



Happy 2026 Global Gauchos,

As we step into 2026, the Office of Students and Scholars is energized to continue our work in supporting UCSB's diverse international population.

Our commitment goes beyond visa and immigration matters; we are here to champion a global academic community where international and domestic members thrive together. Through advocacy, regulatory expertise, and cross-cultural collaborations, we strive to make the transition to campus life as seamless as possible. We believe that by fostering these inclusive partnerships, we are helping shape the global leaders of tomorrow. Thank you for being part of our story—we can't wait to see what we achieve together this year.

Warmly,

The OISS Team

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New Student Requirements

OISS extends a warm welcome to our new international students. We hope your travels went well. Please be sure to complete your required immigration check-in. **Both local address and arrival documents are required.**

- [Login to UCSB Global](#)
- [New & Returning Students Start Here](#)
- [CALI Training](#)
- [Local Address Update in UCSB Global and Gold](#)
- [Arrival Documents](#)



Immigration Reminders



Are you enrolled full-time yet? Be sure to register in a full course load to maintain your visa status this quarter. Grad students need at least 8 units and undergraduate students need at least 12 units. If you need assistance registering for classes, please contact an academic advisor in your college. If you are a J-1 visa holder with UCSB's Education Abroad Reciprocity Program, please contact your [EAP advisor](#) for academic questions.

There are only a few government-approved exceptions to the full-time enrollment rule. Learn more about academic reduced course loads, medical reduced course loads, and filing leaves eligibility on our [Academic Requirements page](#). Students must obtain approval from OISS before dropping below full-time enrollment.

If you qualify, be sure to submit your request via [UCSB Global](#) at least two weeks before the end of the quarter. The sooner, the better!



Employment authorization is mandatory for all J-1 students (EAP or grad student) for any type of work. Before beginning an on campus position or off campus (Academic Training) position, employment authorization is required.

Welcome International Scholars

Dear International Scholars,

On behalf of OISS Scholar Advisor Team, we would like to wish you a Happy New Year! May 2026 be filled with good health, happiness, and peace.

To our international scholars and their families who **just arrived in the U.S.**, we are thrilled to welcome you to our campus and community. We hope you will be able to make UCSB your home away from home. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns. We are here to assist you.

To our international scholars who **traveled abroad during the break**, welcome back! We hope your journey back to the US was smooth and uneventful. Please make sure to retrieve your most recent I-94 to ensure you were readmitted in J-1 status.

To our international scholars who **stayed in the US**, we hope you were able to travel and explore new landscapes and cities.

Finally, to our international scholars whose **programs are coming to an end**, we wish you safe travels back home and hope your visit at UCSB met your expectations.

Kindly,

Felipe, Mavel, and Virginie

Tax reminder for J-1 Visa Holders

As a reminder, J-1 visa holders are required to file a U.S. tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) each year if they received U.S.-source income. J-2 dependents who have been employed must also file. J-1s and J-2s who were physically present in the U.S. must file Form 8843, even if they had no U.S. income. For more information, please visit our [website](#).



Proposed “Duration of Status” Elimination

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to share their support and concerns regarding potential changes to the Duration of Status (D/S) regulations for F-1 and J-1 visa holders. Please know that OISS is monitoring these developments very closely. We are committed to keeping our international students, scholars, and campus partners informed with timely, relevant updates.

Current Status vs. Proposed Changes

Currently, F-1 and J-1 visitors are admitted for "Duration of Status," allowing them to remain in the U.S. as long as they maintain their immigration requirements. The proposed rule suggests a shift toward a more restrictive model:

- Fixed End Dates: A maximum initial stay of 4 years.
- Formal Extensions: Requiring a filing with USCIS if more than 4 years are needed to complete a program.
- Major Limitations: New restrictions on changing majors for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Our Commitment

It is important to remember that this is currently only a proposal. No changes have been finalized. The University of California system has already submitted a formal comment expressing our position on this matter, which you can [read here](#).

While we cannot yet advise on the specific details of a rule that has not been enacted, we are here to support you. If you have questions, please reach out to our office, and we will provide as much context and clarity as possible.



OISS Events

UC SANTA BARBARA
Education Abroad Program

UC SANTA BARBARA
Office of International Students & Scholars

UCSB All Languages Language Exchange

All Levels and Languages Welcome
Open to Students, Staff & Faculty



Register on Shoreline for Winter 2026
Events will be held in the Third Floor Forum in the
Student Resource Building from 4-5:30pm

Jan 8	Jan 22	Feb 5	Feb 19	Mar 5
				

Have questions?
Contact: oissprograms@ucsb.edu

English Conversation Club



OISS' English Conversation Club brings together international students, scholars, and their adult dependents in a welcoming space to practice English, explore U.S. culture, and share their own. Through group discussions, cultural exchanges, and community activities, the club fosters cross-cultural understanding and meaningful connections in a fun, inclusive environment.



Thursdays
10:30 AM - 12 PM
Student Resource Building,
First Floor, Room 1103

[More details on Shoreline](#)

OISS Updates

Do you know who your OISS advisor is?

OISS Advisors are here to support you. Whether you're an F, J or H-1B visa holder, OISS has you covered. Please check out our [People Directory](#) to find your assigned OISS Immigration Advisor.

OISS Closed on Jan 19, 2026

OISS will be closed on Monday, January 19, in honor of [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#).

Operations will resume on Tuesday, January 20.



Upcoming Sprintax Webinars

WEBINARS



Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinar

In these tax webinars, international students, scholars and professionals will be run through everything they need to know about non-resident tax for the 2025 tax season. Topics will include who must file, tax residency, FICA, state returns, implications of misfiling as well as how to use Sprintax to prepare a compliant tax return.

- Dec 9th @ 12pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Jan 20th @ 10am ET → [Register here](#)
- Jan 28th @ 12pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Feb 5th @ 1pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Feb 10th @ 7pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Feb 18th @ 3pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Feb 24th @ 10am ET → [Register here](#)
- Mar 5th @ 12pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Mar 11th @ 1pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Mar 16th @ 2pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Mar 27th @ 11am ET → [Register here](#)
- Apr 1st @ 1pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Apr 7th @ 8am ET → [Register here](#)
- Apr 14th @ 2pm ET → [Register here](#)



Sprintax Nonresident Tax Overview for OPT/CPT

In these tax webinars, OPT/CPT participants will be run through preparing for their employment from a tax perspective. Topics covered will include residency for tax purposes, tax liabilities when on OPT/CPT and pre-employment tax forms when on OPT/CPT. The Sprintax team will also provide an overview of Sprintax Forms which can be used to prepare your pre-OPT/CPT employment tax documents.

- Dec 1st @ 1pm ET → [Register here](#)
- Jan 8th @ 2pm ET → [Register here](#)

Important:
OISS does not provide tax
advise.
You are welcome to use
any tax service you prefer.

Thanks for Reading!

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the OISS Newsletter. Past newsletters can be viewed on the OISS [website](#).

Questions?

If you are a current international student with questions regarding immigration, advising and other requests, email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu.

J-1 Scholars should reach out to j1scholar@sa.ucsb.edu. For those with questions related to employment-based visas; please contact longtermvisa@sa.ucsb.edu.

For any inquiries regarding upcoming OISS events, or collaboration opportunities, contact oissprograms@sa.ucsb.edu.

If you are a UCSB department or organization and would like to publicize any information or upcoming events to international Gauchos, contact

Let's stay in touch!

Follow our social media accounts to stay up-to-date with everything happening at OISS.

