

# International Graduate Students at Virginia Tech

Information, support, &  
resources

Fall 2025



# Introduction and Purpose

- 40% of our graduate students are international from over 100 countries
- Shifting landscape of international student regulations and requirements—THESE GUIDELINES MAY CHANGE
- Faculty, GPDs, coordinators, and advisors should know what resources are available to support the students and in when and how to refer them to experts.
  - We don't expect you to know everything but you need to know what the issues are and who to ask for help.

# Overview

- Student journey before and after arrival
- Federal Policies and Regulations
- University Policies and Procedures
- Funding
- Advisor Relationships and Academic Expectations
- Family Relationships and Emotional Strains
- Cultural and Linguistic Adjustments
- Work opportunities and procedures (OPT, CPT)
- List of resources

# The Cranwell Model

# Our Role

1. Immigration
2. Orientation
3. Programming with campus partners
4. Adjustment support (1:1)
5. Connecting students with other resources
6. Advocacy!

# Advising at Cranwell

## Teams-Based Model

- Eforms and requests are assigned to international student services staff based on complexity and staff experience
- More complicated requests and concerns will be directed to more senior advisors, and can take longer to resolve
- Routine requests are simpler and can be processed much more quickly

## Appointments and Walk-Ins

- Walk-Ins are the easiest place to get a timely response. Advisors will take a few minutes with each student to provide one-on-one attention for their general concerns.
  - Schedule available on our website
  - Walk-ins occur during the semester when classes are in session
- You may need an appointment for a particularly complicated issue, or because our walk-ins conflict with your schedule (class or work).
  - You will need to utilize Navigate to set up an appointment with the advisor who specializes in your area of concern.

# Communicating with Cranwell

## Email

- Cranwell International Center receives high email volume, which means that email typically takes 3 to 4 business days for staff to respond given the competing demands of timely processing.

[international@vt.edu](mailto:international@vt.edu)

## Phone Assistance

- Our phone is monitored during business hours, but due to high call volumes, the office staff may be speaking with a student on the phone or in the office when you call. The phone is not staffed by an international student advisor, so it will not be an option for immigration advising.

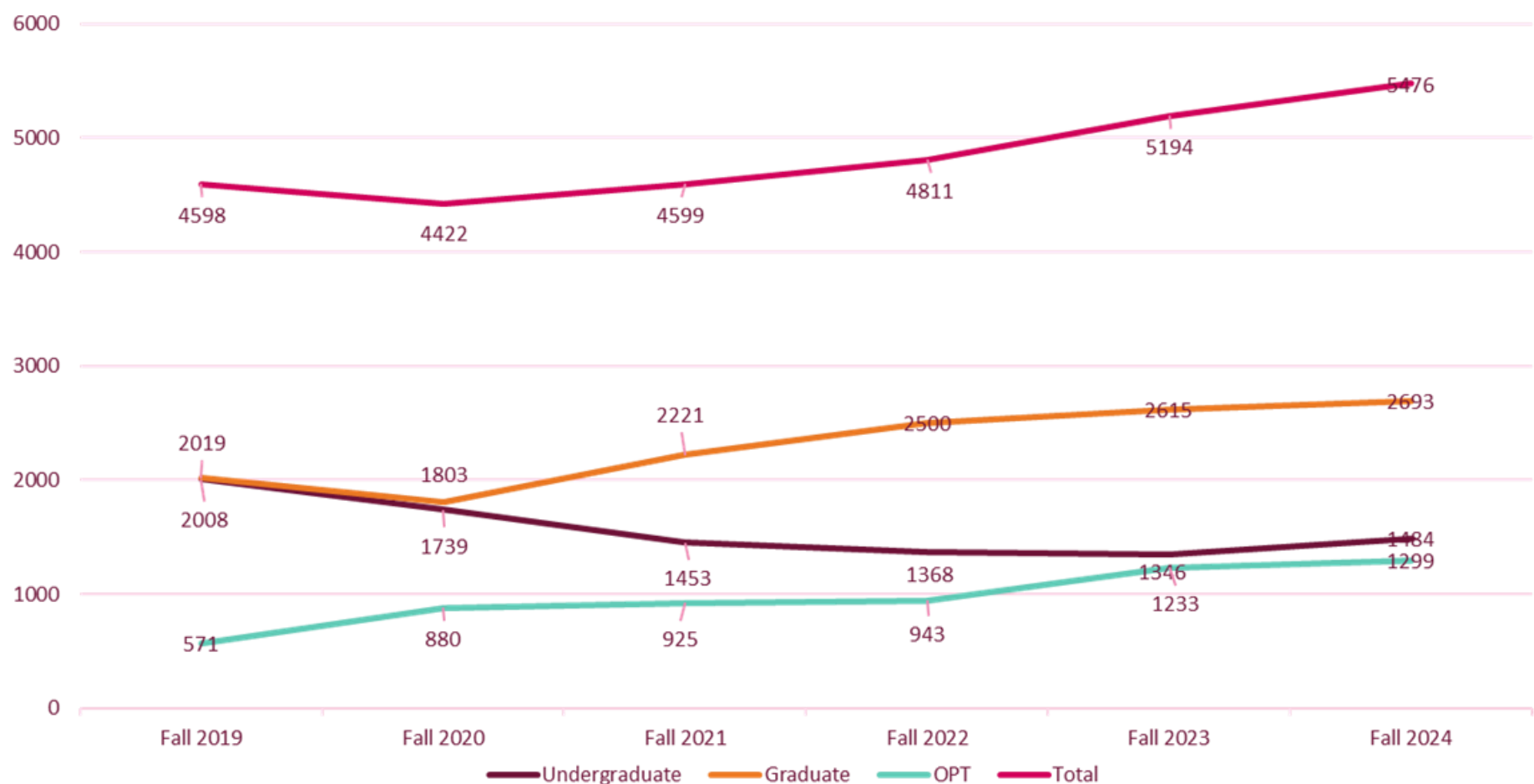
Phone calls are best for the following:

- Questions around the services our team provides.
- Questions about what method of communication might be most fitting for your concern.
- Reporting an area of high concern or emergency.

(540) 231-6527

# Total International Students (Fall 2024)

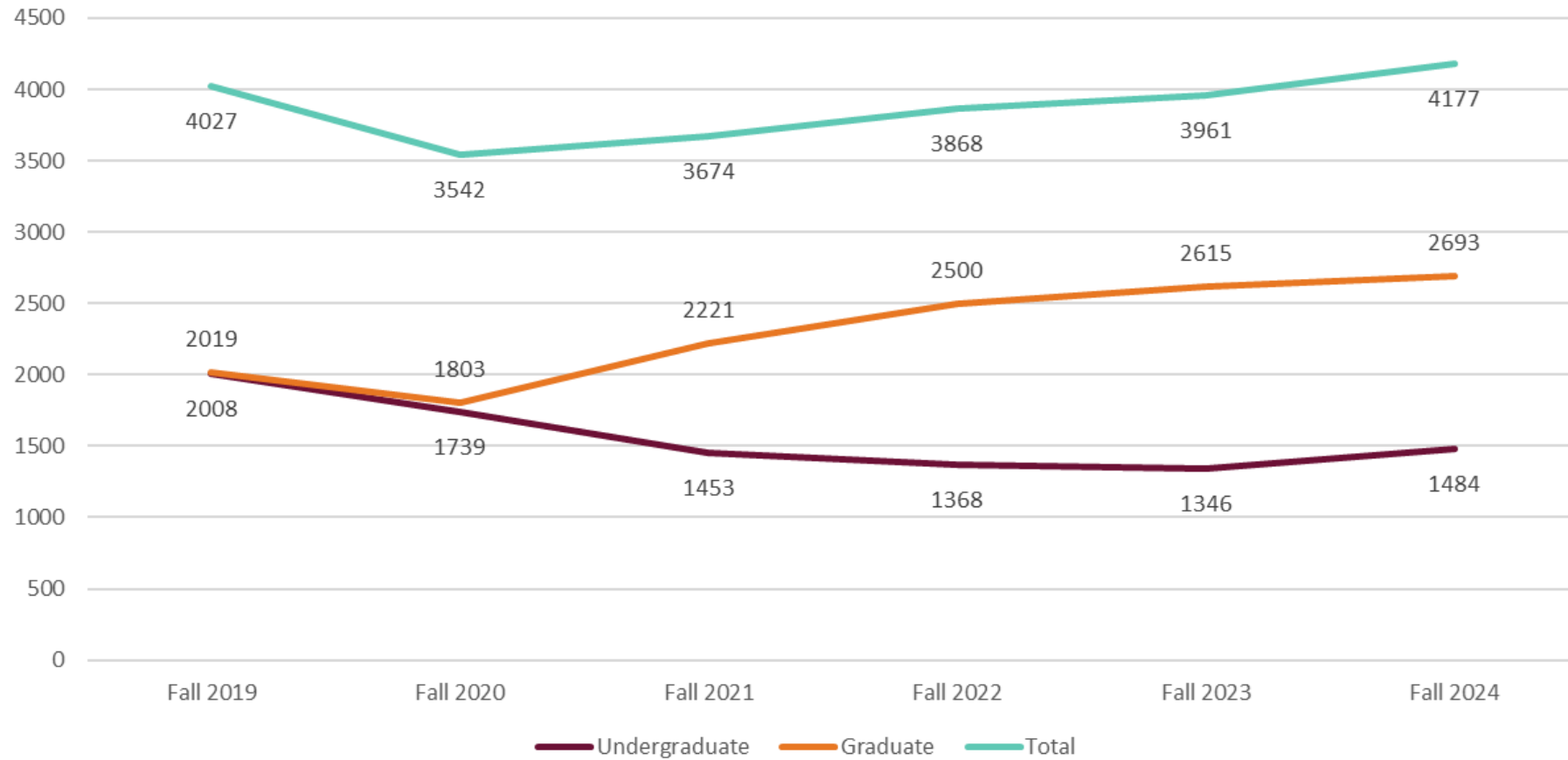
(including non-enrolled students engaged in post-completion OPT/STEM OPT)





# International Student Enrollment Total (Fall 2024)

*(including only enrolled students)*



# International Student Enrollment Change (Fall 2024)

- *(including only enrolled students)*

	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2023 to Fall 2024	Fall 2019 to Fall 2024
<b>Undergraduate</b>	2008	1739	1803	1368	1346	1,484	+9.30%	-35.31%
<b>Graduate</b>	2019	1803	2221	2500	2615	2,693	+2.90%	+25.03%
<b>Total</b>	4027	3542	3674	3868	3961	4,177	+5.17%	+3.59%

## International Student Enrollment Change (Fall 2024)

- *(including only newly admitted students)*

	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2023 to Fall 2024	Fall 2019 to Fall 2024
Undergraduate	622	279	183	288	422	516	+18.22%	-20.54%
Graduate	500	253	673	637	648	574	-12.89%	+12.89%
Total	1122	535	856	925	1070	1090	+1.83%	-2.94%

# International Student Population

## Graduate - Top Five Countries of Origin

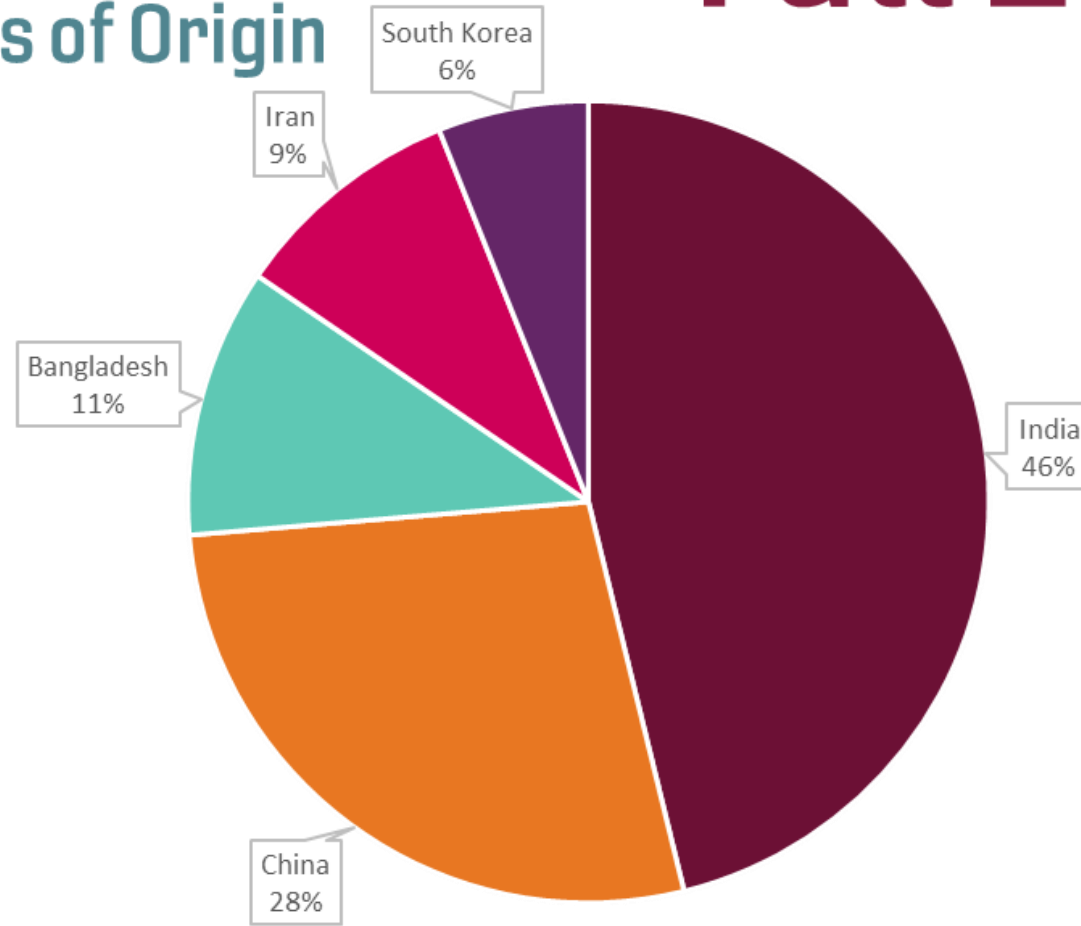
# Fall 2024

# 2,693

international  
students  
from

# 108

countries



■ India ■ China ■ Bangladesh ■ Iran ■ South Korea

# International Student Population

## Graduate - Top Ten Countries of Origin

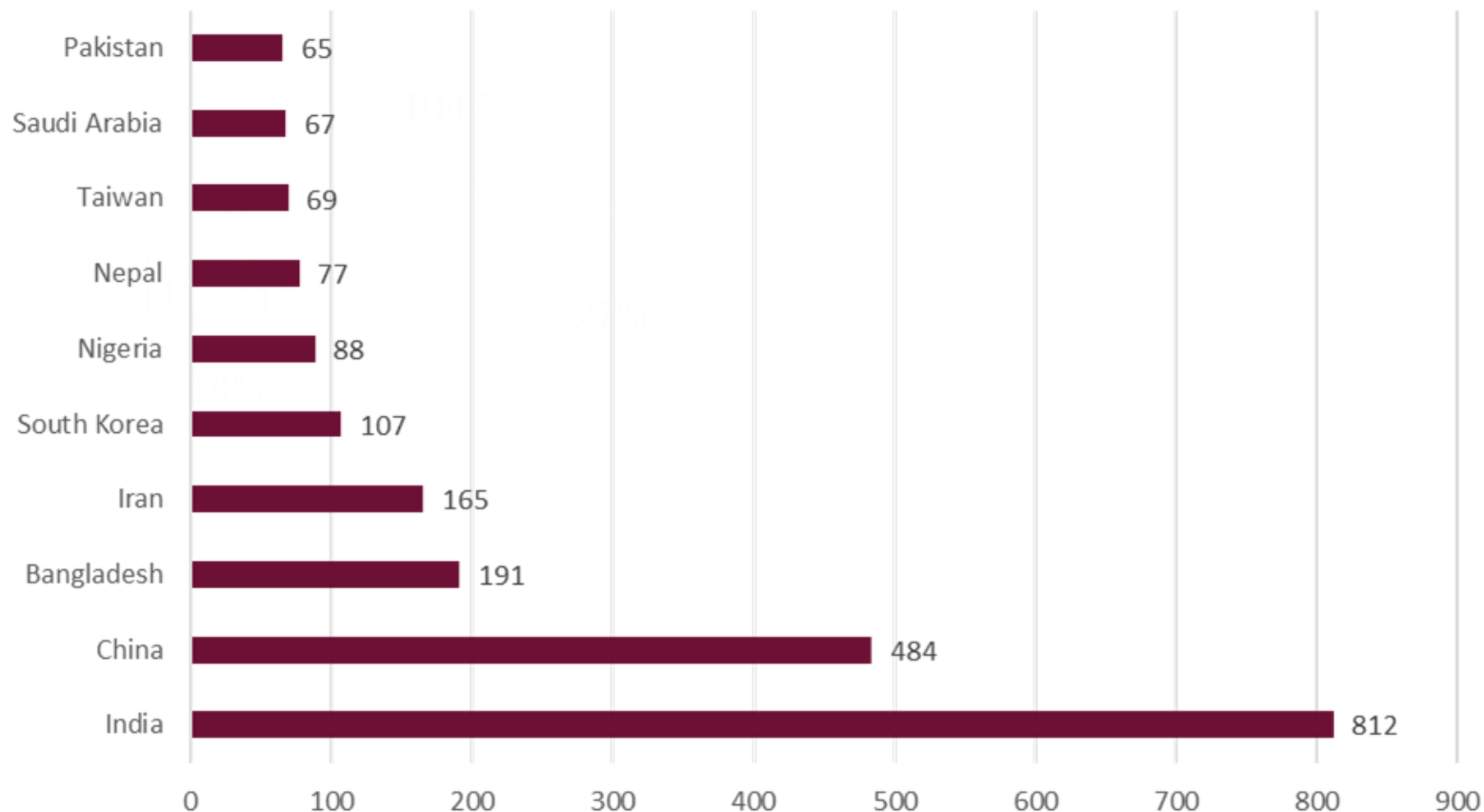
# Fall 2024

# 2,693

international  
students  
from

# 108

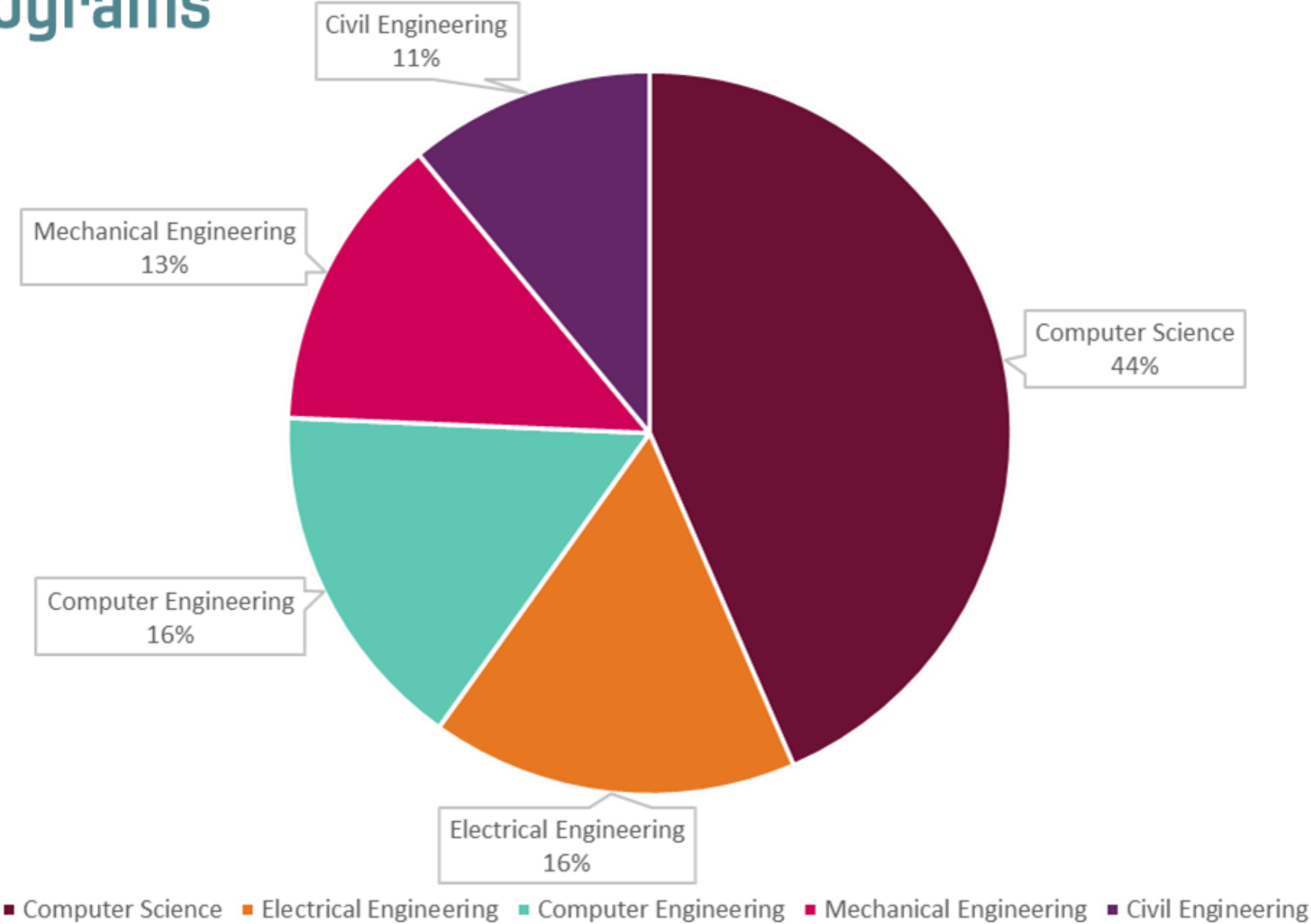
countries



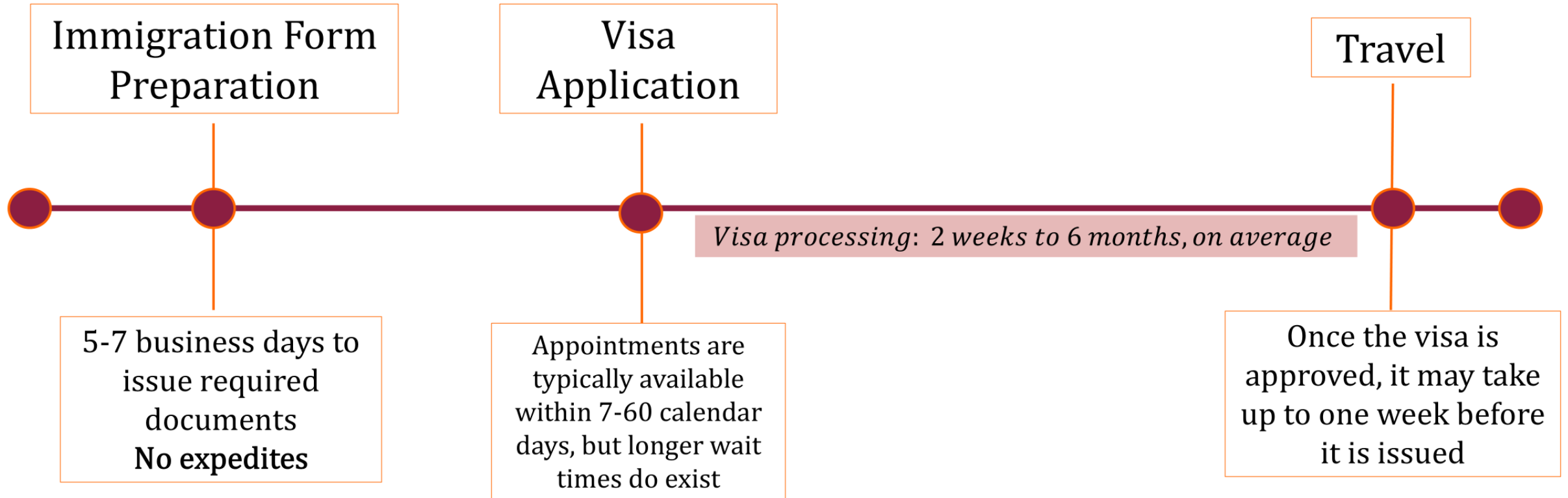
# International Student Enrollment

## Graduate - Top 5 Programs

Fall  
2024



# Admission to Arrival Timeline



Cranwell recommends that students apply as early as possible, for both the immigration forms and visa appointments

# Visa Application Process

## Schedule a Visa Appointment

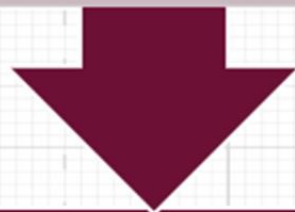
Complete the DS-160 online and pay I-901 SEVIS fee



Bring required documents (including admission letter from grad program) to US consulate or embassy



Attend visa interview or submit documents via mail, if eligible



## Visa approved, denied or submitted for administrative processing

If approved, retrieve passport with new F-1 or J-1 visa

If denied, begin visa application again or defer to later semester

Administrative Processing: “[a] consular officer may determine that additional information from sources other than the applicant may help establish an applicant’s eligibility for a visa.”





# **Cranwell International Center Priorities**



# Security

---

***Assisting*** students  
in the maintenance  
of their status.





# Belonging

---

**Welcoming**  
international  
students into the  
campus.



# Integration

---

**Engaging** students in connect with one another and the campus community.





# Celebration

---

***Centering*** other cultures in the Virginia Tech community.



# Life in the U.S.

*This page offers you support for living in the U.S., from meeting basic needs to navigating new customs.*

- [Housing](#)
- [English Language Support](#)
- [Financial Matters](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Health and Wellness Resources](#)
- [Life and Customs](#)

## *Housing*

On-campus Housing



Off-campus Housing



- [IntlHokies](#)
- [For New International Students](#)
- [Employment On and Off Campus](#)
- [Academics](#)
- [Learning Resources](#)
- [Travel Information](#)
- [Resources for Students with Dependents](#)
- [Life in the U.S.](#)
- [The Student Experience](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [E-Form Processing Times](#)
- [About Cranwell International Center](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Immigration Updates](#)

# Social Security Number (SSN)

## *Obtaining a Social Security Number*

*International students in F-1 and J-1 status who have an on-campus position (assistantship or wage employee) are eligible to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). Students who have applied for and been approved for Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training are also eligible to apply for a SSN.*

Required Documentation



Application Process



Working While a SSN Application is Pending



For more information about obtaining a Social Security Number while on F-1 visa status, review the information on SSNs on the Study in the States website.

**Study in the States (leaves VT)**

- Employment On and Off Campus
  - On-Campus Employment
  - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
  - Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  - Academic Training
  - Social Security Number (SSN)
  - International Tax Information
  - 24-month STEM OPT Extension

# Hiring International Students

What must happen before the  
first minute of work





- Assistantship contract issued and accepted by the student
  - This can occur anytime after the student's admissions acceptance.
  - Standard contract dates
    - Fall August 10- December 24
    - Spring December 25- May 9
- Check-in with Cranwell must be complete
  - Start date in Banner should not be before their status has been updated to Active.
- I-9 Completed within federal regulations
  - Section 1 completed by employee on or before start date
  - Section 2 completed by department with three days of the start date

# Start Date and I-9 Compliance

## Fall Semester

- Alert students ahead of time that they must be here on or before their August 10 start date to allow ample time for all documentation to be processed, including the I-9.
- Students who arrive between August 10 – 24 should still receive the full stipend amount; however, the monthly stipend rate will need to be adjusted based on their arrival/start date. Students who arrive on or after August 25 will have a reduction in pay based on their start date.
- Fall contract must start on or before August 31 to receive the full health insurance subsidy
- Tuition remission drops to 75% coverage on September 5th.

# Spring Semester

- All new students starting in Spring should have a Jan 10th start date with the full stipend amount divided over eight pay periods rather than nine.
- Students who arrive on or after January 25, will have a reduction in pay based on their start date.
- Health insurance subsidy will be prorated if start date is after January 31<sup>st</sup>
- Tuition dropped to 75% coverage on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

# International Travel

- University Business: Conference, Field work
  - Situations are handled on a case by case basis.
  - Email [tax@vt.edu](mailto:tax@vt.edu) for further instructions
- Personal Travel
  - If leaving the country for 1-2 weeks, the student would be considered “on leave” status and payment would not need to be stopped.
  - Document that no work will be done during this time.

# Ongoing Funding Changes & Impacts

# Academic Advising and Immigration



STUDENT AFFAIRS  
CRANWELL  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.

# Form I-20

## Reasons to receive or request a new I-20:

- Change of major or level (Bachelor's to Masters)
- Name change
- Program extension
- Travel signature
- Funding has changed
- Off-campus employment authorization

[illegible][illegible]

Students are permitted to travel outside the US and return on their F-1 or J-1 visa throughout their program of study.

- CIC provides a travel authorization signature
- If students must apply to renew their visa, CIC provides advising and resources for that process

### The F-1 and J-1 Visa...

...is a travel document. This means that students do not have to have an unexpired visa while they are studying in the US. If they choose to travel outside of the US, they must have a valid visa to return.

---

Students abroad for longer than five [5] months will need to be re-registered as initial status students and issued a new I-20.

Traveling   
Outside the US



# Academic Advising and Registration

To remain in good standing with VT and USCIS, international students **MUST**:

- Maintain a full course load during their program of study
  - **Undergrad**: 12 credits
  - **Grad (no assistantship)**: 9 credits
  - Grad (assistantship): 12 credits

**A student must take 75% of their classes on a face-to-face basis.**

- One or more online courses per semester, as long as 9 credit hours (undergraduate) or 6 credit hours (graduate) are face-to-face.
- No full load of online courses in any semester (except summer).
- Students with funding from their home governments may not be able to take any courses online without jeopardizing their funding.

---

## **Withdrawals:**

- Most international students cannot withdraw from courses during the semester, unless they will otherwise remain full-time.
- Must make “normal progress” on their degree, and withdrawals can interfere with this
- CIC must approve any students who will be enrolled less than full time (whether voluntary or involuntary) prior to the drop happening.

# Programs and Level Changes

International students are permitted to enroll in nearly any program, but there are some restrictions:

- OSERC
- Country of origin vs program of study

## GAAPS Forms that create Immigration Changes

- Change of Level (mastering out)
- Leave of Absence
- Change of Campus
- Change of Graduate Program
- In Absentia (very rare)
- SSDE

Not every change a student requests can be accommodated.

---

## Program Extensions

- CIC can provide limited extensions to students with academic or medical reasons for their delayed program completion. Their advisor must be supportive, if for academic reasons

# Work Authorization (F Visa)

---

## Curricular Practical Training

- An internship, field placement, clinical or even independent study
- Pre-completion of the program
- Can be repeated throughout the degree program
- Only available after two academic terms on the F-1 visa
- Must be related to your major

## Optional Practical Training

- A full-time position, typically after graduation
- Post-completion of the program
- Valid for 12 months, with option to extend for 36 months for STEM majors
- Requires additional authorization and application through USCIS
- Must be related to your major

# CPT

## Process

INTERNSHIP PROVIDER	CPD OR GRAD	CRANWELL
Apply for and secure an internship	Request CEIP (undergrad) or Co-op (grad) enrollment	Begin Curricular Practical Training Request in IntlHokies Portal
Receive offer letter	Secure approval from Career and Professional Development (CEIP) or Grad School (co-op)	Provide proof of enrollment and offer letter
Complete Handshake process (if undergrad)	Collect proof of enrollment: approval email for grads, and unofficial transcript for undergrads	Sign new I-20 with CPT approval

# Graduate Cooperative Education Program (CO-OP)



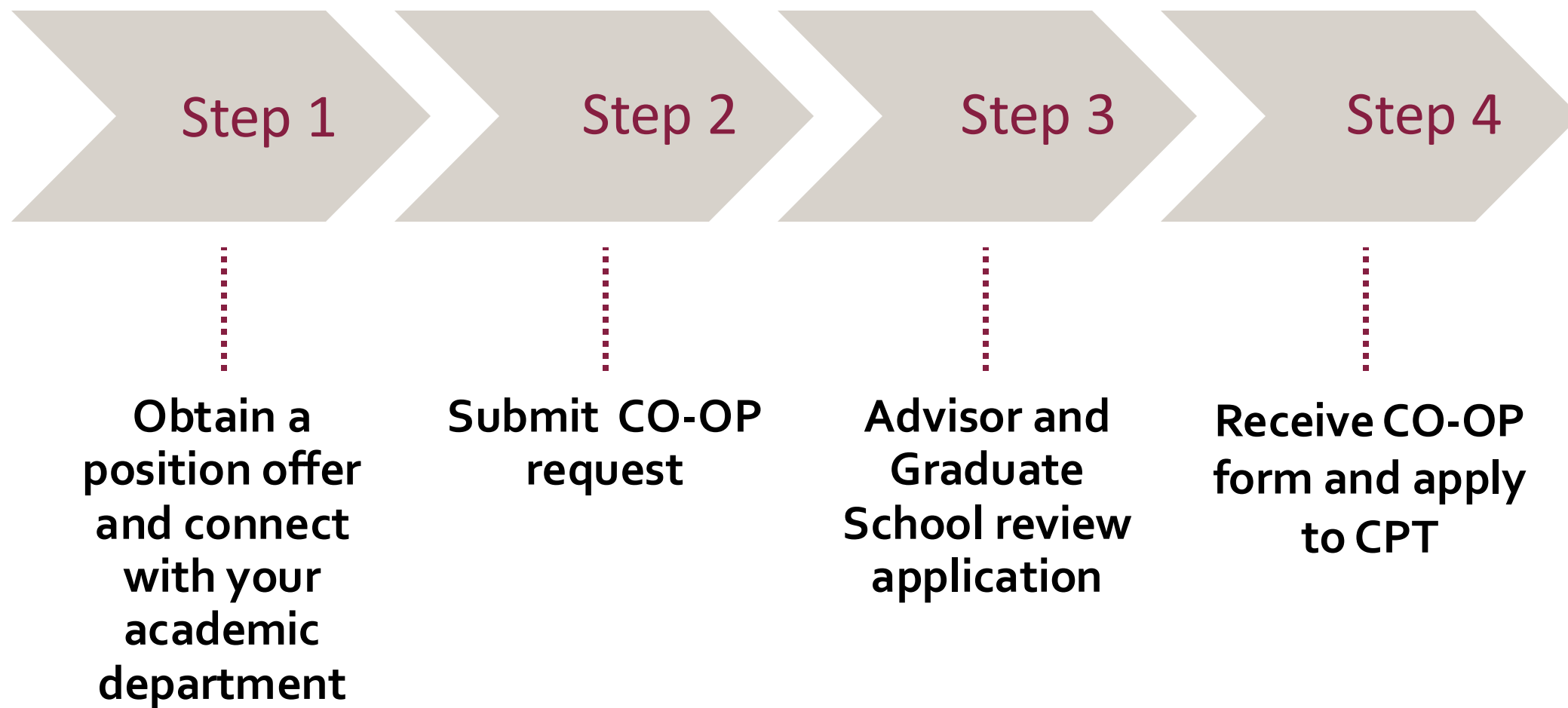
# Overview of CO-OP

- Academic justification for Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Directly related to the area of study
- Integral part of the student's academic program
- Authorized by the Graduate School
- 0-credit course GRAD 5944/7944 or 5944p/7944p

# CO-OP Requirements

- No holds on student's account
- GPA minimum 3.0
- No overlap with assistantships
  - Exception allowed in Summer
  - Exception allowed in Fall/Spring for part-time CO-OP
- Start date must be at minimum 10 days from when CO-OP application is submitted
- Minimum of four weeks in a semester
- Minimum of four hours per week
- Formal signed offer letter

# CO-OP Process Overview





# Tips for Faculty Advisors

---

- Career and Professional Development can help students prepare for internship interviews
- Encourage students to discuss their co-op plans with the Graduate School if they have questions
- Advisor approvals – read the offer letter – verify co-op related to student's field
- Refer students to Cranwell with immigration questions
- Co-op Website: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/student-services/GradCoop.html>



# Making Sense of the International Student Experience

- Countless intersections between immigration status and academic life.
- Cultural considerations.
- Faculty and student relationship.

# The value of the Ombuds

How does the Ombuds support conflict management within the community?

- Asks questions to determine parameters of conflict and confidentially explore self-help options (coaching)
- Explores potential for informal assisted options (facilitation and mediation)
- Identifying options for looping forward to higher level of authority for resolution process (if party chooses to do so)
- Provide workshops to help our community members approach conflict situations in constructive ways (education)

# Observations from the Ombuds Office

## Perceived Vulnerabilities around Visa Status are Increasing.

- These vulnerabilities are seen as creating easy targets for funding cuts.
- Perceptions and realities around travel are causing stress.
- Accessing resources perceived as detrimental to their status.

## Current Environment Impacting Relational Dynamics

- Sense of belonging by some international students impacted by current messaging in our society.
- Perceptions as an outsider within lab groups resulting in self isolation.
- These perceptions hinder students comfort engaging with those that may be able to support them in challenging moments.

# Students' Perspective: Common Challenges for International Graduate and Professional Students

1. Feeling of being "Tolerated" rather than "Accepted" - Contribution without appreciation
2. Discrimination and bias
3. Isolation - No sense of belonging
4. Mental strain from global events
5. Financial challenges
6. Academic adjustments
7. Cultural and social adjustment
8. Maintaining cultural identity
9. Career and professional challenges
10. Communication barriers
11. Daily living and practical issues
12. Family and dependents



# Students' Perspective: How You Can Help

1. Stay informed on current national and global news
2. Check in on students' personal lives – small gestures matter, especially for those far from home
3. Communicate clearly about funding availability;  
Send/update students on their assistantship contracts as early as you can
4. Help students prepare an alternative plan for potential future funding issues
5. Look out for subtle discrimination or microaggressions
6. Connect your students with your alumni, other contacts
7. Promote wellness workshops on dept level - Hokie Wellness
8. Guide students to available resources
9. Organize small activities for your lab/dept/class to foster a sense of belonging
10. Help students navigate the US Culture
11. Encourage to participate in social activities
12. Spread the word!

# Learning Resources



STUDENT AFFAIRS  
CRANWELL  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.

# Students

## *Learning Resources for International Students*

### **Pre-arrival Modules for New International Students**

New international students are added to an online hub of resources through direct invitation to a Canvas website. All new students receive a direct invitation to their official VT email to join the pre-arrival modules in Canvas, which have been designed with **Universal Design for Learning** principles in mind.

### **Pre-arrival Webinars for New International Students**

Working with many campus partners, Cranwell staff host live webinars prior to new students' arrival on topics to support their transition including securing a visa, travel, housing, health insurance, campus engagement, and more. New students receive direct invitations to their official VT email to join these webinars.

### **CranwellConnect Bi-weekly Emails**

Every other Tuesday during the fall and spring semester, we send out information about Cranwell and campus events relevant to international students, intercultural learners, and the interested public. Curious? You can [request to be added to our CranwellConnect](#) list to receive our emails.

### **Cranwell Socials**

Follow us at our [Instagram account](#) for updates!

### **Additional Learning Resources for Students**

- [Council of International Student Organizations](#) the umbrella organization and liaison to administration for international students at Virginia Tech
- [Cranwell Calendar of Events and Workshops](#) on managing status, career, well-being, and more
- [Resources for Managing F-1 Status](#) (Study in the States)
- [Resources for Managing J-1 Status](#) (BridgeUSA)
- [Resources for Students with Dependents](#)



# Faculty/Staff

## *Learning Resources for Faculty and Staff*

### **Introduction to International Student Support (90 minutes, co-taught with Cook Counseling)**

This training is offered each fall and spring semester. Registration and schedule are available through the [TLOS Professional Development Network \(PDN\)](#) of free learning opportunities. Questions? Reach out to us at [cranwellconnect@vt.edu](mailto:cranwellconnect@vt.edu).

### **Request a custom intercultural training or outreach**

Cranwell staff will come to your department or unit to present on topics related to intercultural learning and supporting international student success. These requests can be made during the fall and spring semesters. We ask that you submit your request one month in advance of a desired program date. Please complete our [custom outreach/training request form](#) and we will be in touch.

### **CranwellConnect Bi-weekly Emails**

Every other Tuesday during the fall and spring semester, we send out information about Cranwell and campus events relevant to international students, intercultural learners, and the interested public. We also share occasional information from campus and community partners that directly supports our international student community at Virginia Tech. Curious? As a faculty or staff member at VT, you can also [request to be added to our CranwellConnect](#) list to receive our emails.

# Immigration Updates

Last updated: June 5, 2025

## *Executive and Regulatory Actions Affecting Non-Immigrant Students*

Virginia Tech and Cranwell International Center are closely monitoring ongoing changes in immigration policy to ensure that our F-1 and J-1 visa holders are informed and prepared. **This page will serve as a central hub for communicating key updates on policy changes that may affect international students.** Our goal is to keep you updated with timely, accurate information during this period of transition and uncertainty.

**Below, you can review an abbreviated timeline of all critical updates related to non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 visa statuses, as well as more complete breakdowns of recent changes by subject area:**

Timeline of Critical Updates



Travel and Re-Entry



Visa Applications and Renewals



SEVIS Actions and Student Records



Immigration Benefits and Enforcement Actions



## *Articles & Campus Notices from VT News*

- [4/25/25: University update on higher education, immigration matters](#)
- [4/15/25: A joint message from President Tim Sands and Senior Vice President Dan Sui](#)
- [4/11/25: Upcoming webinar on immigration issues](#)
- [4/10/25: An update from President Tim Sands](#)

## *Resources*

- [Cook Counseling Center](#)
- [Cranwell International Center](#) - Immigration Advising
- [Dean of Students' Office](#)
- [Schiffert Health Center](#)
- [TimelyCare](#) - 24/7 Mental health support for

# Calendar of Events

## *Advising Calendar*

Cranwell International Center - Advising Calendar

## *Fall 2025 Cranwell Events*

August	September	October	November	December
--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------

- 5 September, 3:00-5:00 PM, Harper Hall 1025 | Coffee with Cranwell
- 5 September, 4:00-6:00 PM, D2 Side Room | International Cafe Hour - Sudanese Culture
- 6 September, 8:00 AM, Rice Fields | Exploring Our Mountain Home, Venture Out Hiking Trip
- 10 September, 5:30-6:30 PM, GLC Room C | Job Searching in Academia
- 11 September, 3:00 PM, GLC | Graduate Resource Fair
- 16 September, 5:00-6:00 PM, GLC Room F | H-1B Workshop
- 16 September, 5:30 PM, Harper Hall 1025 | Mozaiko House Highlight
- 18 September, 5:30-7:00PM, Harper Hall 1025 | Let's Talk About series
- 19 September, 3:30-5:00PM, Harper Hall 1025 | CPT Workshop

- [IntlHokies](#)
- [For New International Students](#)
- [Employment On and Off Campus](#)
- [Academics](#)
- [Learning Resources](#)
- [Travel Information](#)
- [Resources for Students with Dependents](#)
- [Life in the U.S.](#)
- [The Student Experience](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [E-Form Processing Times](#)
- [About Cranwell International Center](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Immigration Updates](#)

# Q&A



STUDENT AFFAIRS  
CRANWELL  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.