letter for: ___FALL ___SPRING ___SUMMER
  • Attach class schedule.

☐ Invitation Letter for commencement (ONLY STUDENTS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR GRADUATION)
  • Attach separate sheet with the following information TYPED for each individual: full name as it appears on passport (correct spelling), date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy), place of birth, country of citizenship, and relationship to student

☐ On-Campus Employment Certification – DEPARTMENT/EMPLOYER:
  • If applying for Social Security Number, attach hiring department’s letter.

☐ Other – Please explain below exactly what you need:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If I am unable to pick up document, I hereby authorize ISSS to release document to (state name(s)):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature Date

(Continued on back page)
YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS PAGE IF YOU ARE REQUESTING A NEW I-20 OR DS-2019.

PLEASE INDICATE THE REASON FOR YOUR REQUEST:

☐ VISA RENEWAL*
  • Attach Proof of Funds.

☐ RESTART F-1 STATUS* through travel and reentry
  • See Information Sheet for required supporting documents. Appointment required before I-20 issuance.

☐ REINSTATEMENT* through application to USCIS
  • See Information Sheet for required supporting documents. Appointment required before I-20 issuance.

☐ CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1 or J-1*
  • See Information Sheet for required supporting documents. Appointment required before I-20 issuance.

☐ PROGRAM EXTENSION*
  • See Information Sheet for required supporting documents.

☐ H-1B CAP-CAP I-20
  • Attach copy of USCIS Receipt Notice/Approval Notice for I-129 petition.

☐ DEPENDENT (Spouse or Child) VISA OR CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION*
  • See Information Sheet for required supporting documents.

☐ REPLACEMENT I-20 or DS-2019
  • Indicate if original is: ☐ Lost ☐ Damaged ☐ Stolen ☐ Without space for additional travel signatures

☐ Other (Specify other reason(s) in addition to OR not mentioned above): _______________________________________

IMPORTANT: IF TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE U.S., indicate your expected travel dates (IF KNOWN)

Departure Date: Month____ Day____ Year_____
Reentry Date: Month____ Day____ Year_____

*Proof of Funds Required:

Many of the reasons for a document request listed above require you to provide proof of funding. You must show sufficient money to cover tuition, school fees and ALL other expenses for at least one academic year (or in the case of a program extension, for the duration of the extension period). Valid documents to prove funds:

• MUST BE IN ENGLISH
• MUST SPECIFICALLY STATE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY AVAILABLE to you in US dollars
• MAY INCLUDE:
  (1) current bank letter and (if not your own account) signed letter from sponsor
  (2) current scholarship letter from sponsoring agency or organization
  (3) official and current letter verifying educational loan awarded to you
  (4) ISSS Graduate Stipend form completed by department and signed by the Dean

(S:\Forms\Document Request: 05/10/2019)
NEW STUDENTS: ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

1. **Immigration Documents:**
   You MUST report to the Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSSS) and submit copies of your passport (personal information page, passport validity page, and visa stamp), I-94 card, I-20 or DS-2019 form. These copies are retained in your files to help us in reviewing your status. To avoid any problems, new students should report to ISSSS within the first ten days after arriving in the U.S. or, if a transfer student who will not travel outside the U.S., as soon as possible after arriving in Miami or arriving on campus.

2. **F-1 Transfer Students:**
   F-1 students transferring to FIU from another U.S. institution (i.e., MDCC, UM, etc.) must process a school transfer through SEVIS. This procedure must be completed within the first 15 days of class. You should arrange to have your SEVIS record released by your previous school to FIU and a Transfer Release Form completed and sent to the appropriate admissions officer in a timely manner so that your new FIU I-20 may be issued by Admissions before the start of classes. In order to complete the transfer, you must bring your FIU I-20, passport, visa, and I-94 card to ISSSS within the first 15 days of class.

3. **Insurance Clearance:**
   By state law and university policy, ALL F-1 and J-1 students attending FIU are REQUIRED to have adequate medical insurance prior to registration. Students will NOT be able to register for classes unless they comply with the medical insurance requirement. An insurance hold (IMI) will appear on your registration record each semester and you will not be able to register until this hold is removed.

   The University-approved policy may be purchased at the University Health Services office at the MMC campus or BBC campus once you arrive. You can make a payment at UHS by cashier’s check or money order ONLY. Insurance may also be purchased online by using a major credit card (Visa or Master card) prior to your arrival. A description of the policy and its coverage and current premium rates are available at UHS and online at [http://healthservices.fiu.edu](http://healthservices.fiu.edu).

   If you have a different insurance policy and would like your IMI hold lifted, you must have your insurance company complete an International Student Health Insurance Compliance Form to UHS. The completed form must be signed and returned in person or by FAX to (305) 348-3336. Your form will be reviewed, and if it meets the requirements stated above, your hold will be removed. If your policy does not comply, you will not be able to register until this requirement is met. General questions can be answered by phone or in writing, but alternate policies cannot be evaluated without the completed compliance form. If you have questions regarding the FIU medical insurance requirement, please contact the UHS office at MMC 305-348-2401 or BBC 305-919-5620.

   *NOTE:* Students in “J” visa categories sponsored by FIU are REQUIRED to purchase the University-approved health insurance policy for themselves AND their dependents.
4. **Immunization & Medical Information:**

*Florida state law requires proof of immunizations before students are allowed to register for classes.* You should complete a medical information form and provide copies of your immunization record to University Health Services. The University must cancel your registration if you do not comply with this requirement.

5. **Immigration Orientation (Mandatory):**

ISSS holds an immigration orientation for new international students each Fall, Spring, and Summer term. Important information is given during these orientations regarding medical insurance, school transfer, immigration rules and regulations, and policies and procedures for the university and ISSS.

*REMINDER:* New students are also required to attend the appropriate University-wide orientation program (i.e. freshman, transfer, or graduate).

6. **FIU E-Mail Account:**

As soon as you are registered and have paid for classes, you should activate your FIU email account. A username will have been assigned to you; if you do not know it, you can find it at [http://myaccounts.fiu.edu](http://myaccounts.fiu.edu) by clicking on “Look Up Your MyAccounts ID.” You can set your password at [http://panthermail.fiu.edu](http://panthermail.fiu.edu). All University and ISSS correspondence will be sent through your FIU email account. The FIU email system allows you to forward your messages to your personal email account, should you have one.

*NOTE:* "I don't use my FIU email" will never be considered as a valid excuse, should you miss important information and fall out-of-status.

7. **Emergency Text Messaging/ FIU Alerts!**

Sign up for free FIU Alerts! the emergency text messaging service. In the event of an emergency, a text message will be sent to the cell number that you specify and/or your email address. NOTE: This is a free service provided by Florida International University; however, normal text message fees from your carrier may apply. To receive text messages on your cell phone, you must have text messaging capabilities. You may sign up for FIU Alerts! at the time you register for classes online or contact the Office of Emergency Management at (305) 348-0670.

8. **Questions/Inquiries:**

The ISSS office provides general information regarding FIU and can address your immigration questions and concerns. Don’t wait until it is too late to resolve any issues you may have related to your status, immigration documents, full-time enrollment and course registration or other concerns. If we cannot directly assist you, we will refer you to the appropriate office. If you do not know where to go, come to ISSS!
IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS & TERMINOLOGY

Immigration Documents:

*Form I-20 [Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Students (F-1 visa)]:
This form is required in order to obtain F-1 status. The form is issued by the school to fully admitted, degree-seeking students who have shown sufficient funds to cover their studies in the U.S. This form may also be issued for use by dependents. It will have a barcode on the upper right-hand side.

*Form DS-2019 [Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitors (J-1 visa)]:
This form is required for prospective exchange visitor to request J-1 visa at a U.S. consular post abroad. Categories of exchange visitors are visiting professor, short-term scholar, researcher, faculty member or student. This form may also be issued for use by dependents.

*Passport:
A document issued by a government to identify a person as a citizen of a specific country and allow the bearer to travel abroad and permit reentry to the home country. The visa is stamped in the passport. **U.S. immigration law requires that passports remain VALID at all times.**

*F-1 Visa:
The stamp issued by a U.S. consular post abroad allowing the bearer to enter the U.S. as a student in F-1 status.

*F-2 Visa:
The stamp issued by a U.S. consular post abroad allowing the bearer to enter the U.S. as a "Dependent" of an F-1 visa holder. Dependent status applies only to the student's spouse and children.

*J-1 Visa:
The stamp issued by a U.S. consular post abroad allowing the bearer to enter the U.S. in J-1 status in the category specified on their DS-2019.

*J-2 Visa:
The stamp issued by a U.S. consular post abroad allowing the bearer to enter the U.S. as a "Dependent" of a J-1 visa holder. Dependent status applies only to the student's spouse and children.

*I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record):
Form used to document entry to and departure from the U.S. of all foreigners. At entry, this form is stamped according to the person's visa classification. The date or period through which the bearer is authorized to remain in the U.S. is also noted on this form. For an entry in student status, the I-94 should be stamped “F-1” or “J-1” with the notation “D/S”. The I-94 number is a unique 11-digit number on the I-94 card used by DHS to document entries and exits from the country. This is also used in immigration databases to track employment, practical training, school transfer and other procedures.
**Immigration Terminology:**

**F-1 Status:** Immigration classification for persons authorized by DHS to be in the U.S. for the principal purpose of pursuing a full course of study at an academic or language institution in the U.S. There are laws and regulations that define what F-1 students can and cannot do while in the U.S. and students **MUST** abide by them in order to maintain their legal status.

**F-2 Status:** Immigration classification for dependents of F-1 students. Persons in F-2 status must abide by certain laws and regulations which define what they can and cannot do while in the U.S. in order to maintain their legal status.

**J-1 Status:** Immigration classification for persons admitted in the U.S. as an exchange visitor and authorized to pursue a program at an academic institution in the U.S. as detailed in his/her DS-2019. Persons in J-1 status must abide by certain laws and regulations which define what they can and cannot do while in the U.S. in order to maintain their legal status.

**J-2 Status:** Immigration classification for dependents of persons in J-1 status. Persons in J-2 status must abide by certain laws and regulations which define what they can and cannot do while in the U.S. in order to maintain their legal status.

**Duration of Status (D/S):** A notation specified on the Form I-94 which refers to the period during which the bearer of the I-94 is **authorized** to remain in the U.S., which is until he/she completes his/her program of study in an educational institution and any periods of authorized practical training, plus 60 days (if still applicable) to depart the U.S.

**School Transfer:** The immigration procedure which an F-1 student is required to complete when changing from one U.S. institution to another OR when changing from one educational level to another (e.g., from bachelor's to master's). Failure to complete this procedure puts a student out-of-status.

**Practical Training:** Refers to employment that is related to student's major or field of study. There are two types: **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** and **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. Note that any practical training, whether paid or unpaid, **MUST ALWAYS BE AUTHORIZED,** either by USCIS or by an ISSS advisor.

**Reinstatement:** The immigration procedure that an F-1 student must complete when he/she fails to remain in lawful status or overstays his/her authorized period of stay in the U.S.

**Program Extension:** The immigration procedure that an F-1 student must complete when he/she must remain in the U.S. longer than the time originally estimated for completion of his/her program as stated on his/her I-20.

**60 - day Grace Period:** An F-1 student who is in status and has completed his/her degree and/or authorized Optional Practical Training is authorized a 60-day grace period to prepare for departure from the U.S. or transfer to another school. This means that after completion of the program or completion of OPT, a student may remain in the U.S. up to 60 days, but once he/she has left, F-1 status is completed and the student is ineligible to return. **Important:** If a student leaves the U.S. after completion of program before applying for OPT, he/she will be ineligible to return and apply for OPT.

**15 - day Grace Period:** An F-1 student authorized by an ISSS advisor to withdraw from classes in the middle of a semester will be allowed a 15-day period for departure from the U.S.
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS NON-IMMIGRANT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

During your stay in the U.S., you are subject to many complex immigration laws and regulations that relate to your legal status. Advisors at ISSS are available to answer your questions about your immigration status, but it is **your responsibility to know and abide by the law, in order to maintain valid legal status throughout the duration of your stay in the U.S.**

As a non-immigrant international student you must:

1. Have a valid passport at all times.
2. Attend the school stated on your I-20 or DS-2019.
3. Register full-time each fall and spring semester. **Undergraduate** students must register for at least **12 credits** per semester and **graduate** students for at least **9 graduate-level credits** per semester. You are not required to register for classes during the summer unless you are admitted for summer or completing your degree during the summer.
4. Register for no more than 3 credits of online coursework to count toward your full-time enrollment each fall and spring semester. You may register for more than 3 online credits only if your total credits exceed the required amount (for example, an undergraduate student may take 15 credits total, 9 in-person credits and 6 online credits, but if he or she needs to drop a class it will have to be an online class that is dropped in order to maintain full-time enrollment: 9 in-person credits + 3 online credits = 12 credits).
5. Register for at least one in-person class during your final semester. You may enroll less than full-time in your final term if you have submitted a Reduced Course Load form signed by your academic advisor. However, you may NOT take all online credits in your final term (even if you complete your program in the summer semester).
6. Maintain good academic standing per university policy and make normal progress towards completing your degree.
7. Follow appropriate procedures to have your SEVIS record electronically released to the other school **IF** you are transferring to another school or starting a new degree program at another school.
8. Request a program extension **IF** you must remain in the U.S. longer than the time stated on your I-20 or DS-2019. Program extensions must be completed prior to the program end date listed on the I-20 or DS-2019.
9. Check your immigration documents to make sure they are in order before leaving the U.S. Please visit ISSS at least two weeks before traveling.
   - ✓ If you are an F-1 visa holder and the signature on page 3 of your I-20 is more than 12 months old, you must submit your I-20 to ISSS and request a new travel
signature. If you are a J-1 visa holder and the signature on your DS-2019 is more
than 6 months old, you must request a new signature.

- If your F-1 or J-1 visa will be expired at the time you return to the U.S., you will
  need to renew your visa while abroad so you must request an updated I-20 or DS-
  2019 before leaving. You must also submit new funding documents at this time.
- Your passport must never expire and ideally it will be valid at least six months into
  the future at the time you re-enter the U.S.
- If you are traveling for less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico or certain Caribbean
  nations (the “adjacent territories”), you may re-enter the U.S. with an expired student
  visa, as long as you retain your original I-94 card. However, you should not attempt
to do this without first consulting with an ISSS advisor about what documents you
will need and obtaining a special memo from ISSS which you should have with you
when you travel.

10. Obtain proper authorization before engaging in any paid or unpaid employment. You may
work on-campus for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters.
During the summer term and semester breaks, you may work on-campus full-time. Off-
campus employment must be authorized either by an ISSS advisor or by USCIS. For
detailed policies and procedures for obtaining employment authorization, both on and off
campus, view the ISSS F-1 Employment Online Workshop at

11. Report any change in your U.S. address by updating your personal information in your
Panthersoft account. Always verify your foreign address as well.

12. Respond IMMEDIATELY if ISSS contacts you for any reason. There may be a problem
with your SEVIS record or the documents in your file, or you may have done something
to jeopardize your status. There may be a limited time to solve the problem before DHS
must be contacted so do not wait to take action.

If you have any questions on any aspect of immigration law and regulations related to your
status, you should meet with an advisor at ISSS. Bear in mind that you may be given advice by
individuals who do not know that you are an international student or who do not know what
restrictions you are subject to. For example:

- An academic advisor may tell you to drop a class because your GPA will suffer if you do
  not, even though dropping below full-time enrollment will put you out of status.
- An employer may tell you it is OK for you to work for them without proper employment
  authorization documents, even though working illegally is a deportable offense.
- An academic advisor may encourage you to accept an internship position that has been
  offered to you, even though you may not be eligible for Curricular Practical Training (you
  will need this type of employment authorization to complete an internship off-campus).
- Your friends may tell you what documents you need to travel outside the U.S. based on their
  experience, even though they do not know specific details relevant to your own situation.

These are all examples of situations in which you should meet with an ISSS advisor to discuss your
individual case and to clarify the rules and regulations and/or go over your options.
STUDENT CONDUCT AND CODE OF STANDARDS

Florida International University aims to provide students with an educational experience, which prepares them to participate in a rapidly changing world, and to do so with a commitment to the highest moral and ethical standards. To achieve this end, the University has outlined a set of desired values and attitudes considered to be the foundation of intellectual and moral integrity in our future societal leaders. The University has a clear statement as to behavior expected of students in the campus environment. It is anticipated that this conduct will be carried forth in their lives beyond the University.

The University Standards of Student Conduct address three major areas of integrity. They include academic honesty, respect for the law and respect for people. The first two are more readily established because they relate to written rules, regulations and laws, which are stated in the Student Code of Conduct. Failure to comply may result in appropriate sanctions. The last, respect for people, is more intangible in nature and yet of the most importance because it governs one’s response to the first two.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
In meeting one of the major objectives of higher education, which is to develop self-reliance, it is expected that students will be responsible for the completion of their own academic work. The use of literature, notes, aids, or assistance from other sources should be clearly identified with respect to all course assignments and examinations. In addition, students are expected to use all resources, including books, journals, and computers only in legal and authorized ways. They should also refrain from falsification of records, attend class as required, and participate in the educational process without disrupting the orderly processes and functions of the University.

RESPECT FOR THE LAW
Students are expected to respect and obey all regulations of the University and all state and federal laws. If regulations or laws are considered to be unfair or improper, it is expected that students will use appropriate, established, and lawful procedures to affect change. Of particular importance is adherence to laws regarding theft, destruction of property, physical assault, sexual abuse, and alcohol and drug abuse.

RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS
Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which exemplifies respect for people of all races, religions, and ethnic groups, and to adhere to one’s personal values without unduly imposing them on others. Respect for one’s own mind and body, including refraining from substance abuse, is essential. In interpersonal relationships, students are expected to respect the rights of others, particularly their right to refuse to participate in any activity. At no time should students harass, assault, or violate the privacy of other persons. Students should also conduct themselves in ways to protect themselves and others from contagious diseases. Students should take responsibility to serve as leaders in promoting compassion for others and challenging prejudice against all individuals and groups whether due to race, gender, age, marital status, religion, nationality, political persuasion, sexual orientation, disability, or infection with disease.
Standards of Conduct

The Standards of Conduct have as their purpose, the encouragement of honesty and integrity in academic achievement and personal growth and development. The University is committed to an academic environment consistent with these standards and the set of desired values and attitudes, as presented below:

1. Personal integrity that is rooted in respect for truth and love of learning.
2. A sense of duty to self, family, and the larger community.
3. Self-esteem rooted in the quest for achievement of one’s potential.
4. Respect for the rights of all persons regardless of their race, religion, nationality, sex, age, sexual orientation, physical condition or mental state.
5. The courage to express one’s convictions and recognition of the rights of others to hold and express differing views.
6. The capacity to make discriminating judgments among competing opinions.
7. A sense of, and commitment to, justice, rectitude, and fair play.
8. Understanding, sympathy, concern, and compassion for others.
9. A sense of discipline and pride in one’s work; respect for the achievements of others.
10. Respect for one’s property and the property of others, including public property.
11. An understanding of, and appreciation for, other cultures and traditions.
12. Willingness to perform the obligations of citizenship, including the right to vote and the obligation to cast an informed ballot, jury service, participation in government, and the rule of law.
13. Civility, including congenial relations between men and women.
14. A commitment to academic freedom as a safeguard essential to the purpose of the University and to the welfare of those who work within it.
15. The courage to oppose the use of substances which impair one’s judgment or one’s health.

All students of Florida International University are expected to adhere to the above values and attitudes. It is the student’s responsibility to know and understand the complete Student Code of Conduct, including University statements on Rights and Freedom, especially the Right to Due Process. The Student Code of Conduct is included in the Florida International University Student Handbook published by the Student Government Association in collaboration with the Campus Life Department in the Division of Student Affairs.
CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

When you leave your own culture and go to another, you naturally carry with you your own background and personality, sometimes called your cultural baggage. How you react to the new culture and how well you adjust to living in it will depend on you. Here are some suggestions that others have made concerning adjustment.

1. **Listen and observe.** Since there are new rules, norms, and cues that may be unfamiliar to you, you will need to listen to verbal communication and observe non-verbal communication carefully and try to put them in the proper context.

2. **Ask questions.** You should not be afraid to ask questions. You may need to ask them to repeat what was said or to rephrase the conversation.

3. **Try not to evaluate or judge.** You will see many things that are different from your own culture. It is important not to label everything as good or bad in comparison with your own culture; most customs, habits, and ideas are simply different from what you have known before.

4. **Try to empathize.** Try to put yourself in the other person's place and look at the situation from that person's perspective. There are very different cultural perspectives of the same situation.

5. **Interact with openness and curiosity.** To experience a new culture and to learn from it, it is important to be open to new experiences, try new things, to be curious about the way things are done in a new place. The more you explore, the more you learn.

6. **Keep your sense of humor.** It is likely that you will make mistakes as you explore a new culture, and if you can laugh at your mistakes, it will help you learn, and other people will respond with friendliness.

7. **Acknowledge your anxiety and frustration.** Learning to function in a new culture is not easy, and it is natural to feel anxiety and frustration. If you recognize that this is a normal part of the experience, you will be able to deal with more effectively. Your sense of humor and openness will also help.

8. **Become involved.** The more you put into the experience, the more you will learn from it. You should make an effort to meet people, form friendships, get involved in activities, and learn about people and their culture.
STAGES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Most international students spend their first few days settling in and getting adjusted; however, adjustment is not accomplished in a few days. It is an on-going process, one situation after another, some physical, some mental. What follows are the four stages of cultural adjustment as identified by Gregory Trifonovich. You may find this useful and may recognize some of the characteristics in yourself as you go through the process of adjusting to your new life here in the U.S. How quickly you adjust may depend on your own personality and past experiences.

The Honeymoon Stage: This first stage is characterized by exhilaration, anticipation, and excitement. You are fascinated with everything that is new. You are embarking on what may be a "dream come true," an opportunity to study in another country. Students in the honeymoon stage will demonstrate an eagerness to please everyone, a spirit of cooperation, and an active interest in what others say. Faculty and staff find it a delight to work with students at this stage, however, in your enthusiasm to please, you may frequently nod or smile to indicate understanding when, in fact, you do not understand. When your misunderstandings accumulate, you are likely to experience the second stage of cultural adjustment.

The Hostility/Frustration Stage: The symptoms of this stage are frustration, anger, anxiety, and sometimes depression. Following the initial excitement is frustration with the college bureaucracy and weariness of speaking and listening in English (or a different accent of English) every day. Sleep patterns are disrupted. You may suffer from indigestion and become unable to eat. You may become upset because you have studied English, however, people find it hard to understand you and you do not seem to understand them. You may react to this frustration by rejecting the new environment in which you feel discomfort. The internal reason may be, "I feel bad and it is because of them." At this point, international students usually display hostility toward the new culture. Some of this hostility may translate into anger over minor frustrations, excessive fear, frequent absenteeism, lack of interest or motivation, complete withdrawal and mistrust of Americans. Should you undergo this stage and start feeling these extreme symptoms, please see an ISSS advisor or a counselor at the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services.

The Humor Stage: The third stage does not last forever. The humor stage follows when you begin to relax in your new situation and learn to laugh at the minor mistakes and misunderstandings. The more relaxed state of being occurs after you have made some friends and are able to manage the size and complexity of the university.

The Home Stage: This occurs when you remain allegiant to your home culture, while feeling at home in your new environment. You have successfully adjusted to the norms and standards of the university and the U.S. culture.

Cultural adjustment takes time and patience. It means learning to understand the new culture as well as holding on to your own. You will notice similarities as well as differences in the new culture, but learning to adjust takes recognizing that there are certain things that you cannot change and others to which you can contribute your own ideas and ways of being.
FINANCIAL PLANNING AND RESPONSIBILITY

As international students, you must have a clear understanding of how hard it can be to finance your education in the U.S. Compared to other countries, American higher education is quite expensive.

However, **this fact is something you should be aware of.** You submitted proof of sufficient funds to cover your educational expenses in order to obtain your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. As international students coming here to pursue your studies, you agree to have funds available for the duration of your studies. **It is important, therefore, that you responsibly plan and manage your finances.**

Responsible financial planning includes extensive research into different financial aid sources that may be available to you such as: scholarships from your home country, home government loans or grants, merit scholarships from international organizations, scholarships and grants from various institutions, agencies, and family funds.

**ISSS has very limited information on scholarships.** However, there are other places you can check such as the Reference Section of the FIU Libraries. There you will find guides and handbooks on financial aid, scholarships, and grants. These resources list different international organizations, American institutions, and multinational corporations that offer financial aid to students. You may also call these Washington, DC centers: Foundation Center at (202) 331-1400 and the Foreign Student Service Council: International Student Resource Center at (202) 232-4979.

You should carefully read the information on scholarships and grants, because some restrictions may be imposed; such as academic major or field of study, educational level, or citizenship. Financial aid at FIU (as well as in most state universities across the U.S.) comes from the federal government; therefore, you must be a U.S. citizenship or permanent residence to apply. Most scholarships and grants will **not** cover all of your educational expenses.

**IMPORTANT:** Cancellation of courses due to non-payment of tuition and fees (fiscal) is a reportable event in SEVIS and constitutes a violation of your status requirements. It is suggested that you meet with an ISSS Advisor as soon as your classes are cancelled to discuss your immigration status.
MANAGING YOUR MONEY

During your stay in the U.S., there are several ways in which you may choose to handle your expenses and financial matters. If you are a new international student, it is best to open a bank account and deposit your money soon after your arrival in Miami. **It is NOT a good idea to carry with you or keep in your apartment large sums of money.**

**Traveler’s Checks** - Traveler’s checks are a convenient and safe way to carry money when you travel. They can be purchased from any bank for a small fee. They can be used at most restaurants, stores and hotels. They can also be cashed or deposited at your local banks. An advantage to carrying traveler’s checks is that if they are lost or stolen, they can be replaced. You may use these traveler’s checks to open a bank account.

**Checking Account** – A checking account is a type of bank account that safeguards your money while allowing for easy payment of expenses. To open a checking account, you will need to deposit money and provide personal information, a mailing address and photo identification. You will be given temporary checks right away but you should order checks with your name and address printed on them. All checking accounts may be accessed using an ATM card and a personal identification number (PIN) that are issued by the bank. An automatic teller machine (ATM) is a computerized system which allows bank customers to **make deposits or withdraw cash 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** You may also initiate other transactions on the ATM such as **transfer money from your savings account to your checking account.** Before you open a checking account, you should be aware of any fees that the bank may charge for returned checks, overdraft or not maintaining a minimum balance in your account.

**Savings Account** – A savings account is a bank account that is used to safeguard money for a prolonged period. Interest is paid on your deposits, generally at a low rate. You can open this type of account at most commercial banks, or at a savings and loan association. Certificates of deposit (CD) are special accounts that pay higher interest than savings accounts, but you cannot withdraw the money for a specified period (typically several months to a year). The longer you leave the money deposited, the higher the rate of interest paid. Money market accounts also pay higher interest rates, but restrict how often you can make withdrawals.

**NOTE:** You may open an account with a bank where you can have both a checking account and a savings account and the two accounts can be **linked together** so that you can transfer money between the two accounts depending on your needs.
Credit Cards - Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and department store cards) are another common and convenient way to pay for purchases. However, credit cards are not necessarily easy to obtain, especially for someone who is new to the U.S. and has not established a “credit history” in the U.S. Many credit cards also charge high interest rates on unpaid credit account balances. This can become an expensive way to handle your finances if you do not use them with caution. You can inquire at your bank for details on how to obtain a credit card.

Debit Card – You may also get a debit card from your bank. This is similar to a credit card except that the money is automatically taken from your bank account. This can sometimes be helpful if you want to make sure that you do not spend more money than you have.

Identity Theft – Identity theft occurs when someone takes your personal information and uses it to create another “identity” to gain access to your financial accounts. There are many ways this can occur. For example, someone can hack into a computer system and steal your personal information. However, there are ways to reduce the threat of identity theft. Never reply to emails that ask for personal or account information. Do not carry your PIN numbers, Social Security numbers or passwords with you. Consider using a shredder to destroy old bank and credit statements. If you do become a victim of identity theft, contact your credit/debit card company immediately to notify them. Also, contact the fraud departments of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian or Trans-Union) in the U.S. and ask them to put a “fraud alert” in your file.

HOUSING

One of the first things you must take care of before starting your program at FIU is your housing. FIU has residential housing facilities at both MMC and BBC. However, it fills up very quickly. Contact the University Housing Office at (305) 348-4190 at MMC or (305) 919-5587 at BBC or visit their website (see “Resource Guide” on page 27).

Many FIU international students live off-campus. Once you have found a place to live, you will be asked to sign a lease. Make sure you carefully read and understand the lease before you sign it, because it is a legally binding document. Once you have signed a lease, you are held responsible to abide by everything written in it. The lease must state the duration of the lease, the amount of monthly rent, the landlord's responsibilities for maintenance and repairs, who is responsible for payment of utilities, and how much notice is to be given before terminating the lease. The lease may also include restrictions on children, pets, or putting holes or tape on the walls. When you sign a lease, you will likely be required to leave a "security deposit" which may equal one or two months of rent. This deposit will be returned to you at the end of your lease period if the facility is undamaged. You will be required to pay the first month’s rent upon signing the lease. Remember that the lease is a legally binding contract and cannot be broken without meeting specified legal requirements. When you move into an apartment or house, you may be responsible for obtaining your own utility services, which might include electricity, natural gas, and water. It is recommended that you call utility companies at least one week before service is initiated. You may also be required to pay a deposit for utilities before the start of service.
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Social Security is a U.S. government program that maintains benefits for injured, disabled or retired people. The money for this program is obtained through withholdings from employees' pay and from employers' contributions. The Social Security Number is issued through the Social Security Administration Office. This number serves as an identification number for U.S. citizens, permanent residents ("green card" holders), and legal non-immigrants in the U.S.

International students pursuing their studies in the U.S. may obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) once they have been granted employment authorization from the ISSS office for on-campus employment or practical training. Your Panther ID number is not your SSN. Your Panther ID is a university identification number that can only be used for university purposes such as registering for classes. A social security number can be granted ONLY by the Social Security Administration Office.

If you have obtained on-campus employment, you must request a letter from your employer regarding your need for a SSN (a sample letter is available on the ISSS website). You will take this letter to the ISSS office and complete a Document Request Form to request certification stating that you are eligible to apply for a SSN. You will take all of your documents (I-20 or DS-2019, passport, visa, I-94 card, employer’s letter) to the nearest Social Security Administration Office and apply for a SSN.

Due to changes in SSA and DHS policies and procedures, obtaining a SSN has become more restricted and highly regulated. ISSS cannot guarantee the issuance of a SSN.

INCOME TAXES

January 1 through April 15 is "Tax Season" in the U.S. During this period, U.S. citizens, permanent residents and many non-immigrants must file income tax returns. All international students are responsible for submitting an annual income-tax statement to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by April 15th if they have worked and earned any U.S. income. If unemployed during the tax year, form 8843 must be filed by June 15th.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is a U.S. government institution that oversees the withholding and filing of taxes. International students are not always exempt from income taxes in the U.S. To determine your tax obligations, you should contact IRS and request publications related to your status (i.e., Pub. 519 "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens").

ISSS advisors are NOT income taxes experts and cannot advise or assist you in filing your returns. However, ISSS sponsors a free Tax Workshop for International Students at both campuses during the Spring semester. At this workshop, a certified public accountant (CPA) or an IRS representative will assist you in filling out the proper tax forms and answer questions you may have regarding the filing procedure. Forms are available through the IRS website: www.irs.gov or in the ISSS office.
What to Do If Questioned by Police, FBI, Customs Agents or Immigration Officers

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is now part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and has been renamed and reorganized into:
1. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
2. United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP)
3. United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE)
All three bureaus are part of the DHS and will be referred to as "DHS" for the purposes of this handout.

I. WHAT IF THE POLICE, FBI OR AGENTS CONTACT ME?

Q: Do I have to answer the questions asked by the agents?
A: You have the constitutional right to remain silent. It is not a crime to refuse to answer questions. It is a good idea to talk to a lawyer before agreeing to answer questions. You do not have to talk to anyone, even if you have been arrested or are in jail. Only a judge can order you to answer questions.

Q: Can I talk to a lawyer?
A: You have the right to talk to a lawyer before you answer questions, whether or not the police inform you of this right. The lawyer’s job is to protect your rights. Once you say that you want to talk to a lawyer, officers should stop asking you questions. If you do not have a lawyer, you may still tell the officer you want to speak to one before answering questions. If you do have a lawyer, keep his or her business card with you. Show it to the officer, and ask to call your lawyer. Remember to get the name, agency and telephone number of any investigator who visits you, and give that information to your lawyer.

Q: Can agents search my home or office?
A: Police or other law enforcement agents cannot search your home unless you give them permission, or unless they have a search warrant. A search warrant is a court order that allows the police to conduct a specified search. Interfering with the search probably will not stop it and you might get arrested. But you should say clearly that you have not given your consent and that the search is against your wishes. Your roommate or guest can legally consent to a search of your house if the police believe that person has the authority to give consent. Police and law enforcement need a warrant to search an office, but your employer can consent to a search of your workspace without your permission.

Q: What if agents have a search warrant?
A: If you are present when agents come for the search, you can ask to see the warrant. The warrant must specify in detail the places to be searched and the people or things to be taken away. Call your lawyer as soon as possible. Ask if you are allowed to watch the search; if you are allowed to, you should. Take notes, including names, badge numbers, what agency each officer is from, where they searched and what they took. If others are present, have them act as witnesses to watch carefully what is happening.

Q: Do I have to answer questions if the police have a search warrant?
A: No. A search warrant does not mean you have to answer questions.
**Q: What if agents do not have a search warrant?**

*A:* You do not have to let the police search your home, and you do not have to answer their questions. The police cannot get a warrant based on your refusal.

**Q: What if agents do not have a search warrant, but insist on searching my home even after I object?**

*A:* Do not get in the way of the search. If someone is there with you, ask him or her to witness that you are not giving permission for the search. Call your lawyer as soon as possible. Get the names and badge numbers of the searching officers.

**Q: What if I speak to government agents anyway?**

*A:* Anything you say to law enforcement can be used against you and others. Keep in mind that lying to a government official is a crime. Remaining silent until you consult with a lawyer is not. Even if you have already answered some questions, you can refuse to answer other questions until you have a lawyer.

**Q: What if the police stop me on the street?**

*A:* Ask if you are free to go. If the answer is yes, consider just walking away. If the police say you are not under arrest, but are not free to go, then you are being detained. The police can pat down the outside of your clothing if they have reason to suspect you might be armed and dangerous. If they search any more than this, say clearly, “I do not consent to a search.” They may keep searching anyway. You do not need to answer any questions if you are detained or arrested.

**Q: What if police stop me in my car?**

*A:* Keep your hands where the police can see them. You do not have to consent to a search. But if the police have probable cause to believe that you have been involved in a crime or that you have evidence of a crime in your car, your car can be searched without your consent. Clearly state that you do not consent. Officers may separate passengers and drivers from each other to question them and compare their answers, but no one has to answer any questions.

**Q: What if the police or FBI threatens me with a grand jury subpoena if I don’t answer their questions?**

*A:* A grand jury subpoena is a written order for you to go to court and testify about information you may have. If the police or FBI threatens to get a subpoena, you should call a lawyer right away. Anything you say can usually be used against you.

**Q: Do I have to answer questions if I have been arrested?**

*A:* No. If you are arrested, you do not have to answer any questions. Ask for a lawyer right away. Repeat this request to every officer who tries to talk to or question you. You should always talk to a lawyer before you decide to answer any questions.

**Q: What if I am treated badly by the police or the FBI?**

*A:* Write down the officer’s badge number, name or other identifying information. You have a right to ask the officer for this information. Try to find witnesses and their names and phone numbers. If you are injured, seek medical attention and take pictures of the injuries as soon as you can. Call a lawyer or contact your local American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) office.

**II. WHAT IF I AM NOT A CITIZEN AND THE DHS CONTACTS ME?**

*Assert your rights.* If you do not demand your rights or if you sign papers waiving your rights, the DHS may deport you before you see a lawyer or an immigration judge. *Never sign anything without reading, understanding and knowing the consequences of signing it.*

*Talk to a lawyer.* If possible, carry with you the name and telephone number of a lawyer who will take
your calls. The immigration laws are hard to understand and there have been many recent changes. Based on today’s laws, regulations and DHS guidelines, non-citizens usually have the rights below, no matter what their immigration status. The following information may change, so it is important to contact a lawyer. The following rights apply to non-citizens who are inside the U.S. Non-citizens at the border who are trying to enter the U.S. have additional restrictions and do not have all the same rights.

**Q: Do I have the right to talk to a lawyer before answering any DHS questions or signing any DHS papers?**

**A:** Yes. You have the right to call a lawyer or your family if you are detained, and you have the right to be visited by a lawyer in detention. You have the right to have your attorney with you at any hearing before an immigration judge. You do not have the right to a government-appointed attorney for immigration proceedings, but if you have been arrested, immigration officials must show you a list of free or low cost legal service providers.

**Q: Should I carry my green card or other immigration papers with me?**

**A:** If you have documents authorizing you to stay in the U.S., you must carry them with you. Presenting false or expired papers to DHS may lead to deportation or criminal prosecution. An unexpired green card, I-94, Employment Authorization Card, Border Crossing Card or other papers that prove you are in legal status will satisfy this requirement. If you do not carry these papers with you, you could be charged with a misdemeanor crime. Always keep a copy of your immigration papers with a trusted family member or friend who can fax it to you, if necessary. Check with your immigration lawyer about your specific case. You may be required to show your identification to police officers, border patrol agents and aircraft pilots as well.

**Q: Am I required to talk to government officers about my immigration history?**

**A:** Once you have shown evidence of your status, you do not have to talk to officers further – it is up to you. It may be better to remain silent and talk to a lawyer first, depending on your situation. If DHS asks anything about your political and religious beliefs, groups you belong to or contribute to, things you have said, where you have traveled or other questions that do not seem right, you do not have to answer them. An officer may not request evidence of your immigration status in your home or another private place unless he or she has a warrant.

**Q: If I am arrested for immigration violations, do I have the right to a hearing before an immigration judge to defend myself against deportation charges?**

**A:** Yes. In most cases only an immigration judge can order you deported. But if you waive your rights or take “voluntary departure,” agreeing to leave the country, you could be deported without a hearing. If you have criminal convictions, were arrested at the border, came to the U.S. through the visa waiver program or have been deported in the past, you could be deported without a hearing. Contact a lawyer immediately to see if there is any relief for you.

**Q: Can I call my consulate if I am arrested?**

**A:** Yes. Non-citizens arrested in the U.S. have the right to call their consulate or to have the police tell the consulate of your arrest. The police must let your consulate visit or speak with you if consular officials decide to do so. Your consulate might help you find a lawyer or offer other help.

**Q: What happens if I give up my right to a hearing or leave the U.S. before the hearing is over?**

**A:** You could lose your eligibility for certain immigration benefits, and you could be barred from returning to the U.S. for a number of years. You should always talk to an immigration lawyer before you decide to give up your right to a hearing.
Q: What should I do if I want to contact DHS?
A: Always talk to a lawyer before contacting DHS, even on the phone. Many DHS officers view “enforcement” as their primary job and will not explain all of your options to you.

III. WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AT AIRPORTS?

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is illegal for law enforcement to perform any stops, searches, detentions or removals based solely on your race, national origin, religion, sex or ethnicity.

Q: If I am entering the U.S. with valid travel papers can a U.S. customs agent stop and search me?
A: Yes. Customs agents have the right to stop, detain and search every person and item.

Q: Can my bags or I be searched after going through metal detectors with no problem or after security sees that my bags to not contain a weapon?
A: Yes. Even if the initial screen of your bags reveals nothing suspicious, the screeners have the authority to conduct a further search of you or your bags.

Q: If I am on an airplane, can an airline employee interrogate me or ask me to get off the plane?
A: The pilot of an airplane has the right to refuse to fly a passenger if he or she believes the passenger is a threat to the safety of the flight. The pilot’s decision must be reasonable and based on observations of you, not stereotypes.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN PROFILED at the airport, please fill out the Passenger Profiling Complaint Form that can be found in the Racial Equality section of our Web site at www.aclu.org/airlineprofiling

REFERRAL CONTACT INFORMATION

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC): (202) 244-2990
American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA): 1-800-954-0254
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF): (212) 966-5932
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR): (202) 488-8787
National Lawyers Guild: (212) 679-5100
National Immigration Project: (617) 227-9727
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (UCCR): (800) 552-6843

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THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION is the nation’s premier guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and the laws of the United States.
SAFETY & SECURITY

WHAT IS A HURRICANE?

A hurricane is a type of tropical storm with strong winds circulating around an extreme low-pressure area. When wind speed reaches **74 miles per hour**, the storm is officially classified as a **HURRICANE**. A hurricane’s spiraling wind and rain bands can extend hundreds of miles from its eye. As the storm approaches land, tornadoes may form around its outer edges. The most dangerous part of a hurricane is the storm surge, the large dome of water that the storm strikes at low tide, the water level might reach as high as 20 feet at the shoreline. Flooding is also caused by heavy rains as the hurricane moves inland. Most hurricanes start in the tropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. Although “hurricane season” runs from June 1st to November 30th, most hurricanes strike in August, September and October. The general hurricane terms are:

**Tropical Disturbance** – This is an organized system of clouds and thunderstorms without a defined circulation.

**Tropical Storm** - An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph.

**Hurricane Watch** - Indicates that a hurricane condition is a strong possibility and may threaten the area **within 36 hours**. All windows and blinds should be closed. All electrical equipment including air conditioners should be unplugged. All items considered valuable should be covered with plastic and stored in a high place to avoid water damage. Determine where you will be seeking shelter.

**Hurricane Warning** - Indicates that a hurricane is expected in **24 hours or less**. All students will be evacuated from University Housing and sent to the appropriate shelter/location. You will need to bring your own food and water. Students with friends or relatives in the local area should go there if their dwelling is not in a flood prone area and is structurally sound.

If your home is on or near the coastline where the hurricane's destructive forces will affect it, pay close attention to what the local government and/or police force is recommending. You should also pay attention to radio and TV stations for the latest information.

If you have to evacuate your home, it is recommended that you:

- Heed their warning!!
- Plan ahead where you would go -- it may be beneficial to choose a few places like a friend’s home who is out of town or a designated shelter, etc.
- Take the phone numbers of these places with you.
- Take all your important documents with you in a plastic sealed envelope/container to protect them from damage.
• Take a road map in case the weather forces you onto unfamiliar roads.
• Do not drive over standing water, as floods may have damaged the roads.
  YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW DEEP THE WATER REALLY IS!!!

If you are in the path of a hurricane, you should prepare a supply kit containing:

• A first aid kit and necessary medications.
• Canned food and a can opener.
• Plenty of water. (The Red Cross recommends three gallons of water per person to last three days.)
• Flashlights, a battery powered radio, and extra batteries.
• Raingear, sleeping bags, and protective clothing.

All students are required to follow the instructions of University officials in the event of an emergency situation. The “FIU-HELP” line (305-348-4357) will be activated in the event of a major emergency. The information is updated throughout the various stages of an emergency as new information becomes available. In addition, you can sign up for FIU Alerts at the time you register for classes. In the event of an emergency, a text message will be sent to the cell number that you specify and/or your email address. This is a free service provided by FIU, however, normal text message fees from your carrier may apply.

Helpful websites:
www.weather.com
www.miamiredcross.org

**FIRE PROCEDURES:**

*How to prepare for a fire emergency:*

Pre-plan your evacuation route; locate the nearest alarm pull station; locate the nearest fire extinguisher and become familiar with how to use it appropriately. At FIU, fire drills are conducted regularly. In case of smoke or fire, pull the nearest alarm and report the location of the fire to Public Safety by calling 305-348-2911. All residents must evacuate the building when an alarm is sounded. Residents are required to follow the direction of University officials during an evacuation. Residents are to assemble in the designated areas. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
RESOURCE GUIDE

1. International Student & Scholar Services
   http://isss.fiu.edu
   • Visa issues
   • Important updated immigration information
   • ISSS forms
   • Employment/Practical Training Online Workshop
   • Links to International Student Club (ISC) Facebook pages

2. Housing (on & off campus)
   http://www.fiu.edu/~housing
   • FIU housing information for MMC and BBC
     http://classifieds.fiu.edu/
     • FIU off-campus housing information
     http://www.move.com or http://www.apartments.com
     • Rental rates in the Miami area
     • Possible places to live off-campus

3. Driver’s License
   http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us or http://gathergoget.com
   • Find out what you need to do to obtain your driver’s license
   • Documents you need to bring with you
   • Where you can go to obtain license
   • How long it takes to obtain license

4. Buying a Car
   http://www.kbb.com or http://www.carbuyingtips.com
   • Find out what you need to know before you buy a new or used car
   • Find the best times to buy a car
• Learn how to calculate monthly payments & finance your car

5. Public Transportation (Bus)
   http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/
   • Get information on bus routes and maps
   • Cost to ride the bus
   • Nearest bus stop

6. U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)
   http://www.uscis.gov
   • Latest updates on immigration regulations, rules & policies relating to your F-1 status
   • Forms & fees for immigration procedures
   • Very important resource with abundant information

7. U.S. Department of State
   http://www.state.gov
   • Current travel advisories & specific country updates
   • Visa information
   • Listing of US Consular Offices abroad

8. Council on International Education
   http://www.ciee.org
   • Information on the reasons for obtaining an international student card
   • Information on student train passes and airfare for overseas travel
   • Language and study abroad program opportunities

9. Airfare
   http://www.travelocity.com or http://www.cheaptickets.com
   • Find lower airfare rates
   • Usually offers better airfare rates for last minutes trips

10. Miami
    http://www.miaminewtimes.com or http://southflorida.metromix.com or http://www.miamiherald.com