

# **International Student Information**

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# English for International Students

<http://www.duke.edu/web/eis/>

The Graduate School's 2006 Strategic Plan includes the specific goal to "develop and enhance programs that ensure student success," and one of its concrete steps toward that goal is to "expand the scope of services to international graduate students." Both the Graduate School's plan and the comprehensive strategic plan, *Making a Difference*, which guides Duke, recognize that the knowledge, experiences, and perspectives international students bring to Duke are unique contributions not just to their individual departments, but to the entire University and to the global academic community.

The **English for International Students (EIS)** program directly serves the goals of these strategic plans. Our mission is to support the academic life of international graduate students by providing resources that enable them to succeed in their academic programs and to build a community that actively seeks their intellectual contributions, allowing them to represent Duke University with excellence domestically—both on and off campus—and globally.

The EIS courses in oral communication and academic writing focus on the specialized speaking and writing skills graduate students encounter and need to use in the academic community and environment. The Graduate School recognizes how important it is for international students to have strong language skills, and these courses thus receive the same credit as courses in the disciplines. Course enrollment is limited to 12 students to maximize individualized attention for each participant.

In addition to the TOEFL scores they submit for admission, all new international matriculants take English writing and speaking placement exams administered through the Graduate School to determine their placement in EIS courses. Information about the exam dates and times is sent to departments several months in advance and posted on the EIS Web site. Depending on the exam results, students may place into one or more EIS classes. Any international student who places out of courses and wants to improve his or her academic English skills is also encouraged to enroll. Please contact the program director, Maria Parker ([mgparker@duke.edu](mailto:mgparker@duke.edu)) for specific information about each course.

## **The EIS program offers several additional academic resources:**

1. ESL writing tutors are available at the Writing Studio both during the academic year and in the summer to help international graduate students refine and edit course assignments and other writing projects such as thesis prospectuses, conference abstracts, journal articles, and grant proposals.
2. An experienced ESL speaking coach is available during the academic year and into the summer to work with students individually to rehearse academic presentations and practice speaking skills. Presentation coaching sessions are tailored to individual needs and focus on all aspects of oral presentations. Sessions include videotaping with oral and written feedback.
3. A non-credit, half-course workshop in either speaking or writing skills is typically offered in the first summer session. The specific content is determined by student need and demand, and information about the upcoming course is available toward the end of the Spring semester.

Flyers and e-mail messages about all services are sent to DGSs, DGS assistants, and international students with specific information, such as how to schedule appointments.

Other EIS activities and responsibilities include:

- Working with faculty in relation to international student academic performance and departmental expectations, including developing individualized instructional resources for at-risk students;
- Developing reliable testing instruments, conducting academic English proficiency testing, providing departments with reliable information about students' written and verbal skill levels, and placing them in appropriate EIS classes; and
- Developing opportunities for increased cross-cultural understanding and communication among domestic students, international students, and faculty, both in the classroom and in less structured academic settings.

# International House

<http://ihouse.studentaffairs.duke.edu/>

## Mission

To provide services and advocacy to the international population as well as education and outreach to the Duke-Durham community.

## Assistance for Internationals

**International Graduate and Professional Student Orientation** covers academic and cross-cultural adjustment as well as health and safety issues in the Duke and Durham communities.

**International Spouses and Partners Orientation** provides an opportunity specifically designed to introduce international spouses and partners to the various local resources.

**Loan Closet** offers a limited amount of kitchen, linen, and household goods for setting up new residences.

**Transportation:** Provides transportation to local supermarkets and ethnic grocery stores as well as government agencies, such as the Social Security Office and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Subscribe to *intlhouse* and *intlflash* e-mail lists for more detailed information.

**Resources** available on the International House Web site offer assistance with taxes, English as a Second Language (ESL) contacts and informal opportunities on and off campus, health care, travel, and transportation.

## Get Involved

**International House Orientation Peers (IHOPs)** are graduate and professional students who participate in the International Graduate and Professional Student Orientation and act as cultural ambassadors, answering questions about the academic and social adjustments that occur when starting your new life in the U.S. and at Duke.

**International Friends Program** promotes friendship and cultural exchange between local citizens and Duke's international population by pairing locals with incoming internationals. Local citizens may wish to learn more about another country, reconnect with a country in which they have lived or traveled, or assist someone settling in to life in Durham. Internationals may wish to learn about U.S. and local culture, customs, traditions, and daily life.

**English Conversation Club** is an informal group that gathers for the sole purposes of practicing conversational English and meeting new people. There you will find planned activities, games, and discussion topics all designed to encourage the group to feel comfortable speaking English. The group meets from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. every Monday evening at International House—no prior registration is required.

**Duke Language Partners** matches non-native speakers with native speakers of various languages for weekly conversation exchange. Through the program, one can practice a foreign language, learn about another culture, or gain English as a Second Language (or other language) tutoring experience.

**Spouses' and Partners' Groups** are open to everyone whether a local, international, male, or female spouse or partner. It is sponsored by Duke's International House and organized by volunteer participants. The Spouses' and Partners' Groups are flexible so that they can meet as many different needs as possible, such as finding a support system, having a good time, improving one's English fluency, providing activities for children and babies, cooking, dancing, designing arts & crafts, watching movies, and more.

### **Stay Connected**

***Intlhouse*** is a closed e-mail list used by many internationals and community members for purposes such as selling and purchasing items like furniture and cars, searching for an apartment or roommate, or looking for and sharing a ride.

***Intlspouses*** is an open e-mail list used by the International House's Spouses' Group members to share relevant information (updates, announcements, etc.) as well as a means to interact with other international spouses. Please go to <https://lists.duke.edu/sympa/> to subscribe to this list.

***Intlflash*** is a closed e-mail list through which Duke Visa Services and International House can periodically communicate. International students and scholars will automatically be subscribed to *intlflash*.

The staff of International House is available to assist you with any questions or problems you may have. Don't hesitate to drop by or make an appointment.

# Duke Visa Services

<http://www.visaservices.duke.edu/>

## Mission Statement

Duke Visa Services serves as a nexus for monitoring and shaping legislation, regulations, and policies at the federal, state, and local levels that affect international educational exchange and for interpreting and applying those directives and controls in the Duke environment in support of the teaching, research, patient care, and community service goals of the University, Medical Center, Health System, and affiliated institutions.

## Important Reminders

We want you to be able to involve yourself in the graduate program in almost all the ways that your U.S. citizen and resident colleagues do, but international students have a few limitations. Please remember these two important characteristics of the F-1 and J-1 student status:

1. You must enroll in a full course of study throughout your program. In some cases, such as while you are completing your research or dissertation, you must enroll for "Continuation." Your school or department determines your overall enrollment requirements, but you and your faculty advisor need to be aware of this full course of study requirement. Contact Duke Visa Services before you make any changes that result in a reduced enrollment load.
2. You are permitted to work on campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full time during official school vacations and holidays. All work must be approved by Duke Visa Services and, in some cases, by the Department of Homeland Security, before you begin the employment.

## Staff

For a listing of staff with their e-mail addresses and direct telephone numbers, please visit the Web site at <http://www.visaservices.duke.edu/directory.html>.

## Scheduling Appointments and Self-Service

International students and scholars who need to speak with an advisor at Duke Visa Services should visit our Web site or call us to schedule an appointment. We welcome your visit at any time and will try to help you on a walk-in basis, but if you visit without an appointment, advisors calendars may already be filled with other appointments. You may have to wait a long time to talk to an advisor or make an appointment to return on a different day.

The Duke Visa Services Web site allows you to review options and requirements, and review and complete forms at your convenience. We recommend that you visit the Web site before making an appointment so that you can be prepared to make the best use of your appointment time.