



NMHU International Education Center Policies and Procedures

Prepared By Ernestine B. Clayton

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Policies and procedures Version Control

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Note The content of this manual constitutes the regulations New Mexico Highlands University must adhere to by the United States Customs and Immigration Service, for the purpose of enrolling foreign students. It also may include policies instituted by New Mexico Highlands University.

The International Education Center at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
	Welcome.....	
	History.....	
	Changes in Policy.....	
2	EMPLOYEE DEFINITION AND STATUS	4
	Employment Classification.....	
	Basic Duties of Each Classification.....	
3	RECRUITMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.....	5
4	PROCESSING OF APPLICATION.....	5/6
	Receiving Application.....	
	Acceptance of Foreign Transcripts.....	
	Graduate Student Application.....	
	Undergraduate Student Application.....	
	Admission or Denial Letters.....	
	Scholarships, Graduate and Teaching Assistantships.....	
	Accommodations	
5	PROCESSING STUDENT ARRIVALS.....	6
	Gathering of Immigration Documentation.....	
	Establishing Student at NMHU.....	
	Orientation.....	
	Health Insurance.....	
	Enrollment of International Students.....	
6	EMPLOYMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	7
	On Campus.....	
	Off Campus.....	
	Social Security.....	
7	IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS.....	7/8
	Maintenance of SEVIS Data Base.....	
	Mid-Term and Final Grade Advising.....	
	Extension of I-20.....	
	Transfer Policy.....	
	Completion of Studies Advising.....	
	Tracking of Students After Completion of Studies.....	
8	OPEN COMMUNICATION	8
9	SUGGESTIONS.....	8
10	CLOSING STATEMENT	8

INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed by The International Education Center of New Mexico Highlands University in order to familiarize staff, faculty and students with The International Education Center and provide information about key policies, procedures, and benefits affecting International Students at New Mexico Highlands University.

Welcome

On behalf of the International Education Center, we would like to welcome you to New Mexico Highlands University! We are very excited that you have chosen this university to be your “home” for the next few years! We are here to assist you as you transition to the university environment.

International Education Center Mission Statement

The primary mission of a university is to discover and impart knowledge, transcending all human-constructed social cultural barriers and natural boundaries; a mission that is truly universal, and encompassing all discovery, knowledge, and students.

The Office of International Education at New Mexico Highlands University serves to promote international awareness, knowledge, and experiences, which will enable students, faculty, staff and the Las Vegas community to participate actively and thrive in the global community. The Office emphasizes Highlands’ unique environment, location, multicultural history and resources to foster the international exchange of students, scholars, and faculty.

The Office recruits and assists international students, and advocates for the recruitment of international faculty. The Office encourages international and U.S. students and faculty to learn from each other individually and through programming that fosters appreciation of cultural diversity. The Office advances study abroad for Highlands’ students, and offers overseas work and study opportunities for faculty. In addition, the Office of International Education serves as a proponent for the internationalization of the curricula throughout the University.

History

The International Education Center was established in 1998 for the purpose of providing immigration and educational advising for enrolled International Students of NMHU, to recruit International Students, and to maintain documentation as the F-1 and J-1 Federal regulations stipulate. In 2001, the then Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) dramatically changed as a result of the 911 bombings in New York. The Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) was implemented and from then on all immigration documentation for F-1 and J-1 visas is created electronically. The INS’s name was also changed to United States Customs and Immigration Service.

Since 1999, the enrollment of International Students has increased significantly, from 28 students to approximately 145 in 2007.

With all of the changes that came about internally and externally, the International Education Center augmented its staff size from 1 to 3 permanent full time staff members.

Changes in Policy

This manual supersedes all previous International Education Center’s policies and procedures

While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, The International Education Center reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures, and/or benefits described in the manual with or without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, the affected body will be notified by email. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future students.

International Education Center Employee Definition and Status

An “employee” of The International Education Center is a person who regularly works for New Mexico Highlands University on a wage or salary basis.

Employment Classification

Employees of The International Education Center are classified as Director, Coordinator, Department Secretary, PSDO, DSO and Student Employee.

Basic duties of each classification

Director: Oversees the day to day operations of the Center. Works with Faculty and Staff to develop and Implement new ideas and projects for the promotion of recruitment and retention of students.
Serves as the PSDO (Primary Designated School Official)

Coordinator: Oversees all aspects of the application process to New Mexico Highlands University. Orients Students to American culture, coordinates activities for student and the community. Advises students of their immigration obligations and status. Serves as the DSO (Designated School Official).

Department Secretary: Assists the Director, Coordinator and Student workers with daily tasks of the center.
Answers emails regarding the University, Responsible for updating the Center's budget, emails updates about immigration regulations to currently enrolled students. Initially processes all new application to the Center. Updates all data bases created for the Center.

Recruitment of International Students

The International Education Center answers all emails regarding application to NMHU from foreign students. Will keep a data base to demonstrate how many inquiries are made for recruitment purposes. Pending budgetary funding, the Center will advertise for and recruit international students outside the United States.

Processing of Applications

All foreign students intending to study at NMHU on an F-1 or J-1 visa are required to apply to and enroll at the NMHU main campus only. No exceptions.

All foreign students intending to study at NMHU on a visa, other than the visas mentioned above must provide NMHU with copies of non U.S. Citizen documentation. (Passport, Visa, I-94, or form I-551)

Receiving of Applications

Foreign applications will be processed only if it is received from the country in which the student currently resides.

Acceptance of Foreign Transcripts

Transcripts will be considered official only if they have been placed in a sealed envelope by the granting institution or have been mailed directly to the University by the granting institution.

Official transcripts may not be older than 6 months from the date of issuance.

Acceptance of foreign transcripts will be the final decision of the International Education Center

Graduate student applications

All Graduate Student application should be initially processed by the International Education Center

Only complete applications will be processed

Undergraduate Student applications

All Undergraduate student applications should be initially processed by the International Education Center

Only complete applications will be processed

Admission or Denial letters

All admission or denial letters will be sent to the International Education center for the purpose of completing the application and immigration documentation process to New Mexico Highlands University.

Scholarship, Graduate Assistantship, Teaching Assistantships

All final formal award letters of Scholarship, Graduate Assistantship and Teaching Assistantship, will be submitted to the International Education Center for the purpose of completing immigration documentation for admitted students.

Accommodation on campus

All International students are subject to the policies and procedures of the Housing department of NMHU

The International Education Center is not responsible for acquiring or locating housing for any student.

Inbound students are advised and electronically mailed NMHU residence hall applications when student is admitted to NMHU.

Processing Student Arrivals

Gathering of Immigration Documentation

Students must report to the International Education Center within 14 days of arrival for SEVIS and NMHU reporting.

Students must provide the Center with the following documentation:

1. Passport
2. Visa
3. I-94
4. I-20 bearing POE stamp
5. Proof of housing accommodation bearing student's name (housing contract, lease agreement)
6. Verification of enrollment to NMHU

Establishing Student at NMHU

Student will be given a guide sheet to establish themselves at NMHU and the community

Sheet will contain information on how to: enroll, open a bank account, get a mailing address.....

Orientation

At the beginning of every semester the International Education Center will hold an orientation required to be attended by newly arrived students.

Health Insurance

All F-1 and J-1 students are required to have a health insurance policy that has been negotiated by NMHU for International students.

* Canadian students exempt, provided that a copy of current Canadian Health Insurance policy is given to the International Education Center.

Enrollment of International Students

All F-1 and J-1 students must be enrolled at the Las Vegas Main Campus

All other statuses are allowed to be enrolled at the campus of their choice, provided that they have submitted

F-1 and J-1 students must be enrolled full time for each semester unless authorized to drop below full course of Study, by a PDSO or a DSO

***During Summer Break official school breaks, student does not have to be enrolled

Employment

Employment On Campus

F-1 and J-1 Students allowed to work :

1. up to 20 hours/week when school is in session
2. up to 40 hours/week on official school breaks

All other visa holders not allowed to work on campus until status has been verified and employment is incident to status

Employment Off Campus

All F-1 students must be approved by DHS, PDSO or DSO to be eligible for off campus employment

Social Security

Employed on campus students are required to obtain a Social Security card.

Students are required to apply for a Social Security Card within 36 hours of obtaining employment on campus

Students are required to produce a receipt of application for a social security card to Human Resources within 36 hours of obtaining employment at NMHU

Once a social security card has been received by the student, student must immediately provide a copy to Human Resources and the International Education Center

*The International Education Center will provide a guide for this purpose to students

Immigration Regulations

All students must abide by immigration regulations as stipulated by their visa status.

Maintenance of SEVIS Data Base

Maintenance of the SEVIS data base is required by the PDSO and the DSO of NMHU in order to enroll international students on F-1 and J-1 visa status

Maintenance of the SEVIS data base is an ongoing process throughout the duration of each students study period and up to 29 months after the completion of studies.

Reporting Requirements in SEVIS

All student must report to the International Education Center at the beginning of every semester for the purpose of registering and updating the student in the SEVIS data base record

Mid Term and final grade advising

The International Education Center will verify mid-term and final grades of students for the purpose of advising students about how grades affect their visa status.

Extension of I-20

At least 30 days prior to expiration of I-20, student must request an extension of program of study.

1. Submit an official letter from academic advisor explaining the need for the extension and the Length of the extension
2. Submit bank statements to demonstrate financial ability to study for the duration of the requested extension

Transfer Policy

All students must have satisfied all their financial obligations to NMHU before a transfer will be finalized.

Completion of Studies advising

The International Education Center advises student who are completing their program of study at NMHU approximately 90 days before the end of the semester.

Will advise on:

Post Completion authorization

Transferring of I-20 to begin a new program at either a new school or at NMHU

Tracking of students after completion

The PDSO and the DSO are required by ICE to track all students who have been approved Post Completion Training for 12 to 29 months.

1. Student must inform the Center of employment within 90 days of gaining employment
2. Student must update the Center with new physical address within in 10 days of moving
3. Student must update the Center of employment for every 6 months of employment

Open Communication

The International Education Center will communicate with students in the following order

1. Email, both personal and NMHU accounts
2. Phone
3. Official letter

Suggestions

The International Education Center encourages all students, faculty or staff to bring forward their suggestions and good ideas about making IEC a better place to work and enhancing service to IEC's customers. Anyone who sees an opportunity for improvement is encouraged to talk it over with the Center's Director. The Director can help bring ideas to the attention of the people at NMHU who will be responsible for possibly implementing them. All suggestions are valued.

Closing Statement

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. It is important that students and the IEC staff stay aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, goals, or problems as they affect