

Advising Visiting International Students

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Abstract

There is a growing interest in developing and maintaining incoming study abroad programs for visiting international students at U.S. universities. This session will take a look at the unique needs of these students and identify best practices and things to consider when advising. The presenters have worked with a variety of universities to create avenues for visiting students to fully integrate and they will share their experiences in this emerging area of international education.



Steps in the “life of a visiting student”

- Application
- Registration
- Orientation
- Housing
- Immigration
- Integration



Unique Needs

- Visiting students have one semester or one year to “get it right”
- Transfer Credit worries
- Social integration—language, friends, housing/roommates
- They don’t have the same amount of time
- Short term contracts/leases—housing, phones
- Not having a SSN—credit check, contracts, Driver’s licenses/IDs
- Transportation

- Academic advising of visiting students—how to help students get the best courses
- Getting community to keep pace with the university and the international growth—services and those who understand the needs
- No mechanisms to keep short term students



Things to consider when advising...

- Clear expectations of course options before arrival—working with home institution/sending agencies to convey the university's policies
- Bring appropriate official transcripts/credentials with them
- Bring their home university program/curriculum with them so that the advisor knows what they need
- Academic advising—not setting a student up for failure (i.e. English proficiency)
- Departments function differently

- Conveying clear expectations of what life on your campus is like (i.e. housing/living in a lounge, transportation/food during breaks, temporary housing/moving to a new room during breaks, etc.)
- Contacts in academic support centers (i.e. note takers, writing centers, speaking labs, tutoring, etc.)
- Making sure incoming students know the American (U.S.) educational system—homework requirements, classwork, participation, attendance
- Social integration—realistic expectations of social clubs, etc.



Best Practices

- Visiting student/guest student/non-degree student categories—requirements, waivers, exceptions, concessions
- Point person at the university
- Clear expectations in saturated/popular departments by providing particular courses for visiting students that are open and available
- Getting students into the system before they arrive to get priority in registration
- Housing—having a contact who can receive a list of visiting students

- Matching expectations to realities (classes, housing, services, interaction with culture)—this is their one chance to get it right
- Reflect with students throughout process—analyze “problems” to make changes for the future—Check-in
- Interest inventory with visiting students to get them involved in something they are interested in
- Library of travel books in students’ native language