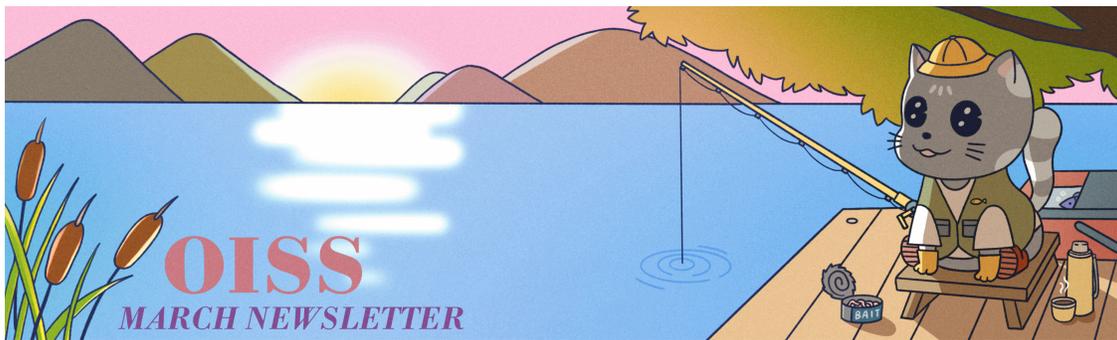

DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL
Please begin a new email to oiss@risd.edu so we do not lose responses in the thread.

[View email in your browser](#)



Dear International Students,

It's March! Spring semester has started and the season of spring is (hopefully) coming soon in Rhode Island. While certain challenges with the global pandemic are still ongoing, there are some glimmers of light... and spring is a great time to look for those possibilities.

The first glimmer is... if you are in a part of the world that participates in [Daylight Saving Time \(DST\)](#), - please remember to set your clocks ahead on Sunday, March 14th.

Lunar New Year/Spring Festival just ended in some parts of the world, and there are many cultures and traditions that will continue to [celebrate spring](#) in other parts of the world. With spring in the air, we begin our March Monthly Newsletter.

Table of Contents

OISS News

Immigration Updates

Programming with OISS

Monthly Mewsings with Meowgi

OISS will send out our Monthly Newsletter on the 1st of each month. While we have been sending them monthly, we decided that a more consistent send date would be helpful to all of you in anticipating when to watch for our newsletter!

OISS Spring 2021 Semester Drop-In Advising Hours:

Tuesdays from 8:30am to 10am EST

Thursdays from 11:30am- 1pm EST

To attend the OISS Drop-In Advising Hours:

1. Register by filling out this [Google Form](#)
2. Receive the Drop-In Advising Zoom link upon completing the form.
3. Click on the link during the Drop-In Advising hours (Tuesday 8:30am - 10am EST & Thursday 11:30am - 1pm EST) - Speak to an OISS advisor!

Students will be served on a first-come, first-serve basis during Drop-In Hours. You will be assigned to a breakout room to speak to an OISS advisor for up to 15 minutes.

* If you require more than the 15 minutes of a drop-in advising time, a scheduled appointment with an advisor is recommended and can be scheduled at: oiss@risd.edu. We have access to other modes of communication too (WhatsApp, WeChat, KakaoTalk, LINE, Skype)- just ask! **We will continue to use the virtual space for our advising sessions for the 2020- 2021 Academic Year.**

* **OISS hours are Monday- Friday, 8:30am- 4:30pm EST**

Immigration Updates

Enrollment and Travel

If you have requested to study remotely:

- You must remain in remote study for the entire semester.
 - If you are studying remotely outside of the United States, traveling into the U.S. after the semester begins is a risk and you may be denied entry by Customs & Border Protection (CBP). In addition, RISD has protocols in place due to the pandemic (see [RISD COVID site](#)).
 - If you are studying entirely remotely inside the United States, you will not have access to campus.

If you are studying in-person and accessing campus for the Spring term, you MUST arrive on-campus by today- Monday, March 1, 2021.

If you are an F-1 Student entering the US for the first time to study at RISD, you MUST be enrolled in at least one hybrid or in-person course in order to maintain your immigration status. OISS staff will be checking in with students who have just arrived to confirm their enrollment.

All Students on the F-1 Student Visa MUST BE enrolled in at least 12 credits to maintain their immigration status. If you are a student in your final term, you may take fewer than 12 credits so long as you will still complete your graduation requirements on time (by June 5, 2021). In order to do this, you must complete an [Exception to Academic Policy Form](#) from the Registrar's Office.

As of January 26th and in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#), all international travelers are required to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test or recovery from COVID-19.

I-94 Record- Please be sure to [check your I-94 Record](#) every time you enter the United States to ensure that your information has been recorded correctly by CBP.

Note About Travel- If you are currently in the United States with plans to work or study here in the near future, traveling outside of the U.S. is not recommended. With the current travel restrictions in the U.S. and in many other countries, when you might be able to return to the United States is unknown. This is not immigration-specific, but rather related to the global pandemic and the travel restrictions that are country-specific. Please contact oiss@risd.edu with any questions specific to your situation.

Routine Visa Services- As of February 24, 2021, the US Department of State (DoS) has announced that there will be a [Phased Resumption of Routine Visa Services](#): U.S. embassies and consulates will continue with their “phased resumption of routine visa services”. We encourage you to monitor the embassies and consulates in your home country as appointment availability will depend on local conditions. Click [HERE](#) to find the embassy nearest you in your home country.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the most up-to-date ICE/SEVP Policy Guidance from August 7, 2020. We have been told by SEVP to continue using the August 7, 2020 Guidance for Wintersession and Spring 2021.

Scams

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has been made aware of a **spoofing scam** involving individuals using the **SEVP Response Center (SRC)** phone numbers (703-603-3400 and 800-892-4829) and **claiming to be SRC representatives**. The fraudulent callers are inquiring about Form I-94 documents and asking students to provide information regarding monetary transactions.

CONTACT OISS at oiss@risd.edu if you think you have received a fraudulent call. We can report it to the appropriate officials.

Things to remember:

- SEVP officials will NEVER ask students to provide credit/debit card/gift card numbers, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers, or to make bitcoin deposits for any purpose.
- NEVER divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers.

If you receive a call like this please contact and report it to OISS immediately. Information on [Scams in the United States](#). DO NOT give anyone money over the phone if they are threatening you in any way. No US Government office will demand money over the phone.

To Report any Scam calls, visit the government or law enforcement agency the caller was saying they were representing:

For Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)-based scams, [REPORT HERE](#)

For Social Security-based scams, [REPORT HERE](#)

For Internal Revenue Service scams, [REPORT HERE](#)

For all other scams, visit: <https://www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds>

Other Things to Consider

Information related to [Social Security Numbers and Driver's Licenses](#).

[CLICK HERE](#) to see previous OISS Newsletters

Programming with OISS

For all OISS-specific events, visit the [Events & News](#) tab on the OISS website.

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 - 7pm- 8:30pm EST

[Visa Options: Working in the US after Optional Practical Training](#)- Gain information and guidance on which visas might be available to F-1 visa holders after OPT. Immigration Attorney, Eileen Morrison, will present visa eligibility details for visas such as the H-1B, O-1, EB2, TN and more. You may sign up for the session [HERE](#).

Are you graduating this year and want to learn more about [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#)? [CLICK HERE](#) for our upcoming lunch sessions! Eating lunch during the session is acceptable! [OPT Canvas modules](#) are up and running - so check them out! The lunch sessions are for our graduating students, but any student can sign up for our OPT Canvas modules!

Are you searching for an off-campus summer internship in the United States? Then do your research now to gather information required for [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#).

work authorization!

CPT Tabling Events (in-person):

Wednesday, April 7 from 11am- 1pm EST at 15 Westminster

Wednesday, April 21 from 11am- 1pm EST at 20 Washington Place

Tax Season 2020 has begun. All non-immigrant students who were physically present in the U.S. at any point during 2020 MUST file a tax form in the United States - even if you did not work in 2020. To learn more about what is required, visit the [Sprintax](#) website. OISS will also be sending out more detailed instructions towards the end of this month as well as links to register for tax workshops throughout the spring. For a quick tax overview, visit the [OISS website](#).

The TAX FILING DEADLINE IS: APRIL 15, 2021.

For information on upcoming programs at RISD, remember to check out Involved at: <https://involved.risd.edu/>

Monthly Mewsings with Meowgi

This is a new section of our newsletter that will include articles and resources focused on cultural adjustment, cross-cultural communication, and some US culture 101 that some of you mentioned wanting more of in the OISS Crits Survey we sent out. While we will also be working on some programming in these areas, we thought our newsletter would be a good start!

Did you know that you can include an audio clip of the pronunciation of your name in your voice for your email signature?! Click [HERE](#) to give it a try!

Pronouncing people's names correctly is very important. Taking the time and making the effort to call someone by the name that they go by and in the way they pronounce it is a great way to start an introduction and to make that person feel like they matter.

Please stay in touch with us. You are very missed and we are here for you as you continue navigating your international student experience at RISD!

Warmly,

The Office of International Student Services Team

Kate Sacco, Director

Jennifer Dressen, Assistant Director

Amy Andrea Iglesias, International Student Advisor

Sachi Tan, Administrative Coordinator

Dr. Meowgi, Friend to All

Follow us on Social Media!



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Office of International Student Services

IMMIGRATION/ EMPLOYMENT EVENTS

★ OPT Application Sessions

Feb 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26
March 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24

12-1pm
EST

★ Visa Options Session

Tuesday, March 9

7-8:30pm
EST

★ Self-Employment & Freelancing Session

Tuesday, April 6

7-8:30pm
EST

★ CPT Tabling Events

April 7 and 21

11am-1pm
EST