

# International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

## F-1 and J-1 Student Handbook



*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

**Last update: 8/27/2018**

**Explore | Engage | Transform | Lead**

Office for International Programs, Sullivan Center 206, 6339 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660

T: 1-773-508-3899 F: 773-508-7125 E: [iss@luc.edu](mailto:iss@luc.edu) W: [luc.edu/iss](http://luc.edu/iss)

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## **International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS)**

### Services

The Office for International Programs staff advises international students and scholars on matters pertaining to their non-immigrant status. We offer a wide range of programs and support services to more than 750 international scholars, students, staff, and faculty at Loyola University Chicago. Our office works with Loyola's international community in advising, immigration policies, educational and community affairs, and outreach.

**The Office for International Programs is open Monday – Friday, 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.**

### Staff



**Marian Carlson**, [mcarl2@luc.edu](mailto:mcarl2@luc.edu)

ISSS Associate Director, PDSO\*/ARO\*\*

**Water Tower Campus:**

- *Quinlan School of Business, School of Communication*
- *School of Education*
- *School of Law*
- *School of Social Work*
- *Institute of Pastoral Studies*
- *School of Continuing & Professional Studies*



**Ryan Radebaugh**, [rradebaugh@luc.edu](mailto:rradebaugh@luc.edu)

ISSS Advisor, DSO\*

**Lake Shore Campus:**

- *College of Arts & Sciences*
- *Institute of Environmental Sustainability*
- *The Graduate School*
- *School of Nursing*
- *ELLP*
- *The Chicago Center*

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**\*DSO = Designated School Official**

The Designated School Officials serve as liaison between F-1 international students, the university, and the government. The DSOs should be the first person you talk with if you have any questions regarding the legal requirements of your stay in the United States. They are able to assist you with answering questions or connect you to other resources you may need.

**\*\*ARO = Alternate Responsible Officer**

The Alternate Responsible Officer serve as liaison between Exchange Visitors (J-1 students and scholars), the university and the government. AROs are knowledgeable of the regulations and requirements that are specific to students and scholars on the J-1 visa.

You must talk to the international student advisor at OIP first if you are planning to:

- Change your major, program, or degree level
- Transfer to a new school
- Take a break from school or leave of absence
- Travel outside the United States
- Move to a new address
- Request a program extension
- Working in the United States
- Applying for a state I.D. or driver's license
- Applying for a Social Security number
- Filing for tax

**Advising Walk-in hours**

The International student advisors are available for walk-in advising during the Fall and Spring semesters, every **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 1:00pm – 3:00 pm** at Lake Shore Campus and Water Tower Campus.

If you are unable to come to come in during walk-in hours, please email or call us to schedule an appointment.

**Addresses and Contact****Lakeshore Campus:**

Office for International Programs  
International Student and Scholar Services  
[Sullivan Center 206](#)  
[6439 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL, 60660](#)

**Water Tower Campus:**

Office of International Programs Satellite Office at  
Lewis Library  
[Corboy Law Center, Suite 800](#)  
[25 E Pearson St, Chicago, IL 60611](#)

**Phone: 773-508-7706**

**Email: [iss@luc.edu](mailto:iss@luc.edu)**

**ISSS Facebook: [LUC International Student and Scholar Services - @lucinternational](#)**

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## **Status Maintenance**

While studying in the United States, it is important to maintain your F or J student status. Your status relates to the purpose, or reason for why you want to come to the United States. Your visa is issued by the U.S. Department of State based on your intended purpose. Although OIP is here to help you, it is your responsibility as the student to maintain your status by minding important dates, procedures, and immigration policies pertaining your student status throughout your study in the United States.

### **Visa Types**

**F-1 visa** is for non-immigrant students attending a full-time degree or academic program. The F-1 Visa is valid for as long as it takes the student to finish their course of study.

**J-1 visa** is for non-immigrant exchange visitors who have been approved to participate in a study program in the United States.

### **Important Documents**

Please keep the following documents safe and up-to-date **at all times**.

- **I-20 (for F-1) or DS-2019 (for J-1):**

It is highly important that your I-20 or DS-2019 accurately reflect your most current status as a student in the United States. Any changes you have must be reported to **OIP through the [I-20 / DS-2019 action request form](#)**. The changes that you must report include:

- Major or program of study
- Financial source
- Name change
- Dependent information
- Document lost or damaged
- Extension of stay (separate form below)
- Degree level change

- **Passport**

**Your passport must be valid for 6 months into the future at all times** while you are in the United States. If your passport will expire within 6 months, please contact the consulate of your country to extend or renew your passport.

- **Visa**

Your visa is an entry document and is only used to gain entry to the United States. Your visa must be valid whenever you are entering the US border when you travel. **You can let your student visa expire as long as you are in the United States, given that your I-20 or DS-2019 is valid.** If you travel out of the country with an expired visa, you will have to re-apply for a visa, and enter the U.S with a new, valid student visa.

**Never throw away any of the above documents, even when they are expired or no longer valid.**

## Full Course of Study

F-1 and J-1 students MUST be enrolled full-time during Fall and Spring semesters. Summer semesters is optional, unless summer is your first term at LUC. If Summer is your very first term at LUC, you must take full course of study.

In order to maintain your lawful immigration status, you are required to be enrolled full-time, each term, which is:

- 18 credit hours for ESL
- 12 credit hours for undergraduates
- 9 credit hours for graduate students
- 8 credit hours for law students
- 6 credits for Quinlan Business students

**Exceptions to the full-time rule must be approved by OIP, by requesting reduced course load.**

## Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Part-time enrollment, meaning any term with credit hours less than the ones stated above, must be approved by OIP. If you plan on reducing your course load, please complete the [RCL Request Form](#) **before** dropping any courses.

Allowable reasons to reduce your course load include the following:

- **Academic Difficulties**

Academic difficulties include overwhelming reading requirements, struggles with the English language, or adjusting to the American learning methods.

RCL for academic difficulties may only be requested only within the first year of study, and only one time throughout a degree program.

- **Improper course placement**

Students who have been improperly placed in an unnecessary course may request to drop the course. RCL for improper course placement may only be requested one time throughout a degree program, and only one time throughout a degree program.

- **Final term of study**

Students who are at their final term of study, and do not have any more courses to meet the minimum course load may request RCL along with the expected graduation date.

- **Medical Reason**

Students with medical concerns may request RCL, providing a letter from a licensed medical doctor or clinical psychologist recommending the reduced course load.

- **Vacation term for student** (Quinlan Business School Graduate Students ONLY)

- **Concurrent enrollment** (see below)

### Concurrent Enrollment (F-1 Only)

F-1 students are eligible to be simultaneously enrolled in another institution while being enrolled at LUC. If you intend to take courses at other institutions, you must obtain approval from OIP before you start your courses at the intended institutions.

To have concurrent enrollment, you must:

- Be in good academic standing at LUC
- Have the majority of your required credit hours taken at LUC
- Complete the [RCL Request Form](#) with the “concurrent enrollment” reason
- Provide proof of enrollment from you intended institution

Concurrent enrollment policies may vary based on institutions. Please make sure that you check with the international student advisors at the institution you intend to enroll in regarding their policies around concurrent enrollment.

### On-line Courses (F-1 only)

**Students with F-1 visa** are allowed to count **only one online class (up to 3 credit hours)** toward the minimum number of credits as full course of study during normal terms (Fall and Spring). For example, if you are an F-1 undergraduate student, you may only take 3 credit hours out of your 12 credit minimum. However, if you are already meeting the 12 credit hours minimum with in-person classes, any additional online courses are allowed.

This restriction does not apply to Summer terms, unless Summer is your first term, in which you must take full course of study. **If you have only one course left to take in your last term of study, that course cannot be online.**

**Students with J-1 visa are not allowed to take any online course.**

### Extension of Stay

If you know you will finish your program of study later than the end date stated in your I-20 or DS-2019, you must request an Extension of Stay by completing the [I-20 / DS-2019 action request form](#). You may only request an extension of stay once in your degree program.

If you plan on extending your stay, you must submit the request **one month before your current program end date** (as stated in your I-20/DS2019).

### SEVIS Transfer In/Out

If you are an **F-1 student**, when you are transferring between schools in the U.S, you must request to have your SEVIS record “**released**” by your current school before your new school can issue your I-20. You are able to transfer your SEVIS record during your 60-day grace period after completion of a degree or a 12-month OPT. Your new program in the transfer-in school must start within 5 months after the release date of your SEVIS or completion date (whichever is earlier).

If your new program starts within 5 months, you may stay in the country until the start of your new program. If your new program of study starts after 5 months, you must **request an Initial I-20** from your new school before leaving the United States. With an Initial I-20 in hand, you must leave the U.S. within

your Grace Period ([see below](#)). To re-enter the U.S., you will need to apply for a new student visa and you may enter the country no more than 30 days before the start of your new program.

If you plan to **transfer in to LUC** from another U.S. institution, you must complete the [Transfer I-20 Form](#). Please also notify the DSO at your current school about your intention to transfer to LUC.

If you plan to **transfer out from LUC** to another U.S. institution, you must complete the [Transfer Out Form](#) to notify LUC of your intent to transfer and to indicate the school to which you intend to transfer. Please also follow the transfer in procedure of the school where you intend to transfer.

**If you are a J-1 student who wish to transfer, please contact our international student advisor directly.**

## Traveling

If you plan to travel **internationally out of the United States**, you will need a **valid travel signature** in order to re-enter the country. The travel signature is located at the last page of your I-20, or the bottom of your DS-2019. Travel signatures are valid for one year after the last date it was signed. To request a travel signature from OIP, fill out the [Travel Signature Request Form](#) before your travel.

If you plan to travel **domestically in the United States**, always bring proper identification document (Passport, State I.D., or Driver's License). You do not need a travel signature to travel domestically. In case needed, we recommend that you bring your I-20 or DS-2019 to prove your student status in the U.S.

## Grace Period

**F-1 students are allowed 60 day-grace period** after finishing your programs of study and/or optional practical training (OPT). Program end date is defined in your I-20.

Within the 60 days grace period, students may:

- Apply and be accepted to a new academic program that starts within five months.
- Apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a change of status
- Travel within the United States and make preparations to depart by the end of the grace period.

**J-1 students are allowed 30 day-grace period** after finishing your program. Within the 30-day grace period, you may travel within the United States and make preparations to return to your home country.

**Do not travel out of the United States during grace period as re-entry to the U.S. may be denied. If you leave the U.S. before the end of your grace period, the rest of your grace period is forfeited.**

## Employment

### On Campus

F-1 students may work on campus any time after obtaining an on-campus employment without the approval of OIP. If you do not yet have a Social Security (required for employment), the OIP will assist you in obtaining your SSN (see [Social Security Number](#) below).



**Note: International students are not eligible for work study.**

**J-1 students must obtain approval from OIP to work on campus.** If you intend to have an on-campus employment, please contact Marian Carlson at [mcarl2@luc.edu](mailto:mcarl2@luc.edu).

For employment resources, please refer to the [Career Development Center](#) and [RamblerLink](#).

### Curricular Practical Training (CPT) (F-1 only)

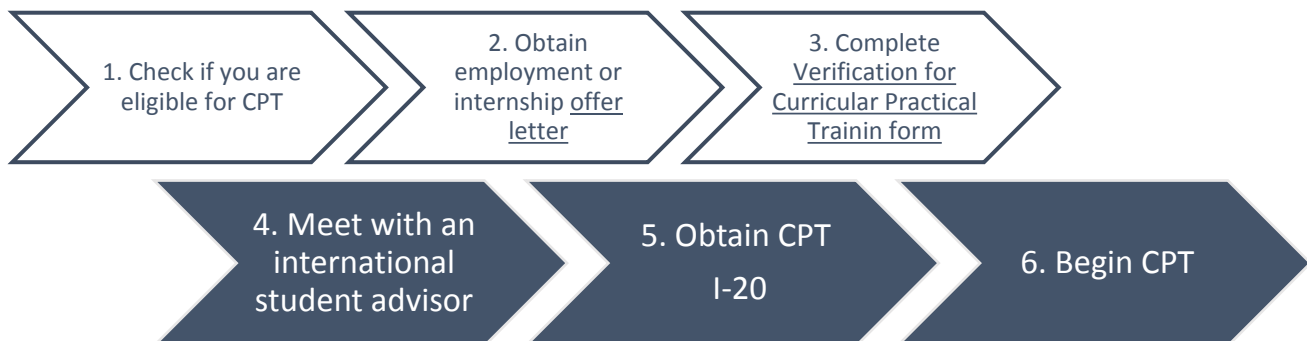
As a student in F-1 status, you may apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization in your field of study if the practical training is an **integral or required** part of your established curriculum. This kind of practical training permits students to take a temporary job or internship for a period no longer than one academic term at a time. Once the student completes all requirements for the degree, CPT is no longer an option.

To qualify for CPT, you must

1. Be in lawful full-time F-1 student status for a full academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters)
2. Be in good academic standing with the university
3. Be enrolled in a course that connects to the practical training
4. Have a job or internship offer

For more details, read through the [Curricular Practical Training Application Procedures](#).

#### The CPT process:



#### Important note:

- You must be authorized for CPT by the Office for International Programs before you can begin employment.
- Unauthorized employment will result in the termination of your F-1 status.
- You are limited to a total of **20 hours of work per week during Fall and Spring**, and **40 hours per week during Summer**. (Exception: Students whose academic program requires a full-time internship during Fall/Spring)
- Students who engage in full-time CPT for more twelve months or more will no longer be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Once you obtain the written authorization from OIP on your SEVIS I-20, no further authorization is required by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service.

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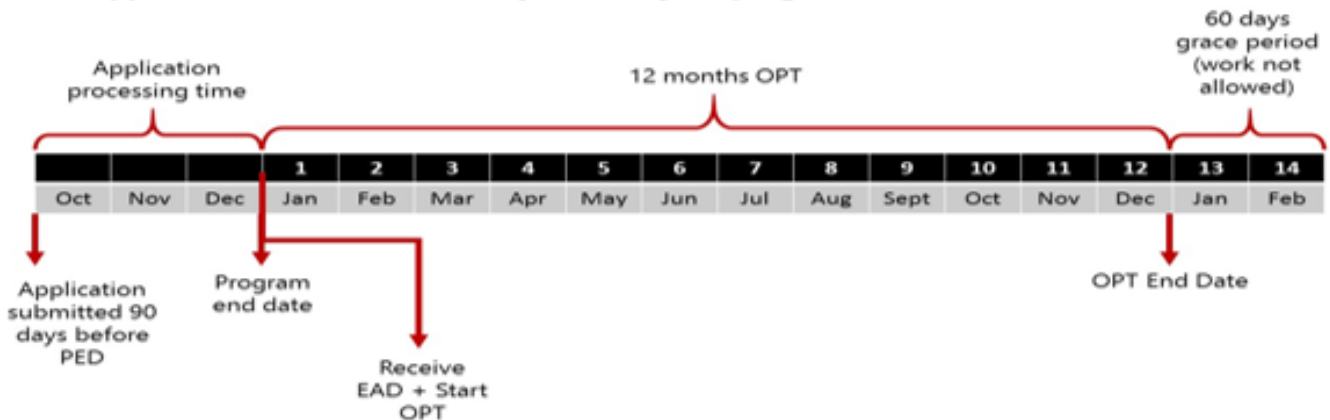
**Optional Practical Training (OPT) (F-1 only)**

Optional Practical Training is a work experience opportunity within the field of your study up to 12 months after you have completed your degree under F-1 status. The OPT application is processed through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and you may apply up to **90 days before** your program end date, or up to **60 days after** your program end date.\* The OPT application can take up to 3-4 months to be processed by the USCIS, and you may not begin work until you have obtained the Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

An employment offer is not necessary by the time you apply for OPT, but **you must be employed within 90 days of your OPT start date, and your employment must end promptly on the end date as stated in your EAD.** You must report your employment, and any changes of your employment, to the OIP ([See OPT Reporting below](#)). When you are on OPT, you are still considered as a student of LUC, but you may be employed anywhere in the United States. For more details and to apply, read through the [OPT Application Procedure](#).

**\*Note:** the maximum amount of time F-1 students may stay after completing a degree, including grace period and OPT, is 14 months. Thus, any processing time needed for late applications will take away from the 12 months eligibility for OPT.

**If OPT application is submitted 90 days before your program end date:**



**If OPT application is submitted 60 days after your program end date:**

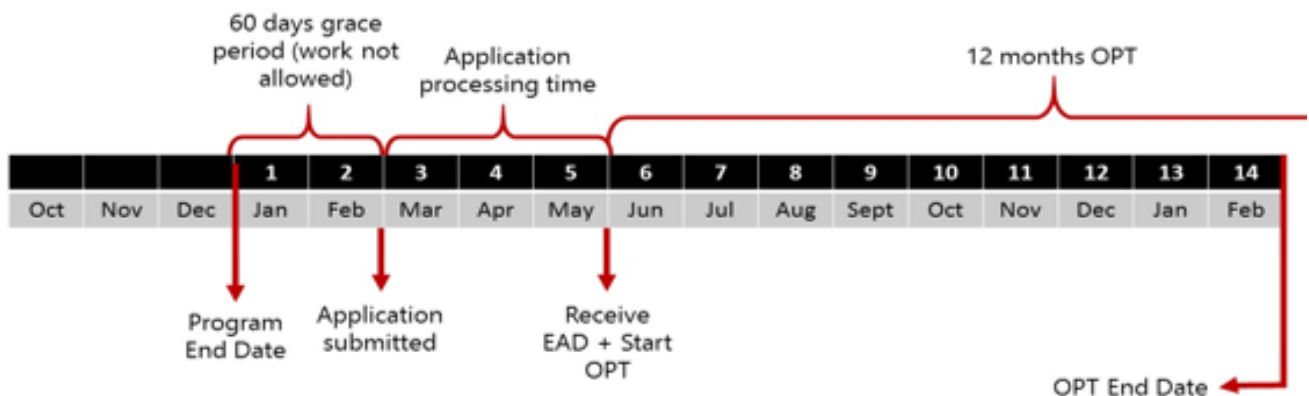


Figure 1 OPT Timeline

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### OPT STEM Extension

You are eligible for OPT STEM Extension if:

1. You have earned a degree in a field of study found in the official [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)
2. You are employed by a company that is registered with the E-Verify program. If you are unsure whether your employer is registered with E-verify, contact your supervisor or the Human Resources Department at the company.

Applications for STEM extensions must be filed with the USCIS before your current 12-month OPT end date, and can be submitted as early as 90 days before your current end date. As long as you have filed for the extension before your current OPT ends, you can continue working even if your application is still pending approval. Read through the [OPT STEM Extension](#) info sheet for more details.

### OPT Reporting

**Any changes** you have regarding your employment status once you start your OPT, must be reported using the [OPT Reporting Form](#) **within 10 days of each change**. Please keep all documentation of your employment, a copy of each documentation and form you send to OIP, and all I-20s issued to you for your records.

Changes that need to be reported:

- Obtaining employment
- Change of hours of employment
- Change of start or end dates of employment
- Change of employment
- Leaving the US before your OPT end date
- Change of visa status

If you are approved for a 24-month STEM OPT Extension, you must report to confirm the information above every 6 months, even if none of them have changed.

### J-1 Academic Training

Academic Training (AT) is employment authorization that permits a J-1 student to gain practical experience in their field of study. AT may be authorized during a student's academic program or used after the completion of student's academic program. **Undergraduate and graduate J-1 students can be authorized for up to 18 months of academic training.** Non-degree or exchange students, may be eligible for period of AT that is equivalent to the length of time spent in their program of study.

To qualify for AT, you must:

1. Be in lawful J-1 status
2. Be in good academic standing
3. Have an internship offer that is directly related to your field of study

How to apply:

- Obtain an offer letter from your prospective employer
- Complete the Academic Training Advisor Recommendation with your Academic Advisor or Program Director

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- Submit both the offer letter and AT Recommendation Form to the Office for International Programs. Your ISSS Advisor will review the documentation and authorize your employment. Once authorized, you will receive a new DS-2019.

**You must receive authorization from ISSS prior to starting the employment.**

## **Non-Immigration Legal Matters**

### **Social Security Number**

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a 9-digit identification number issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA), used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Generally, SSN is assigned to those who are authorized to work in the United States. Thus, you are only eligible to apply for SSN after you have been authorized to work either through on-campus employment, CPT or OPT.

Please refer to the [International Students and Social Security Numbers](#) info sheet for the most accurate and updated information published by the SSA.

To apply for a Social Security Number, fill out the [SSN Application](#), acquire the accompanying documents, and submit them in person at [the nearest SSA](#).

### **State I.D. & Driver's License**

Acquiring a State I.D. is not a requirement, though it can be very useful to carry for purposes such as banking, domestic traveling, opening accounts, etc. International students in Illinois who do not have SSN must request a letter of ineligibility for SSN to fulfill Group C.

- **Illinois State I.D.** (for identification only)
- **Driver's License** (for driving and identification)
- **Temporary Visitor Driver's License** (for driving only, not I.D)

To apply, you must provide your most recent 1-20/DS-2019, I-94 arrival record, and the following documents:

- 1. Group A - Written Signature** (provide one document from list below)
  - a. Valid passport (issued by an approved country),
  - b. I-94 arrival/departure record
  - c. Social Security Card
  - d. Cooperative Driver Certificate (HS Driver Ed),
  - e. Credit Card (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or Visa),
  - f. Current out of State Driver's license/ID,
- 2. Group B - Birthdate** (provide one document from list below)
  - a. Valid Passport (issued by an approved country)
  - b. Proof of name change (if applicable)
  - c. Birth certificate
  - d. Certified school transcripts
  - e. U.S Visa
- 3. Group C - Social Security Number** (provide one document from list below)
  - a. Social Security Card (issued by SSA)
  - b. Letter of ineligibility for Social Security Number (request at OIP)

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4. **Group D - Residency** must include first and last name of the applicant and current address (provide two documents from list below)
- Certified school transcripts,
  - Bank statement (issued within the last 90 days),
  - Rental/lease agreement, insurance policy (homeowner's or renter's), medical claim, statement of benefits from private insurance company or government,
  - Official mail from school, official mail received from state, county, city, village, or federal agency, tuition invoice (issued within the last 90 days)
  - Utility Bill (electric, water, refuse, telephone land/cell, cable or gas, issued within 90days of application)

Please see the [Illinois Secretary of State Document Requirement](#) for the complete list of acceptable documents. For the most updated and detailed instructions on how to attain the State I.D., Drivers' License, or Temporary Visitors Driver's License, please refer to [Secretary of State Website](#).

## Tax

All international students and scholars in nonimmigrant visa categories (e.g. F-1, J-1, or H-1B), are required to file certain tax forms with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) even if you received no taxable income during the tax year, or if your income is tax exempt under a tax treaty.

Typically, two months before the tax due date (in April) OIP will offer free **SPRINTAX Non-Resident Tax Preparation** to current international students and scholars to help with federal tax return preparation. Note that this is only available if your status is a non-resident alien.

## Global Engagement

The Office for International Programs offers a range of Global Engagement programs designed for international and domestic students to interact and engage on campus and beyond. Get to know our various offerings below. Our programs are open to all students of Loyola University Chicago.

To receive updates and reminders regarding our Global Engagement programs, sign up for the [Global Engagement Newsletter](#), and follow us on [Instagram at @luc.globalengagement](#).

## Exploring Chicago Neighborhoods

Hoping to get off campus and explore, but not sure where to start? Chicago has a wider array of neighborhoods that divide the city into smaller communities, each with their own unique culture and history. Our Exploring Chicago Neighborhoods program is a great way to make new friends from around the world, while simultaneously getting to know the great city of Chicago. Each semester, we explore neighborhoods such as Rogers Park, Pilsen, Hyde Park, Chinatown, Wicker Park, and many more.

## Chai and Chat

The Office for International Programs, in collaboration with Achieving College Excellence (ACE) team, hosts Chai and Chat once a week. Chai and Chat offers an opportunity for domestic and international students to meet and get to know each other on a regular basis. Students may talk about any topic that comes to mind, but there will also be a unique conversation starter planned for each week. Chai and

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Chat serves as a safe space where participating students are encouraged to explore different perspectives through discussions. We provide tea, however, we suggest that you bring your own cups or mugs to help reduce waste.

### Global Mentorship Program

The Global Mentorship Program (GMP) is designed to encourage both domestic and international students to expand their worldviews, improve their intercultural communication skills, increase their English competency, and make new friends. To achieve these goals, students are placed into Global Groups consisting of three to five students, including at least one student facilitator. Participants will meet with their Global Groups around at least five times throughout the semester, as determined by the group. Each Global Group will pick the activity for their own meetings, which might include exploring a new Chicago neighborhood ([link to Exploring Chicago Neighborhoods](#)), grabbing coffee, or eating at a restaurant. Additionally, participants have the opportunity to join in on several GMP community events, which bring together all Global Groups and will be planned by the GMP coordinator. Events might include a potluck, attending a sporting event, or a movie night.

### Global Engagement Leadership

The Global Engagement Programs are designed to be student-centered to help you maximize your learning experience at LUC. To ensure an enriching student experience, we encourage peer mentorship, and we encourage student leaders to facilitate each of the Global Engagement program above. The OIP seeks motivated, enthusiastic, and culturally competent students to fill the Global Engagement Leadership positions for an academic year. With the guidance of our Graduate Assistant, leaders will facilitate conversations, plan excursions, coordinate events, and manage the Global Engagement programs. Positions include:

- Exploring Chicago Neighborhoods Leaders (2 positions)
- Chai and Chat
  - o Lake Shore Campus (2 positions)
  - o Water Tower Campus (2 positions)
- Global Mentorship Executive Board
  - o Event Management (2 positions)
  - o Group Management (2 positions)

To learn more about how to get involved, see [Global Engagement Leadership Positions](#).