THE CONNECTION

DUKE VISA SERVICES

Important Information

Traveling abroad?
Please click the icon for important information regarding international travel.

Telephone Scams
Do not fall victim to telephone scammers posing as USCIS personnel or other government officials. In most instances, scammers will:

• request personal information (Social Security number, Passport number, or A-number);
• identify false problems with your immigration record; and
• ask for payment to correct the records.

If a scammer calls you, say “No, thank you” and hang up.

These phone calls are being made by immigration scammers attempting to take your money and your credit card information.

USCIS will not call you to ask for any form of payment over the phone. Don’t give payment over the phone to anyone who claims to be a USCIS official.

Detailed information on Scams can be found at:
http://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/common-scams

Diversity Lottery
The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is administered annually by the Department of State. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides for a class of immigrants known as “diversity immigrants” from countries with historically low rates of immigration in the U.S. For Fiscal Year 2017, 50,000 Diversity Visas (DVs) will be available. There is no cost to register with the DV Program. Entries must be submitted electronically from 10/01/2015 to noon, 11/03/2015.


What Does the VISA in Duke Visa Services Mean?

Duke Visa Services issues the appropriate visa documents (I-20s, DS-2019s, and I-797 approvals) for a foreign national to request and receive the required visa (stamp) or foil in his/her passport from a U.S. consulate abroad for entry to the U.S.

The Duke Visa Services Office cannot extend or issue a visa stamp or foil. Since a valid visa after entry is not required, foreign nationals in F-1, J-1, H-1B, E-3, O-1, NAFTA-TN or H-1B statuses cannot request U.S. visa stamps or foils inside the U.S.

Exceptions and additional information can be found at:
http://www.visaservices.duke.edu/TravelAbroadReentry.html

Update on STEM Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT) Extension Rulemaking

On October 19, 2015, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) posted a proposed rule for comment in the Federal Register. The comment period is 10/19/2015 to 11/28/2015 (expedited to 30 days as opposed to the normal 90 days). After public comments are received and analyzed, DHS must then publish a final rule in the Federal Register for the rule to become effective.

The proposed rule will extend the STEM OPT period to 24 months, replacing the 17 months currently available; increase oversight over STEM OPT extension; and among other things, require the implementation of formal mentoring and training plans by employers; adding wage and other protections for STEM OPT students and U.S. workers; and allowing extensions only to students with degrees from accredited schools.

Department administrators should contact any F-1 employees using STEM Optional Practical Training for employment authorization and discuss the available options for continues employment if the STEM extension expires in February 2016.

What Happens During a U.S. Government Shutdown?

If a U.S. government shutdown happens on 12/11/2015, normally the following occurs:

Department of State (Embassies and Consulates): Operating normally until funding is depleted. Applications are advised to anticipate delays in scheduling appointments and in the issuance of visas. All visa category holders should consider delaying any travel plans unless their current visa stamps will allow reentry to the U.S. without a visit to a U.S. consulate.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP): Ports of entry are open and operational. Travelers are advised to anticipate delays. Travelers applying for visas at pre-clearance stations (Canada) are advised to show up at least three hours before departing flights.

Department of Labor (DOL): Prevailing wage determinations and Labor Condition Application certifications, the key components required before we can file an initial H-1B petition as well as an H-1B extension will not be available, therefore, while USCIS will be open for business, we will not be able to file an H-1B petition until we receive this documentation. Labor Certification Applications for permanent residency filings will also be delayed.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): Will be open and in operation, therefore, H-1Bs, O-1s petitions and I-765 applications for employment authorizations and other adjudications will continue, but employment verification for new employees hired under Federal Contracts will not be processed.

Social Security Administration: Social Security field offices will remain open with limited services. Social Security card centers will be closed. Field offices will NOT be able to issue new or replacement Social Security cards.

Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS): DVS will be able to issue I-20s and DS-2019s.

Student Exchange Visitor Information System: We will be able to issue I-20s and DS-2019s. We will send updates when additional information becomes available.

Visa Services Workshops: L&OD

Immigration Casework Management For International Faculty, Staff, Scholars And Other Visitors

10/21/2015, 8:30am—4:30pm

At Smith Warehouse Conference Room
Seats are Still Available
Parking Passes Provided

October 2015
chance to assist many friends in maintaining ties to “The Old Country,” as well as translating newly-discovered family photos and letters from the past. Having spent many years in the Duke community, I have also had a chance to make significant contributions to their chosen profession, as well as arriving with young families looking forward to a rich international living experience in the U.S. Over the past 31 years, I’ve had the opportunity to meet hundreds of Duke students – both degree-seeking and exchange – and I have been lucky enough to forge lifelong friendships with several. With many of my own family members still living in Germany, I’ve been able to combine visits to them with the weddings, baptisms, and special birthdays of former Dukies. Later this year, I’m looking forward to meeting Alex Morcaut, a Spring, 15 Fuqua exchange student, in Paris before heading on to visit family and friends.

Q: What do you like most about your job?
A: I love travel – domestic and foreign. I especially enjoy “rambling around” here in the South, taking advantage of the limitless historical sites we have right at our fingertips. A classically-trained musician, I enjoy being able to serve as an organist in my family’s home congregation up in Ridgeway (Warren County), NC. The congregation was founded by a community of German immigrants, all of whom arrived between 1884 and 1906. It also gives me a chance to assist many friends in maintaining ties to “The Old Country,” as well as translating newly-discovered letters and documents from yesteryear. And I have the opportunity to serve as one of 2 people on the Duke campus who play the carillon in the Duke Chapel tower. It’s a unique instrument and is one many people on campus look forward to hearing each day at 5 o’clock. The attached photo was taken up at the top of the tower with Raffael, one of my German cousins, born here in N.C., who was back visiting this past spring.

I-9 Processing for Asylees, Refugees, and Permanent Residents
Refugee status or asylum may be granted to people who have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality and/or membership in a particular social or political group. Permanent residents or green card holders are legally allowed to remain and work in the U.S.

For Duke employment purposes, any person in these categories are not considered non-immigrants visa holders and therefore Duke Visa Services would not process a Form I-9 for employment. Asylees and Refugees should present evidence of employment authorization in the form of an I-94 with employment authorization or an Employment Authorization document (EAD). Permanent residents or Permanent Residency applicants will be able to produce a permanent residency card or a visa stamp or foil in their passports showing temporary permanent residency or an EAD.

Duke Visa Services is available to assist administrators needing assistance identifying the various types of employment authorization documents.

Administrative Processing
What does this mean for Visa Applicants?
Also known as the Security Advisory Opinion (SAO), administrative processing means that additional review of a visa application must occur, and this time frame exists outside of the normal visa processing times by a consular officer. The main purpose of administrative processing is to ensure that the applicant does not pose a security threat or other related risk to the United States.

Administrative Processing is usually cleared within 60 days after the applicant was first notified of the information (this usually occurs at the end of the visa interview). You should not attempt to inquire about the status of the delay until 60 days has passed from the time of their visa interview.

Oral Skills Coaching for International Graduate Students
International graduate students who are not currently enrolled in GS 721 or GS 731 are invited for free Oral Skills Coaching sessions with an experienced ESL instructor.

You may reserve your one-on-one appointment by sending an email to: gwen.barclaytoy@duke.edu

For more detailed information please visit gradschool.duke.edu/EIS.