General Information: The Office of International Student Services & Study Abroad

Dr. Parvin Bagherpour
Associate Vice Chancellor for International Student Services & Study Abroad

Background Information

HCC is certified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue certificates of eligibility.

Recertification

The advisor must be a Designated School Official (DSO) which is certified through DHS to issue the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) I-20 forms.

The OISS&SA works to keep HCC and the F-1 students in compliance with DHS regulations.

Centralized office

HCC has the largest number of enrolled international students of any community college in the nation.
Important Immigration Documents You Should Know

SEVIS Form I-20

- **Bio/Demo info**
- **School name**
- **Program info**
- **I-20 exp. date**

SEVIS ID

Important Terms

**Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

- **USCIS**: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is responsible for most application and petition processing.
- **ICE**: Bureau of Immigration and Custom Enforcement is responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence and SEVIS.
- **CBP**: Bureau of Custom and Border Protection is responsible for immigration inspections at U.S. ports of entry, for Border Patrol and Customs Services.

**DSO** (Designated School Official) refers to persons at an institution with the authority to communicate with DHS

**SEVIS** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System is the database used to produce I-20s. This database is accessible on campus only by authorized DSOs who use it to report data and events on international students such as: student identification information, enrollment, address, work authorization, benefits requested, etc.
NEW STUDENTS

From Admissions to Enrollment

New vs. Transfer

**New Student**
- Currently living outside of the U.S.
- Does not have an active SEVIS Form I-20

**Transfer Student**
- Currently living inside the U.S.
- Has been attending school outside of HCC
- Has an active SEVIS Form I-20 from their current school
New Student Steps to Enrollment

1. **Apply to HCC**
   - HCC online application (check F-1 box)
   - submit original documents to OISS: copy of passport, I-20 application, proof of financial sponsorship, $75 fee

2. **Receive SEVIS Form I-20 from HCC DSO**

3. **Interview with local US Embassy for VISA**

4. **Enter the US 30 days prior to the start date on the SEVIS Form I-20**

5. **Check-in with the Office of International Student Services (OISS)**
   - submit copies of immigration documents
   - review and update biographic information
   - receive testing authorization
   - remove FMJ hold

6. **Visit Campus**
   - take English Proficiency or Texas Success Initiative Test
   - submit proof of meningitis

7. **Visit Advisor**
   - submit testing results and any applicable previous transcripts

8. **Enroll in class**

9. **Attend Mandatory International Student Orientation**

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F-1 Student Reporting

- **Graduation**
  - Students must inform the OISS of their graduation date so that the end date on their SEVIS Form I-20 is accurate.
  - Campus advisors assist DSO’s by filling out the Program Completion Verification Form to verify the student’s graduation date

- **Withdrawal from HCC**

- **Travel**
  - DSO signature on 3rd page of SEVIS Form I-20 for travel authorization
  - Valid VISA
Academic Requirements

• **Full Course of Study**
  - F-1 students must pursue a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters
  - F-1 students are not required to take classes during the summer, unless the summer semester is their initial semester at HCC
  - **12 SCH** fall and spring semesters
  - **9 SCH** summer semester
  - **one 3 credit Distance Education** course may count towards a full course of study per semester

• **GPA > 2.0**

• **Course Completion**
  - an **F** still counts towards the completion of a course and does not affect a student’s status
  - a **W** will not count towards the completion of a course, and the credits of that course will not fulfill the **12 SCH** requirement

  **If a student fails to complete a full course of study, their F-1 status must be TERMINATED!**

Employment

**F-1 students must obtain permission from the OISS to work in the U.S.**

• **On-Campus Employment**
  - F-1 students are eligible to work on-campus part-time (19.5hrs/week) during the fall and spring semesters and full-time during the breaks

• **CPT**
  - Part-time off-campus employment based on academic necessity
  - examples: co-op classes and work studies
  - Students must have completed 1 academic year to be eligible

• **OPT**
  - Full-time off-campus employment for 12 months
    - **after the completion of a program plan**
    - employment must be commensurate with the student’s **field of study**
Houston Community College’s (HCC) #1 priority is a focus on student success and preparing individuals for life and work in a global and technological society.

The Study Abroad Office is committed to further integrate global education into the HCC system by growing a multifaceted, scholastic, centralized study abroad program.

The Study Abroad Office worked with the President Elect Study Abroad Council comprised of the college executive deans.

Types of Study Abroad Programs

- **Short Term Faculty-Led Programs**
  Defined as 1-3 week trips, led by a faculty member during class gaps in spring, summer, and winter breaks, that are tied to an HCC course number and in conjunction with semester long classroom instruction.

- **Semester and summer Abroad programs**
  Defined as enrollment in a foreign college/university for an entire semester.

- **Internships and Service Learning Abroad programs**
  Defined as students working or providing services abroad for field experience in conjunction with faculty guidance and partial instruction.
Faculty members play an important role in increasing study abroad opportunities for HCC students.

Short Term Faculty-Led Programs are the most affordable and convenient way for HCC students to experience different cultures.

The Study Abroad Office has created a centralized process for faculty to request the incorporation of study abroad into their course.

Current Examples of Faculty-Led programs at HCC

- HIST 2389 - Honor's College trip to Turkey in spring 2013
- HIST 2389 - Honor's College trip to the United Kingdom in spring 2014
- HIST 2389 – Honor's College trip to Arles and Barcelona
- GOVT 2389 - Slazburg Global Seminar

For more information: www.Hccs.edu/studyabroad