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Dear International Students,

Hello and Welcome from the Office of International Student Services! We are so happy to have you back on campus!! While there are still a few of you who are studying remotely, we are here for all of you... virtually and in-person. Yes, OISS is back in our office space full-time!

We hope that you come and visit us to say hello. We have missed you.

The [Office of International Student Services Team](#) is here to support your international student experience in the different ways you might need it throughout your time at RISD. And... we have added some new members to our team this fall!

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## OISS News

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Welcome to... our **International Peer Mentors in RISD OISS!**

**WHO:** RISD OISS is excited to introduce our [International Peer Mentor Team](#) as a new initiative to support the international student experience. The mentor team is comprised of two graduate and five undergraduate students.

**WHAT:** Peer mentorship and support is something that international students have requested as a resource and a guide to navigating the international student experience at RISD and in the US. The International Peer Mentor offering will provide international students with assistance throughout their time at RISD. The drop-in hours are open to any student who considers themselves part of the international student community.

**WHEN:** The International Peer Mentors will have drop-in mentorship hours Tuesday-Thursday from 9am- 4pm and Friday from 9am- 1pm. The Fall 2021 Schedule can be found on the OISS website with the specific times and international peer mentor.

**WHERE:** Carr House, Room 308

**TOPICS THAT YOU MIGHT VISIT AN INTERNATIONAL PEER MENTOR FOR:**

- Shopping & Food
- Connecting with campus resources: housing, academic support, registration, etc
- Classroom experience
- Outside of the classroom activities, events and clubs
- Navigating and learning about life and culture in the U.S.
- Homesickness
- Sharing your experiences and culture/ connection

*\*Immigration-specific advising must be arranged with an OISS Professional Staff Member*

COME AND VISIT THE INTERNATIONAL PEER MENTORS SOON!

[OISS 2021-2022 Statistics](#) have been posted! Check them out to see who is in our international student community!

OISS Fall 2021 Drop-In Advising Hours (Offered both Virtually AND In-Person):

**Tuesdays from 8:30am to 10am EST**  
**Thursdays from 11:30am to 1pm EST**

To attend the OISS Drop-In Advising Hours:

1. Register by filling out this [Google Form](#) (complete for virtual and in-person advising)
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 OR 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. IF VIRTUAL: You will be assigned to a breakout room to speak to an OISS Advisor for up to 15 minutes. IF IN-PERSON: You will meet with the OISS Advisor who is on-call during that time.

\* 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 by emailing: [oiss@risd.edu](mailto:oiss@risd.edu).

OISS Office Hours are:  
Monday- Friday, 8:30am- 4:30pm EST

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## Immigration Updates

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**ALL F-1 Visa Holders** - OISS is here to provide you with resources and information to help you maintain your immigration status in the United States. However, your F-1 Status is ultimately YOUR responsibility and you must do your part to get the information on what that means.

[Visit the OISS Website and read the section, “How to Maintain Status”](#)

A few highlights of maintaining your status are:

- Maintain at least 12 credits in spring and fall semester and 3 credits in wintersession.
- Know your program completion date and make sure your I-20 end date matches. If you need to extend your date for your program, you must start the process with OISS before the I-20 end date.
- **You CANNOT legally work / volunteer off-campus in the United States without the appropriate work authorization.** See the [Employment](#) page for more information.

**New Students (Remote starts, Deferred and New Incoming Students)** - You will need to complete the [Mandatory Confirmation of Arrival Form](#) when you arrive in Providence. The US Department of Homeland Security requires OISS to register all students into the SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System) within 30 days of their program start date. You must complete the [Mandatory Confirmation of Arrival Form](#) in order for us to process your registration.

**Reinstated Students returning from a Leave of Absence** - You will need to complete the [Mandatory Confirmation of Arrival Form](#) when you arrive in Providence. The US Department of Homeland Security requires OISS to register all students into the SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System) within 30 days of their program start date as listed on your Form I-20. You must complete the [Mandatory Confirmation of Arrival Form](#) in order for us to process your registration.

**Students graduating after Fall 2021 or Wintersession 2022:** If you will be graduating after the Fall 2021 term or the Wintersession 2022 term and you are interested in learning about [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) and exploring post-graduation work authorization in the U.S., please make an appointment with an advisor by emailing: [oiss@risd.edu](mailto:oiss@risd.edu)

### **Immigration & Travel Updates**

#### **Visas (US Department of State):**

The US Department of State is prioritizing student visa processing, amongst a few others. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more.

**Article:** [The Biden administration will lift restrictions on fully vaccinated international travelers in November.](#)

#### **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines**

##### **NIE (National Interest Exception) (US Department of State):**

Students with valid F-1 or M-1 visas traveling to begin or continue an academic program do not need to contact an embassy or consulate to seek an individual NIE to travel. They may enter the United States no earlier than 30 days before the start of their academic studies. NIE eligibility for students who have been present in Brazil, China, India, Iran, or South Africa applies only to programs that begin on or after August 1, 2021. Students seeking to apply for new F-1 or M-1 visas should check the status of visa services at the nearest embassy or consulate; those applicants who are found to be otherwise qualified for an F-1 or M-1 visa will automatically be considered for an NIE to travel.

**If you have a travel emergency and need to contact OISS outside of our office hours, please call RISD Public Safety at: 401-454-6376 and they will be able to get you in touch with us.**

#### **SCAMS**

Please check out the [OISS Website](#) or visit the [OISS Instagram account](#) to get more information about Scams in the United States.

Beginning in October, OISS will host an event on the Third Thursday of each month.

General immigration and cultural programming from OISS will also begin in October... so mark your calendars for the following dates:

**Tuesday, Oct 5, 2021:** Visa Options Workshop : Working In the U.S. After Optional Practical Training (OPT), [RSVP HERE](#)

**Thursday, Oct 21, 2021:** OISS Third Thursday Event

And... [International Education Week](#) is November 15- 19, 2021 this year and we have some fun things planned!

For all of your programming needs, visit: <https://involved.risd.edu/>

Friendly reminder: Masks are required indoors throughout campus. For a reminder on all of RISD's Fall 2021 COVID Policies, visit: <https://covid.risd.edu/fall-protocol/>

We look forward to seeing you soon!

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*

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