THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Office of International Services (OIS)
708 William Pitt Union
ois.pitt.edu

Walk in hours:
Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 1-4 PM

Do you have ideas for the *Global Perspective* or know a student who deserves to be featured? Email us at ois@pitt.edu!
The University of Pittsburgh advises all students and staff to use their discretion when deciding whether it is safe to travel to school or work. The University will only close under extreme conditions so it is important to look at the weather and be aware of the situation. If you have questions about if your class or work is still going on, contact your department or school directly. Expect major delays and/or cancellations with the buses when there is inclement weather.

For weather related information resources (check the night before, and day of possible storms!)
Call 511 for weather related closures in Pittsburgh
Go to weather.gov and type in your area code for storm warnings/weather forecasts
Sign up for the University’s Emergency Notification System to receive University updates:
- Log in to My Pitt (my.pitt.edu) and click the “Profile” link near the top right corner of the page
- Click Manage Your Account
- Select Emergency Notification System Subscriptions and follow the directions
J-2 employment authorization process:

Individuals who enter the U.S. on a J-2 visa have the option of applying for employment authorization, allowing them to work while in the U.S. In order to apply for the employment authorization document (EAD card) the J-2 visa holder must be physically present in the U.S. To apply, J-2 visa holders will complete a Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization to send to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The following documents must be included with the application:

- Copy of Passport identification page
- Copy of DS-2019
- Copy of I-94 record
- Check for filing fee of $410 made payable to Dept. of Homeland Security
- Two passport sized photos
- Cover letter – samples can be found online - G-1145 – OIS encourages you to include the G-1145 which is a form to receive electronic notifications from USCIS

USCIS and the Social Security Administration (SSA) developed a new Form I-765 that allows individuals to apply for both the EAD card and Social Security number (SSN). The revised form includes additional questions that allow applicants to apply for the SSN or replacement card without visiting a Social Security office in person. To learn more, read the USCIS news release about the USCIS-SSA partnership. For additional information on the Form I-765, check the Instructions for Form I-765.

In general, USCIS takes around 90 days to adjudicate the application for employment authorization. Once a J-2 visa holder receives their EAD card, they can use it to work anywhere they would like during the dates of validity.

USCIS will typically issue an EAD card for the duration of the DS-2019. If your DS-2019 is extended every year, the EAD card will also have to be renewed each year. Please take into account USCIS processing times when you file a renewal application, and be sure to file your application in a timely manner. USCIS must approve the application, and issue the EAD card before a J-2 visa holder can begin or continue their employment. Please consult our J-2 Employment Authorization Instructions on the OIS website for additional information. If you have questions about this process, please contact ois@pitt.edu, or schedule an appointment with an Immigration Specialist.
OIS Photo Contest

What is this a picture of?

For your chance to be entered into a raffle; look at this zoomed in picture of someplace around the Pitt campus.

If you think you know where this picture was taken, email us at ach90@pitt.edu. Even if you aren’t sure, take a guess!

The correct answer from last month’s contest was the Pitt Panther statue outside the William Pitt Union.

Congratulations to Jing Zhang, last month’s winner!
Hockey season has officially started in Pittsburgh! Pittsburgh’s hockey team is called the “Pittsburgh Penguins” also known as the “Pens” as you will see on all the public buses! Last year, the Pens won the Stanley Cup, which is the trophy given to the National Hockey League champion. The trophy has a long history dating back to 1892. The trophy travels from team to team depending on who won it that year. The winning team’s roster is engraved onto the side of the trophy, and is a major source of pride for the winning team, as it is the highest honor for the year!

The games are played from February through the first week in April at PPG arena in Downtown Pittsburgh. While the games are somewhat expensive, it is a good experience to go to see the game and experience the Pittsburgh fans!

Check out Seatgeek.com or ticketmaster.com for info on ticket dates and prices
GENERAL TAX INFORMATION

All individuals present in the US in F or J status during any part of 2017 will have tax filing requirements this April. Even those individuals who did not earn any income will have at least one tax form to complete (Form 8843). Those individuals who are still considered ‘non-residents for tax purposes’ will be able to use an online tax preparation software called Sprintax that is specifically designed for international students and scholars.

Be sure to keep any “important tax documents” or documents numbered “W-2”, “1042-S” or “1098-T” that come in the mail until you are ready to prepare your tax paperwork for 2017. Forms 1042-S for the 2017 calendar year may not be distributed to you until mid-March 2018.

You should NOT prepare your tax return until you receive your 1042-S. Visit OIS’ website for definitions of these forms.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TAX REQUIREMENTS?
Visit OIS’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the Taxes website

OIS TAXES WEBSITE:

OIS provides some information on our OIS website including a table to determine if you are a resident or nonresident for tax purposes. Your residency status for tax purposes may be different from your immigration status. Additionally, we have forms, definition of filing requirements, and information about SPRINTAX, a software designed to assist nonresidents for tax purposes to prepare their federal tax returns and Forms 8843.

TAX ASSISTANCE:

OIS staff cannot provide in-person assistance with ANY tax questions, including printing or explaining forms. Staff in OIS are not tax professionals. Please see OIS’ website for recommendations for tax professionals.

Please don’t forget:
The deadline for filing 2017 tax documents is:

Tuesday, April 17th!
CULTURE CORNER: Groundhog Day

Every February 2nd in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, the town comes together to celebrate and observe a groundhog named “Punxsutawney Phil.” As legend has it, if Phil wakes up on February 2nd and sees his shadow, we will have 4 more weeks of winter. If he doesn’t, it will be an early spring!

Although this tradition may sound strange, there are similar holidays celebrated in Eastern Europe, as well as other Groundhog Day celebrations in the US and Canada.

The tradition of Groundhog Day started with the Pennsylvania Dutch (Amish) in the 1800s, although there is an older tradition that the weather on Candlemas (also February 2nd) determines the weather for the next 40 days.

*Groundhog Day* is also a movie! Check out the hilarious 1993 comedy where Bill Murray is stuck re-living February 2nd over and over again.
Applying for Optional Practical Training

Students who are graduating in April 2018 can begin applying for post-completion OPT. Before scheduling an appointment with your Immigration Specialist, please watch the OPT Tutorials located in My OIS (screenshot below). There is a lot of helpful information there that will answer many of your questions. Your Immigration Specialist is happy to meet with you after you watch the tutorials to answer any additional questions you may have and to talk about your specific situation.

Reminder- It takes about 90 days for USCIS to process your application, so apply early!
Free Museum Visits

This year, the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History will be offering FREE admission to everyone on the third Sunday of every month:

- January 21
- February 18
- March 18
- April 15

This applies to everyone, not just Pitt students!

Keep in mind, with a valid Pitt ID you can already get into the following museums for free during the school year:

Free admission only applies to people with a valid Pitt ID from August—April.

- Andy Warhol Museum
- Carnegie Museum of Art
- Carnegie Museum of Natural History
- Carnegie Science Center
- Mattress Factory
- Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
- John Heinz History Center
- Soldiers & Sailors Memorial

Students will not have free admission during the summer.
Located between Oakland, Squirrel Hill, Homestead, and Hazelwood, Greenfield is a popular neighborhood for Pitt students.

Historically, Greenfield was settled by Irish, Polish, Italian, and Hungarian immigrants and their descendants, and this heritage can still be seen in many of the restaurants in the area.

Greenfield is known for its very steep hills and narrow streets, but don’t let that scare you away! It also has one of the best views of Pittsburgh and the Monongahela River. Although it is a predominantly residential neighborhood, Greenfield is a tight community with more than 10 sports centers and a history of professional athletes.

**Fun Fact:**
Andy Warhol went to church in Greenfield at St. John Chrysostom

Greenfield is also known for its many old and beautiful churches. If you like architecture, you should check out St. Rosalia’s and St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church.

If you are looking for new housing, or just a good place to pick up lunch and take in a neighborhood baseball game, give Greenfield a try!

**OIS Staff Picks:**

- Hough’s ($$, American Sports Bar)
- Big Jim’s Restaurant ($$, Italian-American)
- China Star ($$, Chinese)
- Conicella Pizza ($$, Italian-American)
- Yesterday’s Bar & Grill ($, American)
- Jozsa Corner ($$, Hungarian)
- Milky Way ($$, Vegetarian)
What is one of your goals for the new year?

Long Tran
School of Nursing
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Graduating with highest honors

Onyinye Ikwuegbe
DSAS
Nigeria

Do push ups everyday

Nidhi Agarwal
Information Science
Jaipuri, India

Straight As and make new friends
Mark your calendar for Wednesday, February 28 to make your gift on Pitt Day of Giving and share your Pitt pride by encouraging your own network of family and friends to be a part of the day, too. Together, we will make Pitt even stronger!

You can be one with the entire University of Pittsburgh community—alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends—who will come together for the second Pitt Day of Giving. Last year nearly 3,400 of you made gifts to scholarships, research, academic programs, and everything that makes the University so extraordinary.
Dates and Deadlines

Every Friday

J-1 Scholar Orientation @ OIS, 10:30-Noon

Feb. 21, Wednesday

EB-1b Permanent Residency Info Session @ OIS, Noon—1:30pm

Feb. 2, Friday

Groundhog Day

Feb. 14, Wednesday

Valentine’s Day

Feb. 18, Sunday

Free Entrance to Carnegie Museums

Feb. 28, Wednesday

Pitt Day of Giving

Looking ahead to March...

March 4—11

Spring Recess, no classes

Experience America Activities:

Mondays 6:30—7:45PM    $5 Yoga @ Irman Freeman Center for Imagination
Wednesdays 12:00-1:00PM  Artful Wednesday’s at Nordy’s Place (Pitt Union)
Sundays 2:00-3:00PM       Arts Celebration at Carnegie Library