

## Advising International Students

According to the university's Fact Book, 1,133 students from 91 different countries studied at Colorado State University in the 2010-2011 academic year. International student enrollment is expected to increase in coming years with several new initiatives in progress.

Advising international students can be challenging yet extremely rewarding. The advising process will be most successful if the advisor asks many questions, takes time to become acquainted with the student and her/his situation, and encourages the student to utilize the multitude of resources available at CSU.

### Important considerations for international students:

- **Credit requirements:** In order to maintain legal status in the United States, international students must adhere to the following credit requirements:
  - 12 credits minimum for undergraduates
  - 9 credits minimum for graduate students
  - Violation of this rule can result in deportation. An exception form is available through the Office of International Programs, and it must be signed by an academic advisor. The exception can only be granted once during the student's time at CSU.
- **Academic background:** International students admitted to CSU are academically strong and accustomed to academic success. They may feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed with academics if classes are difficult or if they are challenged in a new way.
- **Unfamiliarity with the U.S. education system:** Students may be unfamiliar with certain concepts related to the U.S. higher education system, such as electives or an all university core curriculum. Advisors should take time to explain these concepts to the student and illustrate how these components fit together in a degree.
- **Sponsored or scholarship students:** Some students are sponsored by government agencies in their home country. They are typically selected because of their desire to pursue specific academic programs. These students often do not have another option for a major. If they are not successful in their major, they often cannot choose another one.
- **Academic integrity as a cultural concept:** Definitions of cheating and plagiarism are culturally dependent. International students may struggle with these issues, as sharing work or copying an expert's work may not be considered cheating in their native culture. The TILT Academic Integrity Program can be a great resource for students, advisors, and faculty members.
- **Not all international students are degree-seeking:** VIP students are admitted for one or two terms to CSU to study within a specific department. These students are similar to GUEST students in that they are not degree-seeking. Information about the VIP program can be found in the resource section.
- **Conditionally admitted students:** Students may be conditionally admitted to CSU. This designation requires them to either retake the TOEFL exam (English proficiency) or take courses in the Intensive English Program (IEP). Students may be allowed to take 1 or 2 CSU courses

while they are taking advanced English language courses through the IEP with the recommendation of IEP staff members.

- **Cultural adjustments:** International students not only have to adjust to a new institution, they must adjust to a new culture. The resource section includes a link to the publication “Introduction to American Life”, developed NAFSA, the Association of International Educators.

### **Tips for effectively advising international students:**

- **Prescriptive advising can be appropriate early in the advising relationship:** International students may be accustomed to more prescriptive advising from their educational experience in their home country. Given time constraints with admission and registration, and the confusing nature of navigating differences between educational systems, students may need more direct advice, especially for their first semester. Be clear, concise, and specific. The advisor’s responsibility is then to move toward a developmental advising model as the student adjusts to the U.S. education system and becomes more familiar with CSU.
- **Flexibility is crucial:** Students are inundated with a considerable amount of information and tasks to complete prior to arriving on campus, such as immigration paperwork, housing arrangements, transfer evaluations, and course registration. Some of these tasks may take priority over others and may not match the academic advisor’s preferred schedule or sequence. An advisor should try to be as flexible as possible and willingly work with a student through email, phone, video conferencing, and in-person.
- **Overrides may be needed:** Encourage students to bring courses descriptions from their home institution (translated to English) with them when they come to CSU. This can assist advisors and instructors in determining appropriate courses and granting overrides.
- **Programs and resources aid in transition:** Countless programs and support services exist for International students. Encourage students to get involved with a cultural club or organization or participate in events sponsored by the Office of International Programs.
  - Additionally, encourage students to introduce themselves to professors and other students in their classes.
- **International Check-in holds can be temporarily lifted:** Students are required to check in at the Office of International Programs when they arrive and they will have a hold on their account until they check in. If an advisor is working with an international student remotely on course registration prior to arrival, the student or the advisor can contact OIP to ask that the hold be temporarily lifted to accommodate course registration.

### **Resources for advising international students:**

- [International Student and Scholar Services](http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp) (http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp)
- [TILT Academic Integrity Program](http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/) (http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/)
- [International Student Orientation](http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=orientation) (http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=orientation)
- [Visiting International Program \(VIP\) information](http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=vip_intro_javatest)  
http://iss.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=vip\_intro\_javatest)

- [Introduction to American Life publication](#)

([http://www.nafsa.org/uploadedFiles/NAFSA\\_Home/Resource\\_Library\\_Assets/Publications\\_Library/u.s.pdf?n=1388](http://www.nafsa.org/uploadedFiles/NAFSA_Home/Resource_Library_Assets/Publications_Library/u.s.pdf?n=1388))