The Global Perspective
An Office of International Services Publication
February 2017

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Pittsburgh Strip District

Cover Photo:
Pitt Panther outside William Pitt Union
Credit: Debra Prvanovic
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Important Reminders

WPU 7th Floor Closure
As of Spring Semester 2017, access to the 7th Floor of William Pitt Union will only be allowed between 8:30am and 5:00pm. Please see the Building Managers on the first floor info desk if you have any questions.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
If you will be graduating in April and would like to work in the United States, you will need to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT can take 2-3 months to be approved, and there are several steps that need to be taken before you are able to submit the application. Therefore, now is the time to start this process. The first step is to watch the OPT Tutorial to learn about your responsibilities while on OPT and how to apply. Go to My OIS (https://my.ois.pitt.edu) and click on ‘Optional Practical Training’ for more information.

Travel Signatures
Before you depart the U.S. this winter break, stop and check your I-20 or DS-2019 to be sure you have a recent travel signature on the document. Travel signatures are valid for one year of the date it was signed. For students on OPT or STEM OPT, the travel signature is valid for only six months from the date it was signed. Stop by OIS during walk-in hours (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays from 1 – 4 PM) to get your document signed. J-1 scholars must schedule an appointment for a travel signature.

Experience America
Experience America is a series of events and activities offered to visiting scholars, their families, and graduate students with dependents to help them better understand the American culture. The program is designed to introduce participants to campus and the local community. Upcoming events include a snow tubing trip in February and a museums trip in March.
Greetings from Office of International Services:

We are following up regarding the Executive Order President Trump signed on Friday, January 27, 2017 titled “Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Attacks by Foreign Nationals.” The complete text of the order is posted on the UCIS Resources page.

The provisions in the order may have an immediate impact on some Pitt students, scholars, and employees. The following will be suspended for 90 days for citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen:

Visa issuance. The US Department of State has issued a statement advising individuals from these countries not to schedule visa appointments or pay any visa fees.

Admission the United States. Visa holders from the above countries will not be admitted to the US, even if they have valid documents. US permanent residents should still be eligible for admission.

- Adjudication of other benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act. We are awaiting further clarification on this, but this is likely to include all applications and petitions filed with USCIS Service Centers such as optional practical training applications and H1B and permanent residency petitions. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

If you are from one of these countries, based on what we know, we recommend that you do not travel outside the US, unless you have completed your time at Pitt and do not plan to return. If an application or petition needs to be submitted to USCIS during this period so that you maintain your legal status and/or eligibility for the requested benefit, you should discuss your situation with your OIS immigration specialist.

Additional changes include the following, which may impact individuals of any nationality:

- 120 day suspension of the US Refugee Admissions Program with an indefinite suspension for refugees from Syria
- Implementation of a biometric entry-exit tracking system for all travelers to the US
- Immediate suspension of the Visa Interview Waiver Program
- A review of all visa reciprocity agreements and possible adjustment of the terms (validity period, fees, etc.)

If you or any member of the Pitt community is affected by these changes, please contact OIS.

OIS will continue to monitor this and any other changes to immigration regulations and policy under the new administration and notify you as we learn more. As mentioned in the Chancellor’s email this weekend, updates and resources will be posted to the UCIS Resources page. We will also share articles and information about regulatory and policy changes on the OIS Facebook page. In addition, we will send email messages when there are significant changes that impact the Pitt community directly.

At any time, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at ois@pitt.edu or make an appointment with an immigration specialist.

On behalf of the entire OIS staff,
Genevieve Cook
Director
Office of International Services
General Tax Information

All individuals present in the US in F or J status during any part of 2016 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 that OIS has purchased, called Sprintax. You should have received an email with information about Sprintax, including a discount code to be used to pay for the costs of the federal tax return. If you did not receive this email, please contact us at OIS@pitt.edu and we will send it to you.

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 2016. Forms 1042-S for the 2016 calendar year may not be distributed to you until mid-March 2017. You should NOT prepare your tax return until you receive your 1042-S. Visit OIS’ Tax Site for definitions of these forms.

OIS Taxes Website

OIS provides some information on our OIS Tax Site 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 and Resources:

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’ Tax Site for recommendations for tax professionals.

Questions about Tax Requirements for Nonresidents for Tax Purposes?

Visit OIS’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the Taxes website.

Please don’t forget:
The deadline for filing 2016 tax documents is: Tuesday, April 18th!
What is Tax-Related Identity Theft?

Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses your stolen Social Security number (SSN) to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund. If you become a victim, the IRS is committed to resolving your case as quickly as possible.

You may be unaware that this has happened until you e-file your return and discover that a return has already been filed using your SSN.

Know the Warning Signs

Be alert to possible tax-related identity theft if you are contacted by the IRS about:

- More than one tax return was filed for you,
- You owe additional tax, have a refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year you did not file a tax return, or
- IRS records indicate you received wages or other income from an employer for whom you did not work

How You can Reduce Your Risk

Join efforts by the IRS, states and tax industry to protect your data. Taxes. Security. Together. We all have a role to play. Here’s how you can help:

- Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections. Use strong passwords.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls and texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations such as your bank, credit card companies, and the IRS. (These scams have been known to target international visitors.)
- Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect your personal data. Don’t routinely carry your Social Security card, and make sure your tax records are secure.

NOTE: The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.

Please visit the FTC for more information from the Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week and what to do if you are a victim of identity theft.

Click here to learn your rights when encountering law enforcement and suggested steps to confirm their authenticity (page 9).
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<td>Midori—BNY Mellon Grand Classics &amp; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<td>Camp Broadway Exp.—Trust Arts Education Center</td>
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<td>Alice in Wonderland—Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre</td>
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<td>Sleeping Beauty—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra / Heinz Hall</td>
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<td>Young Writers &amp; Illustrators (workshop) - Trusts Arts Education Center</td>
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<td>“Southside with You” (film screening) - Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>Taj Express: The Bollywood Musical Revue—Byham Theater</td>
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<td>Pittsburgh International Auto Show—David L. Lawrence Convention Center</td>
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<td>Around the Burgh’ - Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<td>Phoenix Rising, &quot;Maria Angelica Caruso.&quot;- Byham Theater</td>
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<td>As One—The Pittsburgh Opera</td>
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<td>Ginger Whiskey Weekend—Wigle Whiskey Barrelhouse</td>
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<td>Galumpha—Byham Theater</td>
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<td>“Mr. Church” (film screening) - Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>The Book of Mormon—PNC Broadway in Pittsburgh / Benedum Center</td>
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<td>Gregory Porter—August Wilson Center</td>
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<td>Showcase Noir—August Wilson Center</td>
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<td>2/24, 2/25, 2/26</td>
<td>Rhapsody in Blue—BNY Mellon Grand Classics, Heinz Hall</td>
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<td>2/28</td>
<td>“The Queen of Katwe” (film screening) - Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh</td>
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Super Bowl LI

Super Bowl LI will take place on **February 5th** and will be the 51st Super Bowl in the United States. The Super Bowl is the final championship game of the **National Football League**. The game will take place at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas.

![New England Patriots](image1.png) ![Atlanta Falcons](image2.png)

### The BASICS of American Football

**AIM**—The purpose of American football is to move the ball towards the opposition's end zone and ultimately into their end zone (a **touchdown**). This is achieved by either running with the ball until tackled, or throwing the ball down field to a team mate.

**DOWNS**—Downs are the most fundamental part of NFL play. The offensive team moves the ball forward in sections of at least 10 yards. They have four chances (or downs) to gain those 10 yards. Each time the ball is advanced at least 10 yards within their four chances, another first down is earned, with four more chances to go a further 10 yards. If the offensive team fails to move 10 yards within four downs, possession is surrendered. However, the ball is usually punted to the defending team on fourth down.

**SCORING:**

- **Touchdown**—6 points
- **Extra Point**—1 point
- **Field Goal**—3 points
Experience America

*Experience America* is a series of events and activities offered to visiting scholars, their families, and graduate students with dependents to help them better understand the American culture. The program is designed to introduce participants to campus and the local community.

**Recent Event**

*Lunch and Learn*—“Art and Culture in Pittsburgh”

OIS Graduate Assistant, Kyle Simpers, gives a presentation on art and culture in Pittsburgh. Winning team of the trivia portion showing their prizes. They represent China, South Korea, Poland, and Germany.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**February** - Snow tubing at Boyce Park

(email will be sent soon)

**March** - Museum tour at Carnegie Museums
The Strip District in Pittsburgh is a great neighborhood to explore. Historically, the neighborhood serves as a receiving area for incoming international shipments. For this reason, the area was over 75% immigrant in the early 20th century. Nowadays, The strip district is filled with great boutique shops of various ethnicities. On weekends, the strip is filled with shops and vendors selling delicious food, and sometimes there’s additional activities like live music or games for children.
February 10  Summer Term enrollment appointments begin (Veteran Students)

February 13  Summer Term enrollment appointments begin (Non-Veteran Students)

February 24  Honors Convocation

March 5-12  Spring Recess for students (no classes); University offices and buildings remain open and staffed during Spring Recess except on Friday, Spring Holiday

March 10  University’s observance of Spring Holiday (University closed)

March 15  Spring Term deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to Dean’s Office

March 24  Fall Term enrollment appointments begin (Veteran Students)

March 27  Fall Term enrollment appointments begin (Non-Veteran Students)

April 7  Last day for Fall Term enrollment appointments

April 8  Fall Term open enrollment period begins

April 21  Spring Term: Last day for undergraduate day classes

April 22  Reading Day

April 22-29  College of General Studies classes, Saturday Only classes, graduate classes, and evening classes will continue to meet during this period; final examinations should be held during the last scheduled class meeting

April 24-29  Final examination period for all undergraduate day classes

April 29  Spring Term Ends: Official date for degrees awarded in Spring Term

April 30  Residence halls close (except for graduating seniors); Annual Commencement Convocation