**New Student Registration for Fall 2016**

All new students must register with Duke Visa Services prior to starting classes.

- Please review the Registration PowerPoint slideshow (there is sound).
- Please print out the requested forms found within the PowerPoint. F-1: SEVIS Registration & Acknowledgment Form, J-1: SEVIS Registration, Health Insurance & Acknowledgment Form.
- Print your I-94 after entering the US.
- Bring the printed forms, DS-2019/I-20, I-94 and passport to Duke Visa Services between 8:30am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

**Update I-901 SEVIS Fee Tutorial**

All F-1 and J-1 Students and Scholars must pay the **Mandatory SEVIS fee**. The updated I-901 SEVIS Fee tutorial: [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/i-901/sevis-payment-tutorial](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/i-901/sevis-payment-tutorial) reflects the new I-901 SEVIS Form that includes a mandatory email address field that allows the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to send instant notifications to students when their I-901 SEVIS Fee payment status changes. The updated tutorial also clarifies instructions for making payments through the Western Union payment process.

**J-1 Scholar Registration has Changed!!**

Effective April 4, 2016, J-1 Scholar Registration at Duke Visa Services will be held **once a day** instead of twice each weekday. The new J-1 Scholar registration time is 9:00am to 10:00am, Monday through Friday. We ask that scholars arrive by 8:45am so we can process the required information before we start the J-1 Scholar presentation.

**HTH Worldwide Insurance Premiums Increase Effective September 1, 2016**

Professors, researchers, short-term scholars, or specialists on Duke’s Form DS-2019 are ineligible for insurance as a Duke employee, are eligible for the HTH Worldwide Insurance plan. While there have been premium increases for this plan, it still provides coverage for pre-existing conditions. New premiums can be found at: [https://visaservices.duke.edu/category/j1/j_health_insurance/j_health_insurance_expenses.php](https://visaservices.duke.edu/category/j1/j_health_insurance/j_health_insurance_expenses.php).

**Processing Times for H-1B Visa Category Petitions**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services are currently processing H-1B petitions received on November 2, 2015. Department Administrators with pending H-1B cases should contact their Duke Visa Services advisors for H-1B processing updates and options for new and current H-1B employees with pending H-1B petitions.

**Always Write Your Name as it Appears in Your Passport**

Using your name as it appears in your passport will facilitate:

1. Admission to the U.S.
2. Tracking your entries and exits to and from the U.S.
3. Applying for a Social Security Number
4. Applying for a Driver’s License
5. Applying for an Individual Tax Payer’s Identification Number (ITIN)
6. Applying for F-1 Optional Practical Training

Strict name standardization guidelines make it mandatory for Duke Visa Services to print your name as it appears in your passport. Remember that your Passport, the Form I-20 or DS-2019, and I-94 should have the same name in order to avoid delays in requesting any of the above benefits of your non-immigrant visa categories.

**A Message for all J-1 Physicians Sponsored by ECFMG and Training Program Liaisons (TPLs)**

As we embark on a new academic year, ECFMG has been asked by U.S. Department of State (DoS) officials to remind all J-1 physicians and Training Program Liaisons (TPLs) that physicians sponsored by ECFMG are required to reside in the United States while in J-1 status and maintain an up-to-date U.S. residential address in ECFMG’s online system, OASIS. The J-1 visa is designed to facilitate educational and cultural exchange. As such, participants in the J-1 program are expected to live in the United States while pursuing their educational programs. The DoS considers it a violation of status to live in a border country while training in the United States in J-1 status. Therefore, a J-1 physician sponsored by ECFMG cannot live in another country and commute to his/her training position in a U.S. teaching hospital.

Samantha Franklin has been promoted to a new position at DVS and we are seeking a new Assistant International/Student Scholar. We will keep you posted.
Each year, a few students, scholars, and employees receive Visa denials. If this happens, all is not lost. Just follow these steps:

1) Consular Officers are required to provide written documentation as to why a denial was issued. Ask for a copy of the denial.
2) Send a copy of the denial to your Duke Visa Services Advisor. The advisor will review the denial and determine what DVS or your academic department can provide to the consulate to answer their concerns.
3) DVS will provide a letter if we believe the additional information will facilitate the approval of the visa. DVS cannot verify the applicant will return to his/her home country after completion of the degree or program. All internationals must prove “nonimmigrant intent” and only the applicant can provide the documentation or assurances that a consular officer will need to issue the visa.
4) Find out when a second visa application can be submitted. Each country’s U.S. consulate has different timelines. You may be able to apply again immediately or you may be required to wait several weeks or up to 6 months.
5) If you believe you will not be able to submit another request, receive a visa, arrive to start your program, or return after a break to continue your program, contact DVS and your academic advisor for additional guidance.

Additional information can be found at: https://visaservices.duke.edu/category/visa_app_entry_us.php, https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange.html and https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/employment.html.

**USCIS Proposed Fee Changes**

(DVS will notify the Duke Community if/when these fees change.)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) proposes to adjust certain immigration and naturalization benefit request fees charged by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). USCIS conducted a comprehensive fee review and determined that current fees do not recover the full costs of the services it provides. In addition, DHS proposes to clarify that persons filing a benefit request may be required to appear for biometrics services or an interview and pay the biometrics services fee, and make a number of other changes. Proposed Fees for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Current Fee</th>
<th>Proposed Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-129 (H-1B, O-1A petitions)</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-539 (Extend/Change status)</td>
<td>$290</td>
<td>$370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-765 (F-1 OPT and J-2 employment applications)</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How long have you been at Duke Visa Services and what do you do?
A: I have been working at Duke Visa Services since July, 2014. I am the Staff Assistant to the Director of Visa Services

Q: What do you like to do on your spare time?
A: I love spending time with my daughter whenever I can since she is in college now and also, looking to retiring someday to enjoy the rest of my life

Q: If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
A: I would love to visit Hawaii or a foreign country to see what the different cultures are like.

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**DUKE VISA SERVICES EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT**

**JESSICA SMITH**

Undergraduate Admissions

Duke Visa Services appreciates Jessica for her assistance processing visa document requests for her department. Her knowledge of Duke policies as well as governmental regulatory issues assists our office in maintaining a high standard in the service to her department’s international population.

Q: What hint would you like to share with other departmental Visa Services administrators that makes your job easier?
A: I prefer to record everything, so I keep a large spreadsheet so that I can keep extensive notes regarding each of our international incoming students. This spreadsheet allows me to track each student’s progress, whether or not I’ve had specific correspondence with them, special circumstances, etc. This information is especially helpful when I meet with other departments who also work with incoming international students. Additionally, it’s essential to send regular reminders with regards to deadlines and updates. This really helps to avoid last-minute timing emergencies.

Q: How has your contact with Duke’s international population changed your world view?
A: I’ve always appreciated diversity and learning about different cultures, but working with Duke’s international population has really opened my eyes even more to the complexities of the world. I’m consistently impressed with the ambition and courage that our international students possess and I’m fascinated by so many of their stories. Having the opportunity to interact with these students is a constant learning experience and one of my favorite aspects of my profession.

Q: Are there any comments you would like to share?
A: I definitely do not work alone in this process. I’m incredibly grateful to the Duke Visa Services staff. In particular, Betty Henderson, our Visa Services liaison, is a wonderful source of support for me. We’ve had to tackle some unusual situations and she’s always there to offer answers and guidance. Also, while the Visa Services website provides so much helpful information for all of the different visa types, because I work primarily with one visa type (F-1), I’ve found that it’s also been productive to provide our incoming undergraduate students with a more customized instructions document. The visa application process can be daunting, especially for younger people who are just beginning to address tasks on their own without their parents’ assistance. So, by giving students step-by-step instructions that are even more specific to their process and their visa type, I try to anticipate any additional questions or concerns that they may have regarding their visa application.

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**DEPARTMENT CONTACT SPOTLIGHT**

**JESSICA SMITH**

Undergraduate Admissions

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