

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
J-1 SCHOLAR & FACULTY
HANDBOOK**



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
& SCHOLAR SERVICES**

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Capstone International Center

International Student & Scholar Services

WELCOME INTERNATIONAL FACULTY AND SCHOLARS!

On behalf of International Student & Scholar Services, I would like to welcome you to The University of Alabama. It is an exciting time of the year for all of us and particularly for all of our newly arrived scholars and faculty. We know that there is much that is strange and new for you as you learn about US culture. We can only hope that you will catch the welcoming nature of the South and find comfort as you settle in to pursue your academic career at The University of Alabama.

The University of Alabama has had a rich history of academic excellence since its founding in 1831. This year we are looking forward to seeing you succeed in your goals and participate in the many culturally enriching activities our campus has to offer. Be sure to check out our website at <http://international.ua.edu/iss/> for important information relating to international students and faculty as well as news about upcoming events of interest to all.

We hope you will join us in many of the campus-wide events designed to welcome new students, scholars, and faculty.

Best wishes for a successful and productive year!

Director, International Student & Scholar Services



Capstone International Center

International Student & Scholar Services

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of International Student & Scholar Services is to provide essential services and innovative programs for The University of Alabama international students, scholars and their families to enable them to achieve their educational, professional and social goals. ISSS seeks to foster diversity and strengthen inter-cultural relationships throughout the UA campus and community. It is our commitment to promote understanding and respect for the world's many cultures.

ISSS VISION

ISSS's vision is to be a leader in international education, both in the State of Alabama and in the United States. Key to our vision of being a great services office is to serve as an advocate for international students, scholars, and their families. In fulfilling this vision, we will:

- Promote international student and scholar issues throughout the University of Alabama by serving on various boards and committees which affect academics, employment, and campus and community life.
- Remain committed to representing The University of Alabama through the AAIE: Alabama Association of International Educators and through NAFSA – The National Association of International Educators.
- Strive to improve our services to international students, scholars, host departments, and academic advisers.

ISSS VALUES

International Student & Scholar Services are:

- Respectful of all cultures and people.
- Committed to empowering students and scholars.
- Focused first and foremost on international students, scholars and their families, and devoted to their support, adjustment, and acculturation.
- Honored to be advocates for international student and scholar issues and concerns.



CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

There is so much to do and see when you arrive to The University of Alabama. Often, things are forgotten and left undone by new faculty, staff, and scholars who become overwhelmed with the amount of information given to them at one time. We want to make it easier for you by providing a checklist of things to do while at Orientation. Make it your mission to have all of these items checked off as soon as possible.

- Attend Orientation for International Scholars and Faculty (ISSS)
- Complete I-9 Employment Verification (With Your Host Department) – PAID EMPLOYEES ONLY
- Meet with Human Resources Office for Orientation (Employee Resource Center at 1515 Flint River Drive) – PAID EMPLOYEES ONLY
- Obtain ActionCard (ID Center in Campus Drive Parking Deck - <http://actcard.ua.edu/>)
- Activate MyBama and update contact info, complete HR forms, etc. (online - <https://mybama.ua.edu>)
- Health Insurance
- Checking Account
- Social Security Number/ Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

Primary contacts for all international scholars and faculty:

1. Charter Morris, Director and RO – charter.morris@ua.edu

International Student & Scholar Services

The University of Alabama
105 B.B. Comer Hall
Box 870254
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0254

Office - (205) 348-5402

Fax - (205) 348-5406

international@ua.edu

<http://international.ua.edu/iss/>

International Student & Scholar Services Hours:

Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 4:45 pm

- To reach an ISSS advisor, call 205-348-5402 or email international@ua.edu
- If an emergency occurs after ISSS hours, please contact UA Police Department at 205-348-5454 and they will contact an ISSS advisor.

J-1 PROFESSOR/RESEARCHERS, SPECIALISTS, & INTERNS

FOR A FULL LIST OF J-1 VISA REGULATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
<http://international.ua.edu/iss/international-faculty-staff/j-1-exchange-visitors/#Regulations>

ESSENTIAL IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

- Form DS-2019 – Validity dates listed in Section 3
- Passport — Must be valid at all times
- Visa Stamp — May expire while in the U.S.; Must be valid to re-enter the U.S. from travel beyond Canada, Mexico, and the adjacent islands
- I-94 record – This should be marked with your visa status and the designation of D/S (duration-of-status). Effective April 30, 2013, US CBP will no longer issue paper I-94 Cards. US CBP will however continue to stamp your passport with your date and status of entry. You will now go to a website and print the electronic record of your I-94 after arrival at www.cbp.gov/i94.

MAINTAINING YOUR PASSPORT

All international faculty, staff, scholars and students should maintain their passport validity. In general, it is best to have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months longer than the intended dates of stay. If renewal of a passport is necessary, check with your embassy or consulate about the renewal process.

J-VISA HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

The U.S. Department of State and the Exchange Visitor Program requires that all persons in J-1 or J-2 status have health insurance that meets the following minimum requirements:

- **medical benefits of at least \$100,000** per person per accident or illness;
- **repatriation of remains coverage of at least \$25,000;**
- **medical evacuation coverage of at least \$50,000;**
- **deductible that is \$500 or less** per accident or illness;
- exchange visitors may also be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

J-1 and J-2 exchange visitors must maintain the health insurance during the entire duration of their program. Persons who willfully fail to maintain coverage are subject to termination from the program.

- For full-time, paid **University of Alabama employees ONLY**:
 - J-1 Scholar Researcher/Professors who are paid by UA and are full-time employees are eligible for health insurance through UA.
 - Only the low deductible (higher monthly premium) health insurance option offered through UA meets the minimum requirements listed by the Department of State for medical benefits and for the deductible, but the insurance does not provide coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. NOTE: The high-deductible health plan option will not meet Department of State requirements. <https://hr.ua.edu/benefits/health-care-benefits/medical-plans>
 - If you receive health insurance as a benefit to your employment at UA, you will need a supplemental insurance policy that covers you for Medical Evacuation and Repatriation - <http://international.ua.edu/iss/insurance-medical-care/medical-insurance/>.
- For **ALL OTHER** individuals utilizing personal or government funds who do not receive payment or health insurance from The University of Alabama:
 - Any J-1 Scholar whose funding is from personal funds or a source other than UA will need to purchase a health insurance plan which will meet the minimum federal requirements.
 - J-1 Scholars should plan to purchase the insurance upon arrival for both themselves and any J-2 dependents.
 - An ISSS advisor can provide you with information on health insurance plans that meet the minimum federal requirements.

J-1 EXTENSIONS AND GRACE PERIOD

- J-1s cannot hold a tenure track position.
- Maximum period of participation in a J-Program:
 - J-1 Professor or Research Scholar: Five years (on a use-or-lose basis)
 - J-1 Specialist or Student Intern: One year
 - J-1 Short-term Scholars: Six months
- Notify your host department and an advisor at ISSS 1-2 months before the end date indicated on your DS-2019 in order for us to process an extension.
- All extensions must be completed in the SEVIS system **before** the end date on your DS-2019.

It is important to keep the information on your DS-2019 current. You must always have valid dates of stay; your dates of stay are listed in section number 3 of your DS-2019. The I-94 of an exchange visitor should be marked D/S (duration-of-status), which means that the J-visa holder is legally in the United States as long as he/she is performing the activities listed on the DS-2019, the DS-2019 has not expired, and the J-1 exchange visitor has not violated Exchange Program rules.

GRACE PERIOD - Exchange visitors can also remain in the U.S. for an additional 30 days beyond the expiration date on the DS-2019 provided they are in legal status. The 30-day grace period is meant to allow the J-visa holder time for travel and preparation for departure. The exchange visitor **may not work** during this period.

Extensions of stay may be possible if you have not exceeded the limit of your J-1 status. To get an extension, you will need to fill out the J-1 Extension form, which is available on the ISSS website <http://international.ua.edu/iss/international-faculty-staff/j-1-exchange-visitors/#Extensions>.

NOTE: You are not eligible for extension if you obtained a waiver of the 2-year home residency requirement.

TRANSFERRING J-1 VISA RECORD TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY/PROGRAM

<http://international.ua.edu/iss/international-faculty-staff/j-1-exchange-visitors/#Extensions>

An exchange visitor can transfer to another program sponsor (i.e. transfer to another University) if:

- the purpose of the program remains the same (same general subject area)
- the visitor will remain in the same category (i.e. Professor will remain a Professor)
- the visitor has not reached the maximum stay limit (5 years for Research Scholar/Professor; 1 year for Specialist; 1 year for Student Intern; 6 months for Short-term Scholar)
- the visitor has not obtained a waiver of the two-year home residency requirement

In order to transfer, written release is needed from the current J-1 sponsor. Please complete the J-1 Scholar Transfer Out form which is available on the <http://international.ua.edu/iss/> website in the Forms Section <http://international.ua.edu/forms/> and submit it to International Student & Scholar Services.

J-1 OCCASIONAL LECTURES OR CONSULTATIONS

J-1 scholars may participate in occasional lectures and short-term consultations outside of UA, but they must have the **advance permission** of ISSS. Such lectures and consultations must be incidental to the exchange visitor's primary program activities. If wages or other remunerations are received for such activities, the exchange visitor must act as an independent contractor. [22CFR 514.20(g)]

To get permission to conduct off-campus lectures or consultations that will involve wages or other payment, you should bring the following to ISSS **before** beginning such activities:

- letter from the inviting organization stating terms and conditions of the consultation/lecture - including dates, hours, purpose of work, amount of pay, and summary of responsibilities
- letter from your UA host department recommending that you participate in the lecture or consultation and explaining how the activity fits in with your exchange visitor program.

Upon receipt of the above, ISSS will issue a letter certifying that the occasional lecture/consultation has been approved.

J-2 DEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

- **Eligibility** - J-2 dependents are eligible to apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for employment authorization, so long as the employment is not for the purpose of supporting the J-1. Financial need is not a criterion for employment authorization of a J-2 dependent.

“Income from the spouse’s or dependent’s employment may be used to support the family’s customary recreational and cultural activities and related travel, among other things. Employment will not be authorized if this income is needed to support the J-1 principal alien.” 8 C.F.R. S 214.2(j)(1)(v)(A)

- **Application Procedure** - Applications for employment authorization are made to the USCIS Service Center with jurisdiction over the J-2’s place of residence. Processing generally takes 3 months.

J-2 Dependents who wish to apply for Employment Authorization should submit the following to USCIS:

- Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization - available at www.uscis.gov under the Forms section at the top of the page
- I-765 filing fee (As of December 23, 2016 - \$410.00); Check or money order payable to: Department of Homeland Security.
ATTN: Check the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov to be sure of the correct filing fee.
- 2 passport style photos (Available through many pharmacies)
- Copies of the current DS-2019 of both the J-1 and J-2
- Copy of passport information page, visa page, and I-94 (back and front) for both J-1 and J-2
- Letter from J-2 stating why the employment is desired, indicating the source and amount of support for the J-1, and specifically stating that the income that the J-2 will derive from employment will not be used for the support of the J-1 exchange visitor.

12/ 24-MONTH BAR AFTER PREVIOUS J PARTICIPATION

• **12-month bar** - The 12-month bar prevents someone from becoming a J-1 Professor/ Research Scholar for 12 months following *any* previous J participation in the J categories of student, specialist, trainee, physician, visitor, intern, counselor, au pair, or summer travel/work (including J-2 dependents of those in these categories) unless the person is transferring to UA's program from another J-1 sponsor, if the person’s presence was for less than 6 months, or if the person's previous presence was as a J-1 Short-Term Scholar.

• **24-month bar for repeat participation as a J-1 Professor/Research Scholar** - The 24-month bar requires that there be a period of at least 24 months between each stay as a J-1 Professor or J-1 Research Scholar. The 24-month bar is not the same as the 212(e) Rule, also known as the two-year home residency requirement.

The general exceptions to the 12- and 24-month bar rules are:

- the exchange visitor is already in J-1 status and is transferring to the new sponsor’s program as defined in 22CFR514.42
- the participant’s previous J-program in any category other than Professor/Research Scholar was less than six months
- if the previous stay was as a J-1 Short-term Scholar

NOTE: The 12/24-month bars affect all persons in J status. A spouse or child who holds J-2 status is not eligible to return as a J-1 Scholar/Professor until the requirements of the bar are fulfilled.

212(e) TWO-YEAR HOME COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT

The 2-year home residency requirement or 212(e) applies to some J-1 exchange visitors. If you are subject to the 212(e), the requirement should be noted on your visa or at the bottom of your DS-2019.

If you are subject to 212(e) this means that you are required to return to your “home” country and be physically present in your home country for two years after completing your J-1 Program.

UNTIL YOU COMPLETE THE 212(e) REQUIREMENTS OR GET A WAIVER, YOU CANNOT:

- Apply for any immigrant status such as Permanent Residency (Green Card);
- Apply for the H, L, or K Visa;
- Change status from within the US from a J-Visa to any other non-immigrant visa category - anyone changing status to another non-immigrant visa category would have to do so outside of the United States at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

HOWEVER, WHILE YOU ARE SUBJECT TO THE 212(e), YOU CAN:

- Apply at a US Embassy or Consulate to return to the US on a non-immigrant visa, such as B-1/B-2 Visitor Visa, F-1 Student Visa, J-1 Visa, etc.;
- Travel freely to other countries.

If you are unsure as to whether or not you are subject to the 2-year home residency requirement, please speak to the Responsible or Alternate Responsible Officer of the J-1 program in ISSS.

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE SUBJECT TO 212(e)

Not all J-1 exchange visitors are subject to the 2-year home residency requirement. There are three grounds on which a J-1 exchange visitor can become subject to 212(e):

- If the J-1 exchange visitor’s participation in an exchange program was financed, directly or indirectly, by the United States government or a foreign government for the purpose of exchange.
- If the skills that the J-1 exchange visitor is coming to develop are in a field which the “home” government considers critical (<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>).
- If the J-1 exchange visitor came to the United States or acquired exchange visitor status to receive graduate medical education or training.

If the J-1 principal exchange visitor is subject to 212(e), all dependents who enter the United States in J-2 status are subject to the 2-year home residency requirement as well.

212(e) WAIVER INFORMATION

There are five different bases upon which a J-1 can obtain a waiver of 212(e), the most common of which is the “statement of no objection from home country.” The State Department website has information about the application process at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/student/residency-waiver.html>. It is essential that a J-1 visa holder talk to both International Student & Scholar Services and his or her department before applying for a waiver of 212(e).

WARNING: DO NOT APPLY FOR THE 212(e) WAIVER UNLESS YOU ARE GUARANTEED SPONSORSHIP FOR A CHANGE OF STATUS TO ANOTHER LEGAL CATEGORY SUCH AS H-1B, L-VISA, OR PERMANENT RESIDENCY. ISSS RECOMMENDS THAT YOU WAIT UNTIL THE FINAL YEAR OF YOUR J-1 ELIGIBILITY TO FILE THE 212(e) WAIVER.

Once the recommendation letter to waive the 212(e) is received from the DOS, J status **CANNOT** be extended or transferred if transfer will lead to an extension. After the DOS waiver recommendation, the J-1 Exchange Visitor is limited to the end-date that is listed on the most recent DS-2019.

A waiver of 212(e) makes a J-1 **eligible to change status to H-1B or PR** (among other statuses), but it does not guarantee that the J-1 will be sponsored for H-1B or PR.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Reporting Change of U.S. Address to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

All non-immigrants (except those in A or G status), who will remain in the U.S. for 30 days or longer, are required by law to notify the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within 10 days of a change of physical address in the United States. Failure to comply with this requirement is a violation of immigration status that is punishable by fine or imprisonment and/or removal (“deportation”).

Reporting Requirements for J-1 Scholar Researchers/Professors, Specialists, and Student Interns

You are required by DHS to inform International Student & Scholar Services at The University of Alabama within 10 days of any change of your physical residence (apartment or home address) in the United States. Once you report your changes to ISSS, we will report the new address to DHS through the Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

Additionally, HR and UA Payroll require employees to update any changes in their mailing address. This is to make sure that paychecks and payment information will be sent to the correct address. To update your mailing address, you must do so through UA’s MyBama service: <http://mybama.ua.edu>.

NOTIFICATIONS THAT DO NOT CONSTITUTE COMPLIANCE

- **Verbal notice** of a change of address to International Student & Scholar Services does not constitute compliance with the SEVIS 10-day reporting requirement.
- **Filing a forwarding address with the U.S. Postal Service will not satisfy the reporting requirement for the Department of Homeland Security.** Additionally, mail from the U.S. government will not be forwarded by the Post Office and will be returned to the issuing government agency as undeliverable.

NOTE: If you have previously filed an application and it is pending with a DHS USCIS Service Center or other field office (e.g. for work authorization or petition for Permanent Residence) updating MyBama **WILL NOT** update your address with the respective DHS office which is handling your petition. You must inform the appropriate DHS office separately in order to update your application address and ensure that you will receive notifications regarding your petition.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

TRAVEL WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Travel within the United States for any international student or scholar on a non-immigrant visa does not require any special documentation, letters, or any signatures from International Student & Scholar Services. Still, Alabama state law and US law require that anyone on a non-immigrant visa should be able to present proof of their legal status within the United States at any time. It is recommended that for travel outside of Tuscaloosa, you take your passport and original accompanying documentation (i.e. DS-2019). Also, it is recommended that you keep photocopies of your main passport page, visa page, I-94 Card, DS-2019 and any other visa documentation with you at all times even when not traveling.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Visa Requirements for Transit Through and Travel To Other Countries

Traveling through/to another country may involve obtaining a transit/entry visa to that country. It is best to check the consulate website of the country you wish to visit to get the current visa procedures.

- For Canadian Visas: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp>
- For Mexican Visas: <https://consulmex2.sre.gob.mx/sanfrancisco/index.php/visas-traveling-to-mexico>

Returning from International Travel

- You must obtain a travel signature on your DS-2019 form from an ARO (J-1 Scholar Advisor at ISSS) in order to re-enter the U.S. after any international travel.
- Signatures are valid for up to one year or up to 6 months for short-term scholars.
- You must carry your DS-2019 signed for travel, visa, passport, and invitation/job offer letter

To be able to travel outside of and return to the United States in J status, you will need to have a valid signature from either the Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) on the front page of your J-1 or J-2 DS-2019 Document in the Travel Validation Section.

Anyone in J-1 or J-2 Status must visit or contact ISSS at least one week before any travel out of the United States. One week is necessary to allow the ISSS Advisor to sign your documents or to make any changes to your DS-2019 before your travel. Travel signatures are valid for one year and must be valid on the date which you wish to return. Also, your DS-2019 must still be valid, meaning your program end-date must not have passed in order to be able to reenter the United States.

Additionally, J-1 scholars seeking to reenter the United States must have a valid passport. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the date you intend to return to the United States. If your passport is expiring, you should make plans to renew or extend your passport before your travel.

With the exception of visits to Canada, Mexico, and the adjacent Caribbean islands that last less than 30-days [22 C.F.R. § 41.112(d); 8 C.F.R. § 214.1 (b) (1)] - http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222014, you will also need to have a valid J-1 or J-2 visa stamp in your passport to be able to return to the United States. The J-1 and J-2 Visa Stamps cannot be obtained within the United States. Visa appointments must be made with a consulate or embassy outside of the United States for the renewal or initial J-Visa.

Note: Citizens of Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria must always have a valid US Visa Stamp in order to return to the United States.

J-1s on a DS-2019 and F-1 Students on OPT/CPT I-20s NOT issued by UA

You must obtain a signature for travel from the institution that issued your DS-2019 or I-20 in order to comply with Department of Homeland Security regulations. You should plan obtain signatures from your DSO/PDSO or RO/ARO well in advance of your intended travel, to allow enough time send your documents to your institution and for your DSO/PDSO or RO/ARO to mail your documents back to you. You should also inform the International Student & Scholar Services office of any plans to travel.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Federal Holidays

Banks, government offices such as the post office are closed on the following holidays, and Stores and restaurants may also be closed or only open for limited hours on these holidays:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Third Monday In January
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday In May
Juneteenth	June 19
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday of September
Columbus Day	Second Monday of October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday of November
Christmas	December 25

The University of Alabama has a separate Holiday Schedule: <https://hr.ua.edu/payroll/payroll-schedules>.

Time Zones

There are four time zones in the continental United States (Eastern Standard, Central, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Time). The University of Alabama is located in the Central Time Zone.

Time in the U.S. is measured on a twelve-hour basis. Time is expressed in a.m. (ante meridiem) and p.m. (post meridiem). The hours 24:00 to 11:00 are expressed as 12:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The hours 12:00 to 23:00 are expressed as 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. For example 2:00 would be 2:00 a.m. and 14:00 would be 2:00 p.m.

Daylight savings time is practiced. Clocks are moved back one hour on the last Sunday in October. Clocks are turned forward one hour on the first Sunday of April.

Metric Conversion

Approximate conversions to metric measures

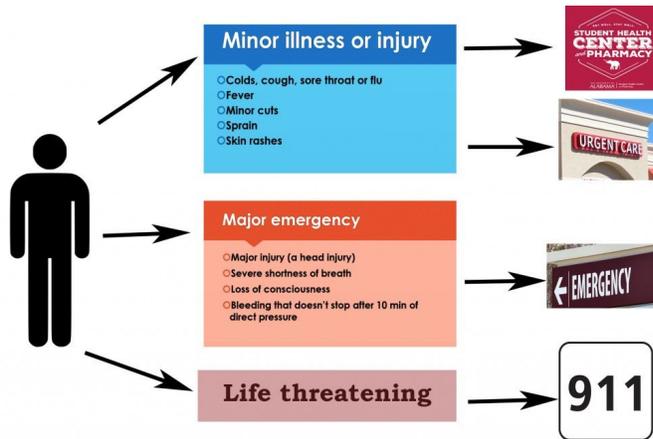
<u>When you know</u>	<u>Multiply by</u>	<u>To find</u>
inches (in)	2.54	centimeters (cm)
feet (ft)	30	centimeters
yards (yd)	.9	meters (m)
miles (mi)	1.6	kilometers (km)
acres	.4	hectares (ha)
ounces (oz)	28	grams (g)
pounds (lb)	.45	kilograms (kg)
cups (c)	.24	liters (l)
pints (pt)	.47	liters
quarts (qt)	.95	liters
gallons (gal)	3.8	liters

Approximate Conversions from Metric measures

<u>When you know</u>	<u>Multiply by</u>	<u>To find</u>
millimeters (mm)	.04	inches
centimeters	.4	inches
meters	3.3	feet
meters	1.1	yards
kilometers	.6	miles
hectares	2.5	acres
grams	.035	ounces
kilograms	2.2	pounds
liters	2.1	pints
liters	1.06	quarts
liters	.26	gallons

- To convert Fahrenheit temperature to Centigrade (Celsius) subtract 32 then divide by 1.8.
- To convert Celsius temperature to Fahrenheit, multiply by 9/5 then add 32.

MEDICAL CARE



LOCAL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Univ. Med Center
Family Medicine Blue – 205-348-1278
Family Medicine Red – 205-348-1211
Faculty/Staff Clinic – 205-348-4696
 850 Peter Bryce Blvd
 Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<https://umc.ua.edu/clinics/>

First Care
 1251 McFarland Blvd NE
 205-349-232

Emergi-Care
 1771 Skyland Blvd
 205-349-2273

American Family Care Midtown
 710 15th Street E.
 205-509-2941

Crimson Care Veterans
 1718 Veterans Memorial Parkway
 205-507-1100

Tuscaloosa Med Center North
 3909 McFarland Blvd
 205-333-1993

Crimson Care Skyland
 1771 Skyland Blvd. E
 205-507-1119

Tuscaloosa Med Center South
 5005 Oscar Baxter Drive
 205-343-2225

American Family Care Tuscaloosa
 9070 Highway 69 South
 205-732-7375

Northport Urgent Care Services
 2810 Lurleen B Wallace Blvd.
 205-333-767

HOSPITALS AND EMERGENCY ROOMS

DCH Regional Medical Center
 809 University Blvd. E
 Tuscaloosa, AL 35401-2029
 205-759-7111

Northport Medical Center
 2700 Hospital Drive
 Northport, AL 35476-3360
 205-333-4500

MEDICATIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

If you are seen by a doctor, you may be given a prescription for medications to help cure you. When you are given this, it needs to be filled by a licensed pharmacist.

DENTAL AND VISION CARE

Dental and Vision care is separate from medical care in the United States, and most health insurance does not cover dental or optometrical procedures. Separate dental and vision insurance must be obtained for dental or vision coverage.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The University Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers international scholars and faculty and their families free personal counseling to help with issues such as stress, relationship problems, alcohol or drug dependence, or depression. Even the most successful person may experience considerable difficulty in adjusting to a new environment. The Employee Assistance Program can help with this adjustment. The EAP offers services designed to complement the University's academic mission by assisting staff and faculty with their personal and professional development through a variety of services. Counseling records are entirely confidential and will in no way affect your stay at the University or in the United States. Such records are released only with your written permission.

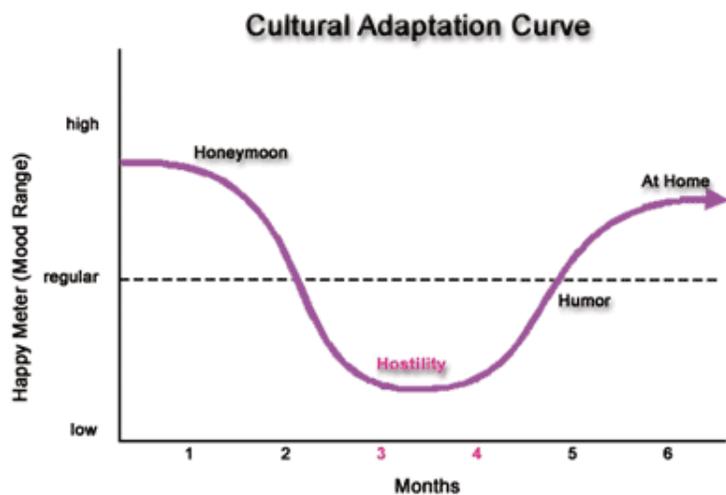
You may reach the EAP by visiting their website

<http://hr.ua.edu/benefits/HREmployeeassistanceprogram.html>

CULTURE SHOCK

What is "Culture Shock"?

- Culture Shock refers to the anxiety experienced by an individual when changes occur in his/her environment. These changes include the absence of familiar surroundings, family, and support systems.
- Culture Shock may be experienced by any person who spends an extended period of time in a new or different culture. The new culture's signs, symbols, and social cues can produce frustration and anxiety.
- The shock of adjustment is normal and perhaps universal.



Common Signs and Symptoms of Culture Shock include

- Anxiety, sadness, depression
- Frustration, despair, disorganization
- Anger, confusion, loneliness
- Lack of energy
- Loss of enjoyment in daily activities
- Withdrawal from others
- Headaches, stomach pains
- Loss of appetite, changes in sleep patterns, tearfulness

How to Cope with "Culture Shock"

- Know that your reactions are normal
- Speak with an advisor in the International Student & Scholar Services office.
- Seek professional help if needed
- Participate in adjustment programs like International Coffee Hour
- Seek others from your own cultural background who have adjusted to the experience
- Seek other new international students, scholars, and faculty for support
- Seek American colleagues who can help you learn more about this culture
- Join cultural, social, and professional organizations
- Participate in recreational activities
- Talk to your supervisor and colleagues about expectations and research/teaching goals
- Keep a sense of Humor

COMMUNITY LIFE & RESOURCES

CITY DINING: <http://www.tuscaloosamenu.com/> or <https://www.zomato.com/tuscaloosa-al>

GROCERY STORES

ALDI www.aldi.us/

- 1363 McFarland Blvd E.
- 5801 McFarland Blvd

Asian Market, 205-345-8005

- 1910 Greensboro Ave

Carniceria Y Tienda La Mexicana, 349-5452

- 428 15th Street

Corazon Latino, 205-553-3115

- 5626 University Blvd. E.

Fresh Market thefreshmarket.com/

- 1320 McFarland Blvd E., Suite 100

Guatemex, 205-872-8351

- 2808 McFarland Blvd.

Manna Grocery mannagrocery.com/

- 2300 McFarland Blvd. E.

Mediterranean Market

- 1700 Greensboro Ave

Mr. Chen's Asian Market

mrchenstuscaloosa.com/

- 514 14th Street

Piggly Wiggly pigglywiggly.com/

- 1721 Greensboro Ave
- 2731 University Blvd E
- 1503 Culver Rd
- 2001 Lurleen B Wallace Blvd

Publix publix.com/

- 1190 University Blvd
- 2300 McFarland Blvd
- 4851 Rice Mine Road
- 1101 Southview Ln

Target target.com/

- 1901 13th Ave E

Tienda Guatelinda, 205-333-3171

- 2501 McFarland Blvd.

Tienda La Espranza, 205-553-7815

- 2825 McFarland Blvd. E. #6

Tienda Latina El Puerto, 205-764-0478

- 625 Hargrove Rd. E.

Tienda Los 3 Hermanos, 205-722-2758

- 1933 Greensboro Ave.

Tienda Sabor Latino, 205-764-1153

- 2815 University Blvd. E.

World Market worldmarket.com/

- 1320 McFarland Blvd E.

Walmart walmart.com/

- 1501 Skyland Blvd E
- 5710 McFarland Blvd
- 1660 McFarland Blvd (Neighborhood Market)
- 4201 Hargrove Rd E (Neighborhood Market)

Winn-Dixie winndixie.com/

- 10 McFarland Blvd
- 4205 University Blvd E
- 9750 Hwy 69 South
- 13620 Hwy 43 N

FARMERS MARKETS – <http://www.fma.alabama.gov/Default.aspx>

Tuscaloosa Farmers Market

1900 Jack Warner Pkwy, Tuscaloosa

<http://www.tuscaloosarivermarket.com/>

Northport Farmers Market

4150 5th Street, Northport, AL 35476

<http://www.npfarmersmarket.com/>

Homegrown Alabama Farmers Market

OPEN MAY – OCTOBER

812 5th Avenue

<http://www.homegrownalabama.org/>

HOUSING

Finding off-campus housing can be difficult when you first arrive. Most apartments require long-term leases of at least one-year. It is common for most landlords to require you to pay a deposit which is equal to one month's rent when you sign a lease for an apartment or house. Be sure to read through the terms of your lease carefully before signing. By signing a lease, you are promising to pay the landlord for the entire time listed on the lease. Ending a lease early or violating the lease agreement can cost you the rental deposit.

Additionally, most apartments and rental houses are unfurnished. Unfurnished apartments are usually cheaper and are much more available. You must anticipate the need to purchase or rent furniture for any apartment or home you find.

Furniture is often found by buying used furniture from the Salvation Army or the Goodwill, checking the newspaper or at "garage sales," and some furniture companies rent furniture (though often at higher prices). There are two rental companies which may be helpful:

- Cort Furniture: www.cort.com/student
- Sealy Furniture: <http://www.sealyfurnitureoutlet.net/>

Housing Resources:

- Off-Campus Housing – <http://offcampushousing.ua.edu/>
- House and Apartment Rentals Through Real Estate Companies:
 - Duckworth Morris – <http://duckworth.com/rentals>
 - Allied Realty – <http://alliedrealtyinc.com/rentals/>
- Craigslist Listings for Tuscaloosa-area Housing
 - Apartments – <https://tuscaloosa.craigslist.org/d/apartments-housing-for-rent/search/apa>
 - Room sharing – <https://tuscaloosa.craigslist.org/d/rooms-shares/search/roo>
 - Sublets – <https://tuscaloosa.craigslist.org/d/sublets-temporary/search/sub>
- Crimson Choice – <http://crimsonchoice.ua.edu/>
- Apartment Guide – <https://www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/Alabama/Tuscaloosa/>
- ApartmentFinder.com – <http://tuscaloosa.apartmentfinder.com/Default.aspx>

APARTMENTS WITH SHUTTLE SERVICES TO UA CAMPUS

Please be aware that many apartments and homes may be far away from campus, and public transportation is limited. However, several apartments provide shuttle service to campus:

- East Edge Apartments - <http://www.eastedgeapartments.com/>
- Landmark Apartments – <https://www.landmarktuscaloosa.com/>
- Redpoint Tuscaloosa – <https://redpoint-tuscaloosa.com/>
- The Cottages – <https://cottagesatlaketamaha.com/>
- The Crimson– <http://www.livecrimson.com/>
- The Greens – <http://www.greensattuscaloosa.apartments/>
- The Links – <https://www.linksattuscaloosa.apartments/>
- The Lofts - <http://www.theloftsatcitycenter.com/>
- The Path Tuscaloosa – <https://thepathtuscaloosa.com/>
- The Preserve Tuscaloosa – <https://www.thepreserveattuscaloosa.com/>

UTILITIES

Utility services such as electricity and water service require that you make a deposit when setting up an account. Deposits usually equal the cost of 1 month to 2 months of service. Some apartments provide utilities included with the cost of rent. Check with your apartment complex or landlord's office to see what utilities are necessary and which utility providers you must use.

Electricity- Alabama Power

To have electric service turned on, call 1-800-245-2244 or visit <http://www.alabamapower.com/>.

Natural Gas Service- Spire Energy

For gas service, call 1-800-292-4008 or visit <https://www.spireenergy.com/turn-my-gas-onoff>.

Water Service- Tuscaloosa or Northport

For Tuscaloosa, contact <http://www.ci.tuscaloosa.al.us/index.aspx?NID=64> or 205-248-5500.

For Northport Residents, contact <http://www.cityofnorthport.org/contact.php> or 205-339-7000.

Telephone & Internet Services (and limited TV services)

To order telephone service, call 1-888-757-6500 or visit <http://www.att.com/shop/home-phone/>.

Cable Television & Internet Services (also offer digital phone services)

To obtain service, contact Comcast at 205-345-0424 or <http://www.comcast.com/>.

CITY TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

TUSCALOOSA BUS AND TROLLEY SYSTEM – <http://tuscaloosatransit.com/>

Tuscaloosa has an affordable public bus system which serves the UA campus and the city, but bus routes are limited to the most popular destinations. For bus schedules, routes, maps, and rates, please visit the Tuscaloosa Transit Authority website: <http://tuscaloosatransit.com/>

CRIMSONRIDE – UA'S CAMPUS BUS SYSTEM – <http://www.crimsonride.ua.edu/>

CrimsonRide provides free, quick and easy access to all areas of campus, whether you live on- or off-campus. To find route maps, visit: <http://www.crimsonride.ua.edu/pages/maps.htm>.

BICYCLE: Bike resources can be found on the local pro bike shop website: <http://velocityprocycle.com/> and also on Craigslist: <http://tuscaloosa.craigslist.org/bik/>

TUSCALOOSA TAXIS: There are several taxi services in the Tuscaloosa area. Rates for transportation are generally much more expensive than public transportation.

A-1 Taxi Service
205-210-8616

YellowCab of Tuscaloosa
205-331-5016

Dunn's Taxi Service
205-462-3644

69 Taxi Express
205-361-5978

E&C Taxi Service LLC
205-454-5712

LYFT
<https://www.lyft.com/>

Lee's Taxi
205-886-2923

UBER
<https://get.uber.com/>

OUT-OF-TOWN TRAVEL

FLIGHT – BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Many online companies offer booking services for flights and hotel. Some of the best prices can be found on www.expedia.com and www.travelocity.com.

The closest major airport to the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa is Birmingham-Shuttlesworth Airport (Airport code BHM): <http://flybirmingham.com/>.

- **CROWN LIMOUSINE:** <http://crown-limo.com/airport-transportation.php>
- **GROOME TRANSPORTATION:** <https://groometransportation.com/>
- **PRESTIGE LIMOUSINE:** <http://www.prestigelimotuscaloosa.com/airport-shuttle.html>

GREYHOUND BUS LINES – <http://www.greyhound.com/>

Tuscaloosa is served by the Greyhound bus line. Fares vary depending on the date and time that you travel. Schedule and fares are subject to change without notice. For more information, call Greyhound at (205) 758-6651 or 1-800-231-2222 ext. 9 (www.greyhound.com). Please note that you will need to make arrangements to get from the Birmingham Airport to the bus station as well as from the Tuscaloosa bus station to campus.

TUSCALOOSA GREYHOUND STATION

7022 HWY 82 EAST
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
Telephone: (205) 758-6651
(inside BP Country Mart)

BIRMINGHAM GREYHOUND STATION

618 N 19TH ST
Birmingham, AL 35203
Telephone: (205) 252-7190

AMTRAK TRAIN SERVICES – <http://www.amtrak.com/>

Information/Reservations (800-872-7245)

Please note that you will need to make arrangements to get from the Birmingham Airport to the train station as well as from the Tuscaloosa train station to campus.

TUSCALOOSA AMTRAK STATION

Passenger Station (205) 758-3578
2105 Greensboro Avenue
Tuscaloosa, AL 3540

BIRMINGHAM AMTRAK STATION

Station Building (with waiting room)
1819 Morris Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35203

BUYING A CAR

Purchasing a Car: When purchasing a car, it is usually best to first consult Consumer Reports, a non-profit consumer's journal available in the library and online. You will be able to review the frequency of repair and suitable prices for specific used and new automobiles. The next step is to check online at Craigslist or AutoTrader www.autotrader.com or shop at various used and new car dealerships.

It is always best to have any car that you are considering purchasing inspected by a reputable mechanic. Most used cars carry no warranty; so, you want to make sure that the vehicle is working properly. Also, when purchasing a new or used car, the sticker price is usually not the price paid. The price is decided by negotiating with the seller. To compare prices of new and used vehicles, check Kelley Blue Book – <http://www.kbb.com/>.

Parking: Parking on campus is restricted and requires that you register your vehicle with the UA Parking Services for a parking hangtag and lot assignment: <http://bamaparking.ua.edu/>.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

DRIVING IN ALABAMA

Drivers must carry with them at all times a valid Driver's License from their home country with a valid International Driver's License/Permit, a valid Driver's License from another US state, or a valid Alabama Driver's License. Driver's Licenses from other states, other country driver's licenses, and International Driver's Licenses are valid for use within the State of Alabama (see point 6 on the list of "An Alabama License is not required for these people" found on page 5 in the Alabama Driver's Manual here: <https://www.alea.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/driverlicensemanual.pdf>).

While it is possible to drive on a valid foreign or out-of-state license, ISSS advises that if possible, you should obtain an Alabama State license. This will help to avoid problems if you are stopped for a traffic violation or at some other time when you need to present a driver's license. In addition, if you do not have a US driver's license, many car insurance companies will not insure your vehicle, or will insure you through a "high risk" pool at much higher rates.

Alabama Driving Regulations: All drivers, regardless of where they received their license, must obey the driving laws of the State of Alabama while driving in Alabama. The Alabama Driver's Manual is available here: <https://www.alea.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/driverlicensemanual.pdf>.

Steps to Obtain a License: Information on how to obtain an AL Driver's License can be found on our website: <http://international.ua.edu/iss/life-in-tuscaloosa/transportation-driving/>

NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE 160 DAYS REMAINING ON YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS (E.G. I-20, DS-2019, H-1B, etc.) TO APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE, ID OR DRIVER PERMIT.

If you are on a Tourist Visa (B-1/B-2 or WB/WT), you are not eligible for an Alabama Driver's License.

AL DMV CENTER IN TUSCALOOSA

TUSCALOOSA TROOPER OFFICE
2645 Skyland Blvd E.
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405

Open Monday – Friday; 8 am – 5 pm
Phone: 205-553-0729

Other locations in Alabama: <https://www.dmv.org/al-alabama/dmv-office-finder.php>

CAR INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

PLEASE NOTE: IT IS ILLEGAL TO DRIVE IN ALABAMA WITHOUT AUTO INSURANCE.

If you choose to purchase traditional liability coverage from an insurance carrier rather than obtain a Motor Vehicle Liability Bond or Certificate of Cash Bond, your policy must include:

- \$25,000 injury liability for one person
- \$50,000 for all injuries in one accident
- \$25,000 property damage in one accident

Purchasing basic liability coverage ensures you're meeting the state's minimum financial responsibility requirements, but you should consider insurance coverage that includes more protection for yourself, your passengers, and your car, including uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage (which protects you in case someone hits you and does not have auto insurance). For more information, contact the MVD at (334) 242-3000 or <http://www.ador.state.al.us/motorvehicle/index.html>

SETTING UP A BANK ACCOUNT

In general, to set up a checking or savings account with a bank in the United States, you must have a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN). It is possible to establish a non-interest-bearing checking account while waiting for the approval of a Social Security Number or ITIN application, and for faculty and staff at UA the school issued CWID number and your ActionCard is sufficient to set up a bank account.

When you first set up a bank account, you will have to sign a statement called a W-8. The W-8 certifies that you are a non-citizen and are not subject to the withholding of taxes on interest on your deposit.

Banks located close to The University of Alabama:

- Alabama Credit Union – <http://alabamacu.com/>
220 Paul W Bryant Drive E, Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-348-5944
- Alabama Central Credit Union – <http://alabamacentral.org/>
423 15th St., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-342-0551
- Bryant Bank - <https://www.bryantbank.com/>
1901 University Blvd., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-710-6100
- Cadence Bank - <https://cadencebank.com/>
401 21st Ave., Tuscaloosa, AL
- Capstone Bank – <http://www.capstonebankal.com/>
2301 University Blvd., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-469-2300
- Chase Bank - <https://www.chase.com/>
1130 University Blvd., Suite B8, Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-771-6622
- DCH Credit Union – <http://www.dhcu.com/>
809 University Blvd. E., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-349-1896
- First Federal Bank – <http://1stfed.com/>
1300 McFarland Blvd NE, Suite 100, Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-391-6700
- PNC Bank – <http://www.pnc.com/>
630 University Blvd., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-391-2582
- REGIONS – <http://www.regions.com/>
504 Paul W Bryant Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-247-9969
- Wells Fargo Bank – <https://www.wellsfargo.com/>
1427 Greensboro Ave., Tuscaloosa, AL; 205-861-1212

General documentation required to set-up a checking account:

- Passport
- USCIS document (DS-2019)
- Proof of Physical Address (e.g. Copy of lease or utility bill).
- Some banks, like Alabama Credit Union require a letter from ISSS confirming a scholar's status and whether or not he/she is eligible for SSN
- Mailing Address (P.O. Box or street address where you can receive mail)
- UA ActionCard
- Local Phone Number
- Email Address

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

If you are working for UA and do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), you will have to apply for one since U.S. federal law requires all individuals employed in the U.S. to have a SSN. SSN's are used to identify employees and tax salaries, and are only issued for the purpose of employment. A SSN is not required to begin employment, but must be obtained immediately after being hired. Additional information about SSN's for internationals is available at: <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10096.html>.

Step 1: Complete I-9 Employment Verification with your employing department.

Step 2: Complete the Non-Resident Alien Information Form: <http://taxoffice.ua.edu/international-tax/>

Step 3: Employment Letter for J-1 Student Intern Visas (**NOTE:** Letter is **not** required for J-1 Research Scholars/Professors/Short-term Scholars/Specialists)

For J-1 Student Intern visa holders to be eligible to apply for a Social Security Number, you must be employed or have a promise of employment from a department on-campus, which is shown by an employment offer letter.

Step 4: Complete Social Security waiting period. Before you can submit an application to the Social Security Administration for a SSN, you must have entered the U.S. on your current visa at least 2 days prior to your SSN application date **and** you must have completed your J-1 Check-in with ISSS.

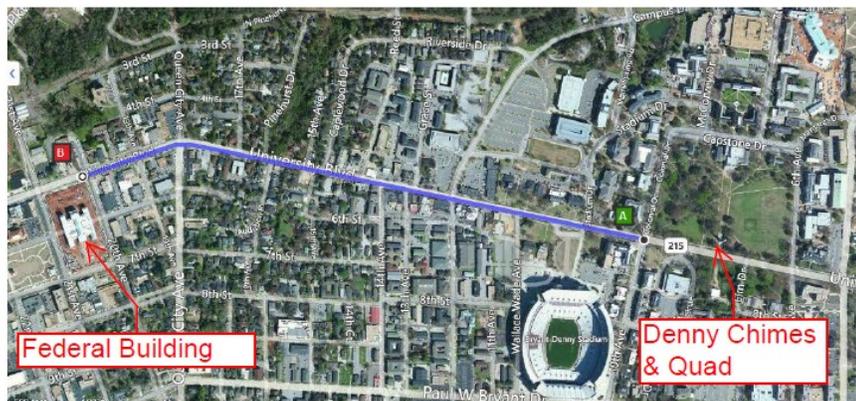
Step 5: Apply for a SSN at the Social Security Administration office.

Location: 2005 University Blvd., Suite 1200, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

General Directions: Located in the Federal Courthouse at the intersection of 20th and 21st Avenue and University Boulevard.

Hours: Monday – Friday, 08:30 am – 3:00 pm (except for Federal Holidays).

Phone Numbers: Local: 1-877-480-4988; National: 1-800-772-1213



Take the following documents with you:

- Your original, valid passport
- Your most recent Form DS-2019
- I-94 Record (available at www.cbp.gov/i-94)
- J-1 Interns also need Employment Letter which has been verified by ISSS (only needed for J-1 Student Interns – J-1 Research Scholars, Short-term Scholars, Specialists, and Professors do not need letter)

Step 6: In approximately two weeks, you will receive your Social Security Card in the mail. Once received, submit 1 copy of your Social Security Card to the Payroll Office / HR Service Center, [1670 Ruby Tyler Parkway, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404](http://1670.RubyTylerParkway.Tuscaloosa.AL.35404) **AND** 1 copy (email is preferred) to the International Tax Office at internationaltax@ua.edu, [1015 Procurement Services Building, 1500 Flint River Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404](http://1015.ProcurementServicesBuilding.1500FlintRiverDrive.Tuscaloosa.AL.35404).

INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is an alternative tax number offered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to those individuals who receive income through grants and scholarships from US sources but who are not employed and thus not eligible for a Social Security Number.

All students/scholars who have received income from US sources must file income tax returns. If you are not employed in the US, the Social Security Office in Tuscaloosa and in other cities in the US will deny your application for a Social Security Number. Issuance of a SSN requires that you be employed in the US.

If you are a student athlete or student who receives a grant or scholarship in the US or if you are a J-1 scholar who receives US funding, and you do not have on-campus employment that would make you eligible for a Social Security Number, you may be eligible to apply for an Individual Tax Identification Number or ITIN.

ITIN Application Instructions

Step 1: If you are on an University of Alabama Scholarship or Award – please complete the Non-Resident Alien Information Form: <http://taxoffice.ua.edu/international-tax/>

Step 2: Complete ITIN waiting period – Before you can apply for an ITIN, you must have entered the U.S. not less than 10 days ago.

Step 3: Gather the required application materials.

- Current F-1 I-20 or J-1 DS-2019 (If your current I-20/DS-2019 does not have an immigration stamp on it, you must also bring a previous I-20/DS-2019 that you entered the U.S. with that is stamped)
- Passport
- Visa
- I-94 record
- Letter from an International Student & Scholar Services Advisor which verifies that you will not be securing employment in the United States or receiving any type of income from personal services.

Step 4: Apply for the ITIN.

- You will need to fill out a W-7 Application for an ITIN and submit it to the IRS
- The W-7 Form can be downloaded here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw7.pdf>
- W-7 Form Instructions are here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/iw7.pdf>
- Under the Eligibility Section of the W-7 Form, select both boxes “F” and “H. Other” and enter one of the valid exceptions listed on pages 6-8 of the W-7 Instructions. In some instances, a F-1 or J-1 student or J-1 scholar who receives funds from a US source in the form of a grant or stipend will be eligible under Exceptions 2(b) or 2(c) on page 7 of the W-7 Instructions.
- Normally, ITIN processing is done when filing annual tax returns; however, it is possible to file early if you fall under one of the exemptions that would allow you to file early.
- Casey Jones, Tax Analyst, will assist you with submission of the W-7 application for ITIN.

Step 5: After receiving your ITIN approval letter, please make 1 copy with your CWID and submit to International Student & Scholar Services, 105 B.B. Comer Hall. Also submit a copy to UA Tax Office [1015 Procurement Services Building, 1500 Flint River Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404](http://1015ProcurementServicesBuilding,1500FlintRiverDrive,Tuscaloosa,AL35404).