

Considerations When Working With International Students

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

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International Students and Mental Health, Important Factors:

- Academic difficulties (different academic system, own expectations about performance, etc.)
- Cultural adjustment and misunderstandings
- Financial difficulties (which can affect academic and immigration status)
- High parental expectations
- Stigma around asking for help
- Lack of support (family far away, difficult to make friends)
- GLBT –coming out in the US can create grave issues at home.

International Students Basic Immigration Requirements:

- Must maintain a full course of study or will lose their visa status, without an approved ISSS exception form for limited reasons. (fear of receiving low grade is not a reason)
- Must maintain good academic standing and make academic progress.
- Have a limited time to complete their degree.
- Have limits on employment - generally only part time, on campus allowed without special permission from ISSS.
- There are limited options for family members living in US with student.

Tips for Working with International Students:

- Provide context: Explain your role compared to others. Explain why you are asking questions or giving information that may seem unrelated to them. Give your business card, explain when/why to contact you or return to see you.
- Be aware that assumptions about your role, relationship, how to get things done, etc., might be different. (eg: In home countries: faculty are highly revered and not usually approachable and student services are often provided to manage and discipline students, not to help and serve.)
- Slow down, pause, rephrase if language difficulties, be patient.
- Avoid or explain idioms, jargon, slang and culturally bound references.
- Point to information on maps, schedules or program descriptions.
- Summarize main points and next step. Write it down.
- Learn from your international colleagues.

(BP-6/2012)