

ANNUAL REPORT

International Students and Scholars Office
Office of the Provost

2022-2023



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OUR MISSION

The mission of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) is to support, uphold, and enhance the global vision of Columbia University.

ISSO serves the international population at the University with broad-based immigration expertise through exemplary, effective, and empathetic service.

We offer programs and services that facilitate a successful transition and adjustment to the U.S. and Columbia University, foster a vibrant and inclusive community, provide professional development, and promote global engagement.

OUR VISION

At ISSO, our vision is to foster a welcoming, caring, and inclusive environment through dedicated student and scholar services and programming. By embracing global citizenship and internationalization, we aspire to set the benchmark for excellence in serving our international population.



LETTER FROM THE SENIOR VICE PROVOST

Dear Colleagues,

It's a pleasure to introduce the 2023 Annual Report of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). This report highlights our unwavering commitment to the diverse community of over 20,000 international students (enrolled students and students on Optional Practical Training and STEM Extension Optional Practical Training), and nearly 3,000 scholars from 162 countries whom we have the privilege to serve. Columbia University's international population enriches the Columbia experience with its diversity and unique perspectives. As you'll see in these pages, the ISSO staff have worked hard to further improve services to Columbia's international community:



Expanded service delivery. New services built during COVID have been institutionalized and expanded, including new digital tools for filing essential forms, and expanded service hours through the ISSO Call Center. ISSO continues to focus on improving advising services, doubling advising appointments offered in 2023 with plans for further expansion.

Convenient office locations. The ISSO's Morningside staff found their new home in Armstrong Hall, just above Tom's Restaurant. The space brings teams which had been in separate offices into one, and creates a vibrant hub just steps from the heart of our 116th Street campus. Drop-ins have doubled since the opening of the new office, and the space is used for gatherings, meetings, and workshops. ISSO-CUIMC continues to thrive in its current location at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center in Washington Heights.

Online courses. As an Office of the Provost's Teaching and Learning 2022-23 grant awardee, ISSO collaborated closely with the Center for Teaching and Learning to develop its first online courses. These self-guided compliance-focused Canvas courses provide students with on-demand learning, while also freeing adviser time to offer high-touch service to students and scholars.

Differentiated professional development programming. Post-pandemic, the Office of the Provost is partnering with the ISSO team to re-imagine the role of the office, with a goal of making programming a distinguishing factor for international applicants to choose Columbia for their studies. ISSO completed the first full year of its new professional development program Global Leadership Advancing Student Success, or GLASS. This program was developed to support the academic and professional success of international students across the University. Through workshops and trainings, it addresses the specific needs and interests of our international student population.

Student life programming. In parallel, the ISSO has launched an in-house programming team, focused on programming open to all of Columbia's international students. They're partnering with international student group leaders, and rolling out a new grants program to support activities and events hosted by international student groups.

A big thank you to the dedicated staff of the ISSO, and to our campus partners for their support of our international community – we look forward to welcoming you all in Armstrong!

Sincerely,

Soulaymane Kachani

Senior Vice Provost

LETTER FROM THE ISSO DIRECTORS

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) Annual Report. This report summarizes the programs and services provided by the ISSO to Columbia University's international community. The ISSO aspires to make Columbia's campus an ever more welcoming place for our international students and scholars.

Our dedicated teams diligently work to provide timely assistance, immigration guidance, and documentation services through various channels, making our support system easily accessible to our international population. Whether through emails, phone calls, scheduled appointments, or drop-ins, we work to ensure that every member of our community receives the assistance they need.



The recently launched ISSO Programs and Events initiative offers a variety of programs. These programs encompass a range of areas, such as transitioning and acclimating, supporting academic success, community building, and maintaining immigration compliance. Together with the signature Global Leadership Advancing Student Success (GLASS) program, we aim to provide comprehensive support for academic and professional growth.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our ISSO staff, the collaborative efforts of the various schools and departments, and student organizations within the university.

In addition, we extend our deepest gratitude to the Office of the Provost for their invaluable support and contributions to the success of our services and programs.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, we are excited to continue our commitment to foster an inclusive and supportive environment that enables all of our students and scholars to thrive academically and professionally.

Sincerely,

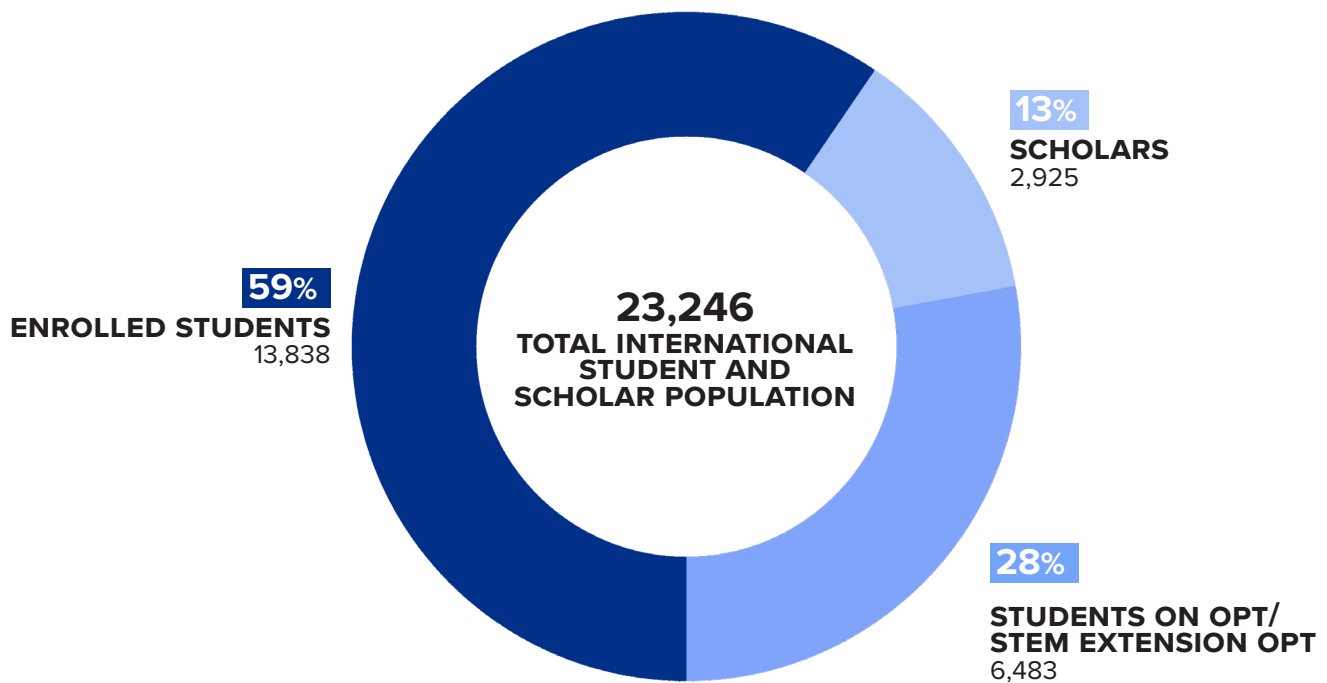
Maria Reynoso
Interim Executive Director and Director of Compliance

Kathleen McVeigh
Director, ISSO-CUIMC

Jane Acton
Director, Faculty and Scholar Services

Samantha Lu
Director, International Student Services

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



162
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

187
STUDENT AND SCHOLAR PROGRAMS

6,752
TOTAL I-20s/DS-2019s ISSUED FOR NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENTS

APPROXIMATELY
40,000
STUDENT EMAILS, CALLS, APPOINTMENTS, AND DROP-INS

78,476
TOTAL ACCOUNTS REACHED VIA INSTAGRAM REELS

128,335
TOTAL INSTAGRAM REEL PLAYS

1,305,080
TOTAL WEBPAGE VISITS

ISSO Locations

ISSO Morningside and Manhattanville

After years of serving students at International House North and scholars at the Nash Building, our teams moved to Armstrong Hall at 545 West 112th Street, 4th Floor.

Our new location is above the famous Tom's Restaurant, providing convenient access to the Morningside campus for students and scholars, and expanded space for gatherings, programs, and events.



ISSO-CUIMC

ISSO-CUIMC is centrally located on the medical center campus. It is in the William Black Building at 650 West 168th Street, on the First Floor, Room 130.

The CUIMC campus is in northern Manhattan where CUIMC's professional colleges and schools are located.



1-130

International Students and Scholars Office

Student Highlights

Expansion of Advising Services

ISSO expanded student support services, increasing the number of virtual and in-person advising availability from 100 appointments per week to 270 appointments per week, and added phone hours for after-hours advising.

The additional services increase ISSO's capacity to serve students participating in Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), and/or STEM Extension Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT), as well as our new incoming students who are often in different time zones prior to their arrival.



Launch of Academic, Cultural, and Social Programming

Last Spring, ISSO rolled out a new international student programming initiative with the support of Senior Vice Provost Soulaymane Kachani and the Office of the Provost. ISSO now has an experienced student programming team creating connection, community, and opportunities for our international students.

This new programming initiative enhances the academic, cultural, social experience of students. Offerings include orientation programs, social events, intercultural engagements, and professional development workshops.



New International Student Welcome Gathering

At the start of the Fall 2023 semester, ISSO hosted a New International Student Welcome Gathering for the first time. All newly admitted international students were invited to attend this event to celebrate their arrival to Columbia University. Over 2,500 international students attended.

Campus partners, which included Columbia Health and University Life, formed a Welcome Committee to greet the newly admitted international students.



Canvas Courses

In 2023, ISSO launched a series of immigration-related courses with the support of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) through the Office of the Provost's Large-Scale Teaching & Learning Grant. Columbia University's CourseWorks Learning Management System (LMS) is powered by Canvas.

We plan to offer more self-directed learning courses in the future.

Over 1,000 students have participated in the courses since the launch. Throughout the self-directed learning modules, students participate in quizzes to help them understand the material and measure learning outcomes.

Applying for Your I-20/DS-2019

Launched: June 2023

Correct Response Rate to Quizzes: 95%

Applying for Your Post-Completion

Optional Practical Training

Launched: November 2023

Correct Response Rate to Quizzes: 99%

Applying for Your STEM Extension

Optional Practical Training

Launched: November 2023

Correct Response Rate to Quizzes: 99%



Scholar Highlights

Continued Increase in Scholar Visa Sponsorship
Columbia University’s international faculty and researcher population continues to rebound toward pre-pandemic levels. This increase is particularly evident in J-1 Exchange Visitor visa sponsorship for Adjunct Faculty, Postdoctoral Researchers, Visiting Scholars, and Visiting Student Interns.

Streamlined Processing Times
ISSO has taken full advantage of the Department of State’s directive to use digital signatures and transmit Form DS-2019 electronically. This represents a notable improvement in reducing ISSO processing time for J-1 visa sponsorship.

Hybrid Advising, Programs, and Presentations
ISSO provides services in various convenient and flexible formats. This includes an expansion of virtual advising, programs, and presentations.

“My personal experience with ISSO is highly regarded due to several reasons. The knowledgeable and supportive staff members offer accurate guidance on immigration regulations and address the concerns faced by international adjunct professors and scholars. The ISSO's responsive communication ensures timely assistance. Their orientation workshops aid in a smooth transition and provide essential information on various aspects.”



— **BOAZ GALINSON,**
ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL



SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ISSO serves international students in F-1 and J-1 visa categories, as well as their family members who accompany them.

There are two offices at Columbia University serving the international student population: the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) on the Morningside campus and the International Students and Scholars Office on the Columbia University Irving Medical Center campus (ISSO-CUIMC).

The dedicated staff members serve over 20,000 international students, including currently enrolled students and students on OPT/STEM OPT.

Advisers have in-depth knowledge and expertise to advise on immigration-related matters and ensure federal immigration compliance.

Programs, Sessions, Events, and Initiatives

ISSO's expanded programming further our efforts to make Columbia University the go-to place for international students from around the world. With the launch of the student programming team, ISSO is hosting offerings and events to enrich student life, support professional development, and ensure a vibrant international campus community.

We are focused on providing programming and events from pre-arrival through post-graduation, which build community, foster belonging and connection, and support the overall success of the Columbia University international student population.

The new programming team offered 67 programs, which included: welcome programming, academic success workshops, community-building events, and leadership development seminars through the GLASS program.

ISSO also collaborated with campus partners such as Public Safety, Columbia Health, and Student Financial Services. We aspire to be a “home away from home” for international students at Columbia.

Areas of Focus

Offering Robust Welcome Programs

Welcome programming, offered throughout the summer to incoming students, serves dual goals of supporting schools by engaging incoming students prior to their arrival on campus, and providing information and support to help students acclimate quickly after arrival.



Programming seeks to:

- Ease the transition to the U.S., New York City, and Columbia University
- Facilitate community, build personal and professional networks, and foster a sense of inclusion and belonging within the international community at Columbia University
- Support students in maintaining their U.S. immigration status

We were thrilled to welcome more than 2,500 incoming students at our inaugural New International Student Welcome Gathering in the Fall.

Building Partnerships Across Campus

The ISSO programming team formed partnerships with departments, schools, and international student groups across the University. Twenty-one programs were offered with partners, including Columbia Health, Columbia Housing, Public Safety, Student Financial Services, and the Writing Center.

Strengthening International Student Life

Student life programming creates connections for students across programs and schools to support a vibrant interschool international community.

Illustrative programming includes:

- Welcome Back to Campus: Goal Setting and Vision Boarding for the New Year
- Exploring Bryant Park Winter Market
- Volunteering at Broadway Food Bank
- Valentine’s Day Card Making
- ISSO Night at the Columbia Men’s Basketball Game
- Barre Class

Supporting International Student Organizations

International Student Leader meetings, held semestery among the Office of the Provost, ISSO, and the leaders of international student groups, provide an opportunity to build connections across student groups, and are an important opportunity for feedback from student leaders on student needs and ISSO’s services.



“The ISSO team was very welcoming and supportive throughout my journey as an international student. All my doubts regarding international travel, CPT, and OPT were solved in detail with helpful resources and live webinars. I even received prompt help to expedite specific requests during personal emergencies. ISSO provided me with all the tools required to navigate my program and future opportunities.”



– **NIHARIKA TELRANDHE,**
CONTINUING STUDENT

We are launching a small grants program for international students, providing access to grants for recognized student groups to fund their events and activities.

Supporting CUIMC Community Building

All international student programming is available to students across Columbia's campuses. These partnerships include the Medical Center's Offices of Health, Housing, Career Services, and schools at the Medical Center. A new initiative developed by the Housing Office and supported by ISSO is The Global Community at 50 Haven Ave which encourages a community among international students by providing a safe space to share challenges and to exchange cultural experiences with domestic students.

Supporting Professional Development

The Global Leadership Advancing Student Success (GLASS) program is designed to equip international students with the skills, knowledge, and support they need to ease their adjustment to living and studying in the U.S., and position them to take best advantage of the plethora of academic, social, and co-curricular experiences available at Columbia.

GLASS Programming is designed to:

- Develop foundational leadership skills, deepen understanding of cultural contexts, and support professional readiness in the U.S. and global work cultures
- Strengthen communication skills within a variety of interpersonal and intercultural contexts
- Build personal and professional connections with other Columbia University international students across departments, schools, and campuses

International students are invited to attend in-person sessions on and off-campus throughout the academic year. Sessions include:

- Communicating with Impact
- Intercultural Story Circles
- Emotional Intelligence
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)
- Handshakes and Headshots
- Tour of the United Nations

The programming team also developed and led sessions for campus partners, including Columbia Engineering's Professional Development and Leadership (PDL) and ICAP Global Health.

“It was a very, very useful and interesting lecture. I didn't know it [would] help me so much. Before, I was really anxious about studying in a completely different culture, I didn't know how to write appropriate emails and some hard 'no' tips, but now I feel more confident!”



– GLASS PARTICIPANT,
FALL 2023

“I believe it's pivotal to start early, fail and make mistakes, and unlearn certain techniques and push ourselves to do the best we can. I feel these sessions by GLASS are helping me achieve that, I am already trying my best to put them into action.”



– GLASS PARTICIPANT,
FALL 2023



Event Highlights

After OPT and Before the Green Card

Immigration attorney Suzanne Seltzer discusses post-graduation employment-based visa options after F-1/J-1 student status.

International Student Leaders' Lunch

Each semester, the student leaders from recognized international student groups are invited to a semi-formal lunch conversation and listening session with the Senior Vice Provost to raise issues and share concerns directly between international student groups and university administration.

International Education Week (IEW)

Co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Education, IEW promotes the benefits of international education and exchange. ISSO coordinates a series of programs and events open to the entire Columbia community in acknowledgement of IEW.

ISSO Collaboration with The Global Community at 50 Haven Ave

A new initiative developed by the Housing Office and supported by ISSO is The Global Community at 50 Haven Ave. The Global Community at 50 Haven Ave encourages inclusivity of our international students with domestic students by providing a place for them to share their challenges and exchange their cultural experiences.

Institute of International Education (IIE) Fulbright Orientation

ISSO, in partnership with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) at Teachers College, invited the 2023 IIE Fulbright student program participants to an orientation and “meet and greet” event.

What “Cite Your Sources” Means at Columbia

ISSO, in partnership with the Writing Center, examines how source use and citation practices vary from culture to culture. The workshop focuses on how to use sources in ways that abide by Columbia University honor codes which demonstrates fluency in their area of study.



Student Advising Interactions

ISSO provides numerous ways for students to interact and ask their immigration-related questions. The ISSO offers convenient access to students through email, phone, drop-ins, virtual and in-person appointments.

Post-pandemic, ISSO expanded services for students to communicate with the ISSO. As a result, ISSO created innovative services, including a Call Center, new email management system, virtual appointments, and self-paced Canvas courses.

The Canvas courses were designed and deployed to help students navigate complex immigration applications. ISSO provided compliance and immigration-related webinars, which were recorded and posted to our website for students to review on demand.

ISSO offered 65 programs focusing on immigration and compliance, including:

- Pre-Arrival Sessions
- School Orientations
- Post-Completion OPT
- Employment Visa Options After Graduation
- Tax Workshops

INTERACTION OVERVIEW

EMAIL

SPRING (JANUARY-MAY): 14,810

SUMMER (JUNE-AUGUST): 8,374

FALL (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER): 8,061



APPOINTMENTS AND DROP-INS

2023 (JANUARY-DECEMBER): 5,525

TOP 5 REASONS FOR VISIT:

1. F-1 OPT
2. F-1 STEM OPT
3. F-1 CPT
4. TRAVEL-RELATED
5. FORM I-20/DS-2019



PHONE (ANSWERED BY STAFF)

SPRING (JANUARY-MAY): 1,030

SUMMER (JUNE-AUGUST): 706

FALL (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER): 652



#ISSOStories Spotlight

Gloria Charité, Student

Gloria (CC'23) was named the 2023 Rhodes Scholar for the East Africa constituency, the first Columbian to be named a recipient.

Quick Facts:

- School: Columbia College
- Program/Department: Psychology
- Primary Area of Research: Cognitive Psychology, specifically Memory Research
- Home Country: Rwanda

What inspired you to apply for a Rhodes Scholarship?

As I was trolling through the Rhodes Trust website, a section entitled “Standing Up for the World” caught my attention. Underlying that statement was a clear and compassionate call to fight for those who have not been as privileged as I am. What I found even more fascinating were the various ways different scholars had chosen to approach the fight. Some were involved in projects tackling pressing issues like food insecurity, others access to quality education, human rights violations, climate change, and cyber security. That I could be part of such an interdisciplinary community of individuals who are not only as impatient as I am about the current state of the world, but are also actively engaged in propelling the world in a better direction was an irresistible opportunity. I am very honored to have won the Rhodes Scholarship, and I am very excited for the opportunities it will afford me to leave the world a better place!

So, why cognitive psychology?

Besides my name, one of my other strong identifiers is my fascination with the brain. My friends and I sometimes joke that I am a “brain addict” (hahaha). I am a psychology major and will be pursuing a doctorate degree in cognitive psychology at Oxford. I feel really lucky to be studying one of the most fascinating things in the universe— the brain. That three pounds of neurons and glia in our head can give rise to complex processes like memory, language, emotions to mention but a few, is very mind-blowing to me.

What do you like best about living in NYC?

One of my favorite NYC and Columbia moments really is hearing people speaking so many different languages within every mile I walk, some of which I don't even recognize. This to me is a constant reminder that the beauty of the human race lies, to a large extent, in our diversity. That we are able to thrive together in this big city in spite of our diverse backgrounds is an indisputable testament that the future is multilingual, multiracial, and in all sense inclusive. Of course, it is upon us to continue to put in the efforts to make that a possibility, otherwise the future will easily resemble the past or look uglier.

Tell us about your background and interests.

In my free time, I love reading, hanging out with friends, volunteering, cooking, playing volleyball, and sometimes writing poetry!

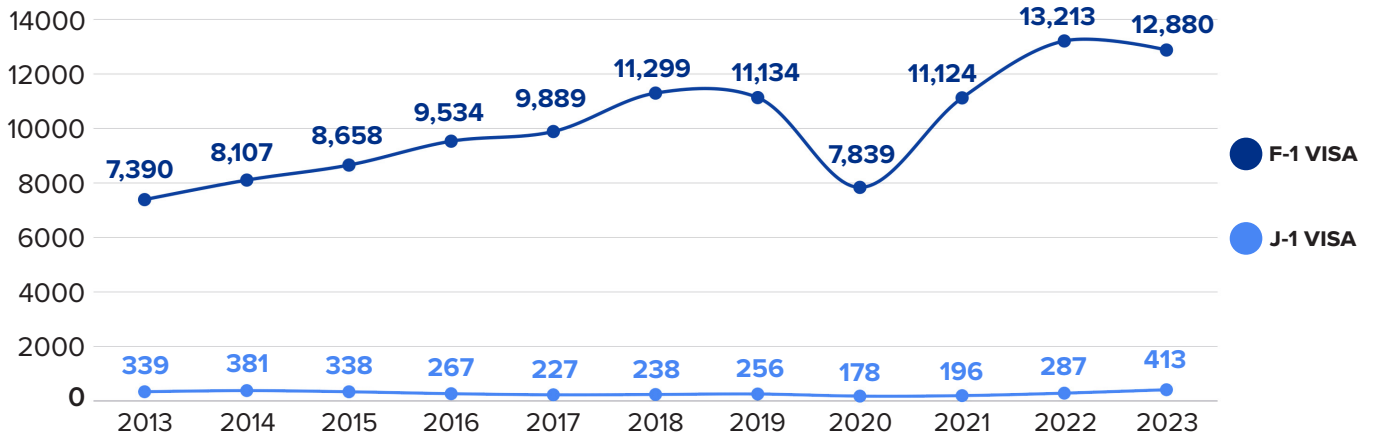


#issostories offers Columbia students and scholars the opportunity to share stories about their lives and advice on living in New York City and the U.S. Participants have their submissions posted through ISSO's newsletters, website, and social media channels.

International Student Population Data

The ISSO reports annually to the Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors Survey, which is a comprehensive national survey that captures information on international students. International student statistics are captured each Fall semester. Columbia University hosts the third largest population of international students in the U.S. according to the latest 2022–2023 IIE Open Doors statistics.

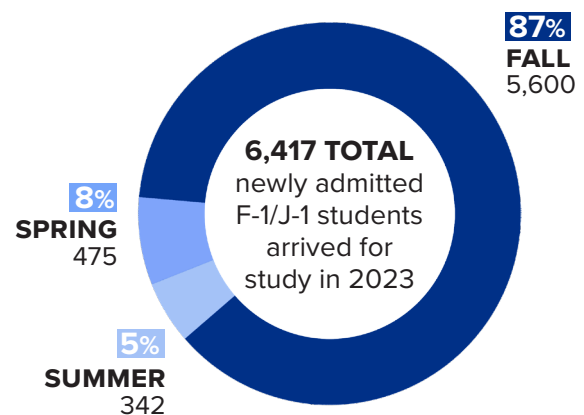
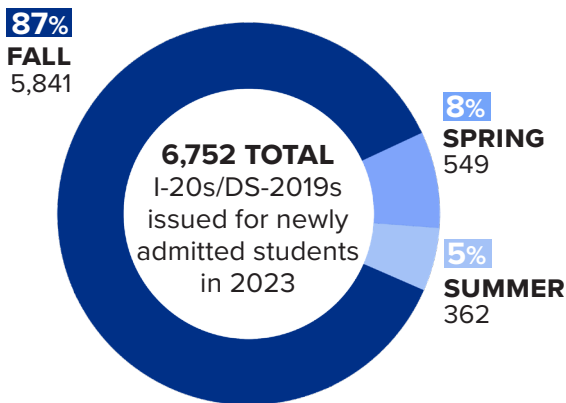
ENROLLED F-1 AND J-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, 2013–2023



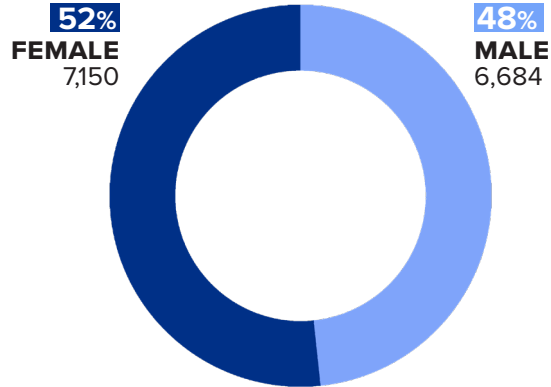
NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENT I-20/DS-2019 REQUESTS

VS.

NEWLY ADMITTED F-1/J-1 STUDENT ARRIVALS



GENDER*



*Gender as listed on passport or in Columbia University's Student Information System

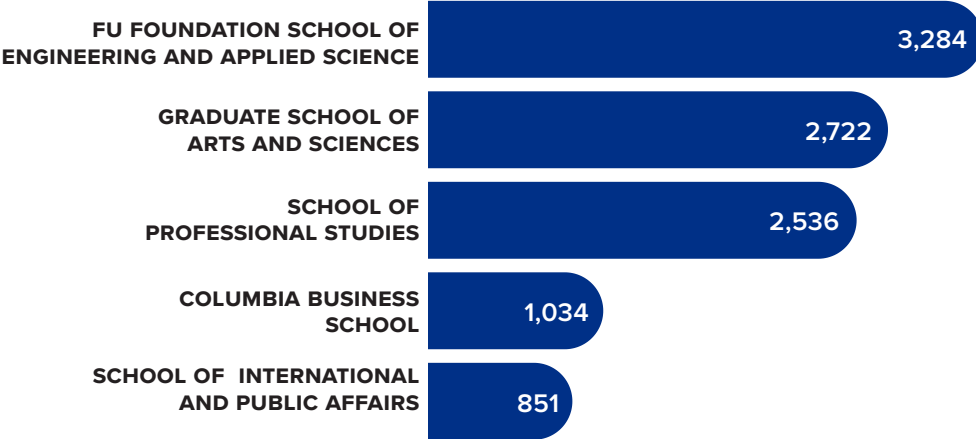
ACADEMIC LEVEL



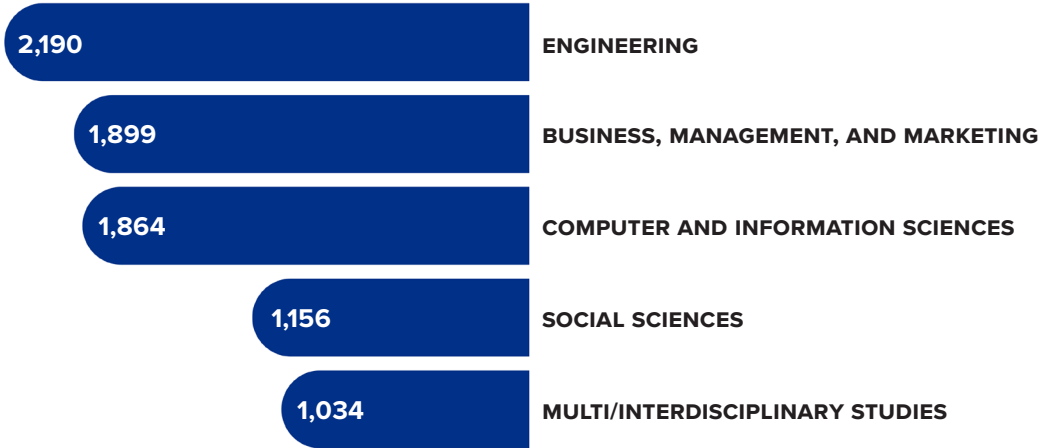
VISA TYPE



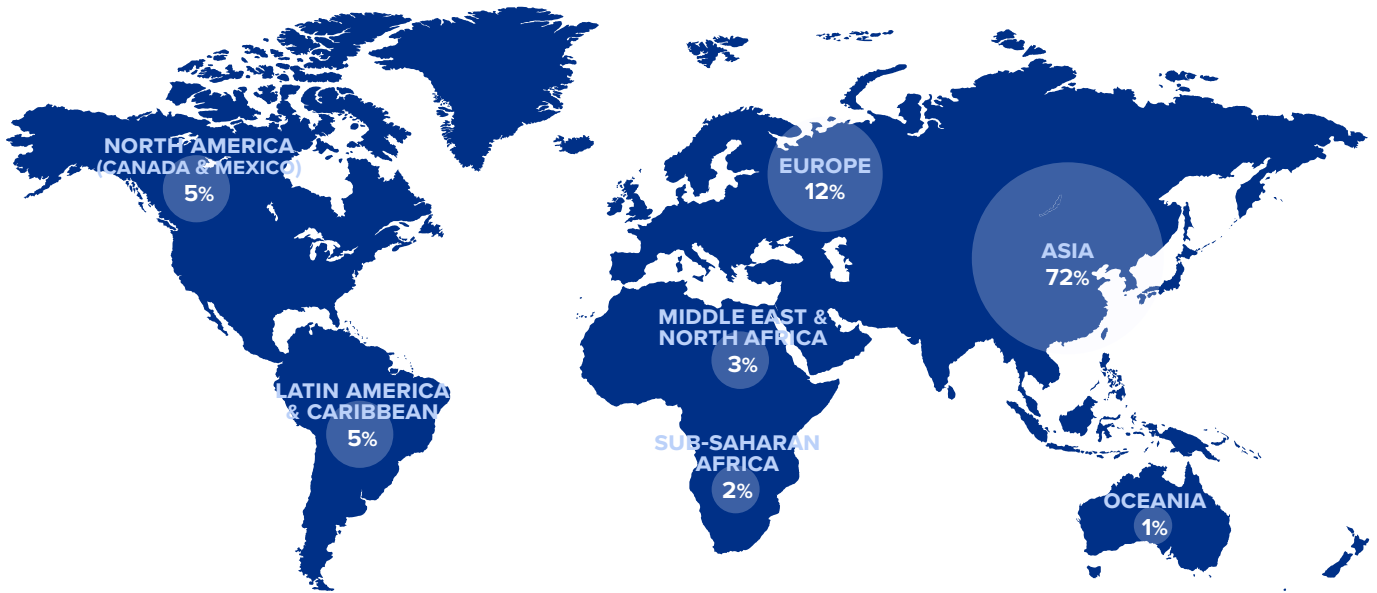
TOP 5 SCHOOLS BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POPULATION



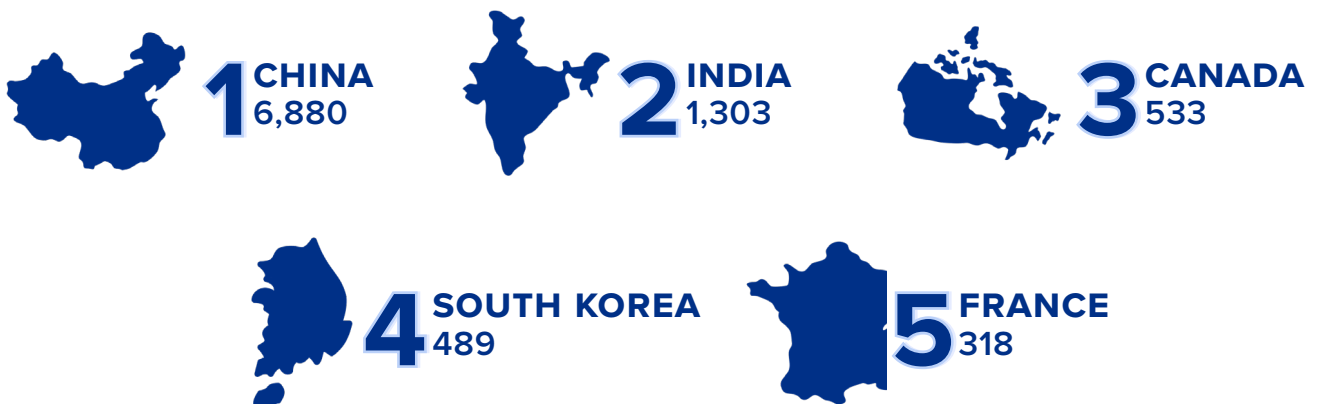
TOP 5 FIELDS OF STUDY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POPULATION BY REGION



TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

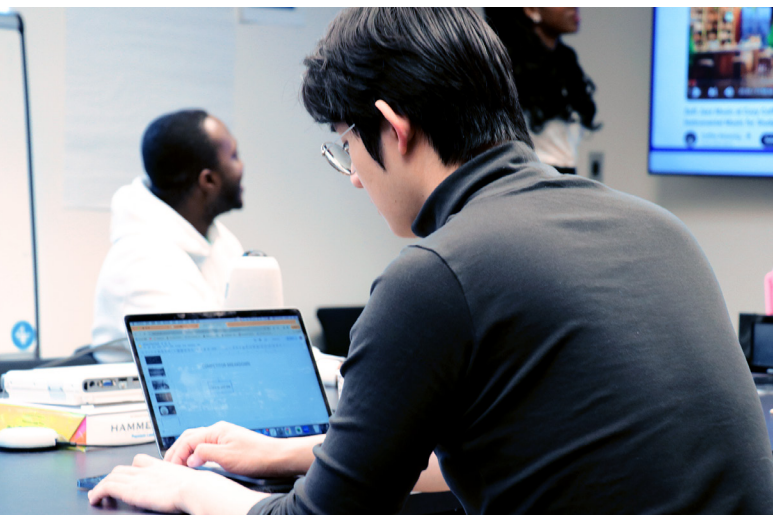




Employment Authorizations

Students in F-1 or J-1 status may engage in employment before and/or after the completion of their degree program, upon meeting eligibility requirements.

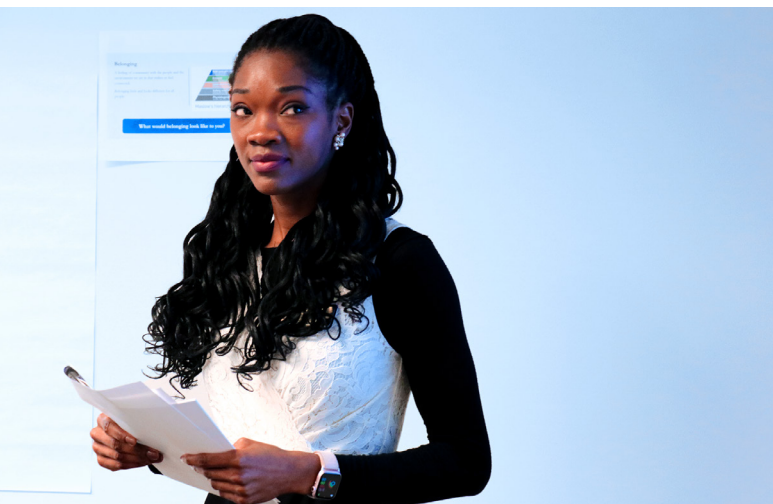
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is authorization for off-campus employment that is an integral part of the established curriculum of the student's degree program. CPT is not available to all F-1 students because it is dependent on the academic requirements of the student's program.



Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment authorization that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. Eligible students can apply to receive up to 12 months of OPT.

STEM Extension Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT) is for F-1 students who have earned a degree in a certain science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) field of study. Eligible students may apply for a 24-month extension of their Post-Completion OPT employment authorization.

Academic Training (AT) is a benefit of J-1 Exchange Visitor student status that allows the student to work in their academic field for the purpose of applying knowledge and skills learned during their program of study.



STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION REQUESTS

2,754

TOTAL CPT

4,613

TOTAL POST-
COMPLETION
OPT

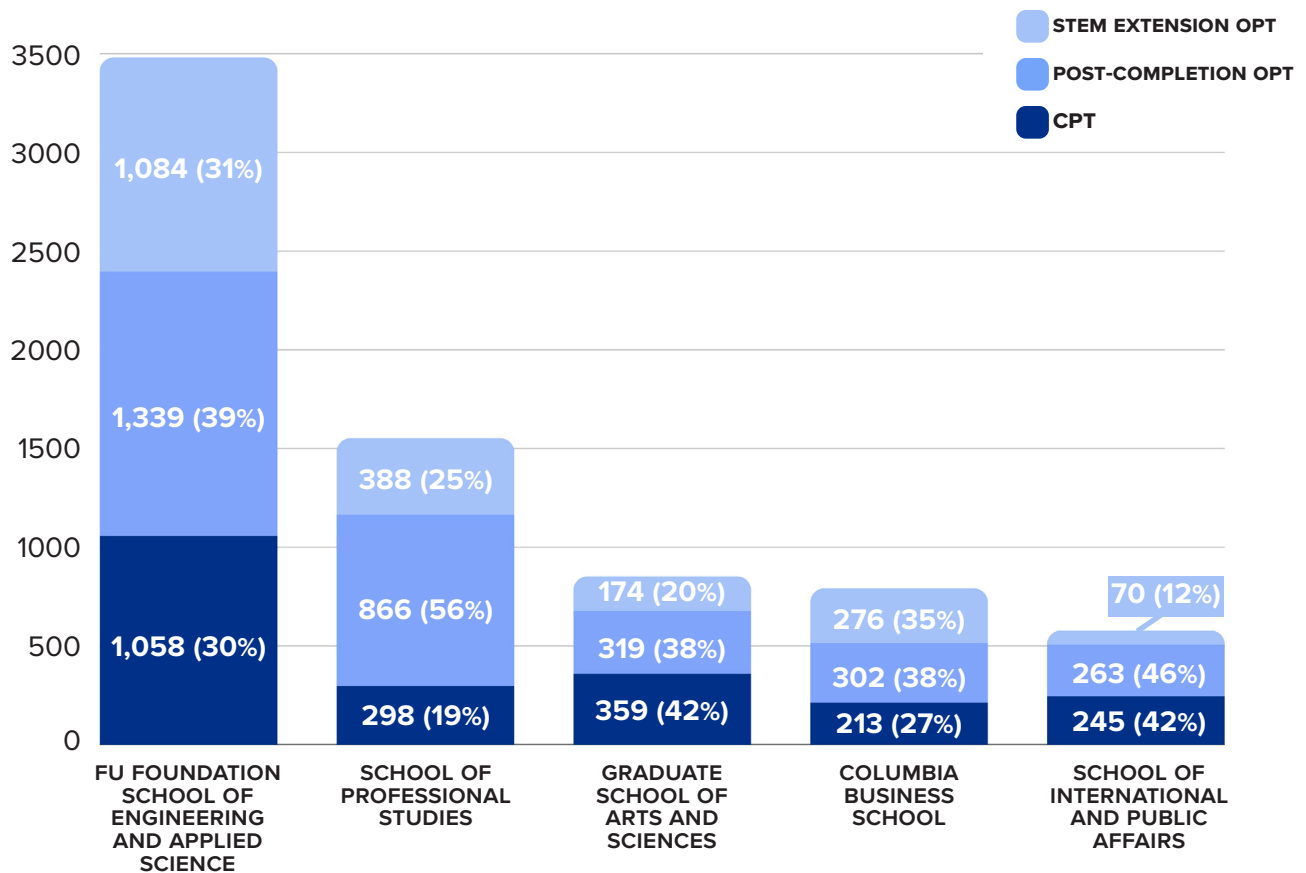
2,320

TOTAL STEM
EXTENSION OPT

50

TOTAL POST-
COMPLETION AT

TOP 5 SCHOOLS F-1 STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION REQUESTS



SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL FACULTY AND SCHOLARS

ISSO is the key service provider concerning all immigration-related needs and is responsible for federal regulation compliance related to J-1, H-1B, E-3, O-1, and TN visa statuses. We also assist in sponsoring employment-based Permanent Residence (PR) applications.

We offer workshops and webinars on topics related to immigration and other practical aspects of life in the U.S. The social events provided are great opportunities for scholars to meet and connect with colleagues across the University.

ISSO also offers training to academic departments designed to meet their specific needs when sponsoring and supporting international scholars.

Programs, Workshops, and Events

Clear Speaking Workshop

Focuses on spontaneous speaking and confidence building to enhance networking and business communication skills.

Clear Presenting Workshop

Focuses on how to prepare and deliver engaging presentations and increase confidence in public speaking.

Academic Integrity Workshop

Focuses on the definition and manifestations of plagiarism, its consequences, and strategies for presenting others' ideas. Provides a review of the mechanics of citing sources, and explores and practices the key principles of paraphrasing.

New International Scholar Happy Hour

Provides a casual, social opportunity for newly arrived scholars to meet, create friendships, and connect with others in Columbia University's scholar community.

Welcome Reception for International Faculty and Researchers

Provides an opportunity to welcome newly arrived international faculty and researchers across Columbia University campuses. Co-sponsored by Columbia Engineering.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Faculty and Scholar Orientations

Provides J-1 scholars and J-1 student interns with essential immigration information and provides the opportunity to meet others and learn more about ISSO's services and programs.

Tax Webinars

Sprintax representatives host tax webinars to provide an overview of tax obligations and the processes for filing tax returns.

Information and Training Sessions for Academic Departments

These information sessions provide academic departments with the knowledge and tools needed to sponsor and support international faculty and scholars. Topics include: sponsoring J-1 and H-1B visas for faculty and researchers, employment-based permanent residence sponsorship, and visa sponsorship for Visiting Student Interns and Visiting Scholars.



“I could always count on ISSO to get a precise, timely, humane response to my questions and doubts. I am immensely grateful to ISSO.”



— LAURELINE JOSSET,
ASSOCIATE RESEARCH SCIENTIST,
DEPARTMENT OF EARTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING



#ISSOSTORIES Spotlight

Antonia Nascimento Moreira, Scholar

Antonia serves as Director of Strategy at Ateliê TRANSmoras, a space for the production of art, fashion, and culture aimed at the trans community. Since 2013, TRANSmoras has built artistic residencies and remains a meeting place for social leaders, seamstresses, producers, students, and LGBTQIA+ people in Brazil.

Quick Facts:

- Program/Department: Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Human Rights Advocates Program
- Primary Area of Research: Human Rights
- Home Country: Brazil

Tell us about your research and projects at Columbia.

The Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) selects advocates working on critical issues around the world. In Brazil, I am Director of Strategy at Ateliê TRANSmoras Association, a trans-led non-profit organization that works through economic empowerment and artistic production to change the scenario of violence towards trans people. Transphobia is the leading cause for trans feminine identities to have only 35 years of life-expectancy. That's why we do educational advocacy and projects in arts, fashion, social movements and

academia, to foster income generation, movement building and rights. With the opportunity to study at Columbia, I am developing myself as an advocate, expanding my networking for partnerships, knowledge, exchange and fundraising. Also, I am conducting independent research about transgender art movements in Brazil.

How has your experience at Columbia been?

Columbia, so far, has been great. As a visiting scholar taking classes in the Law School and Oral History Masters program, I can apply knowledge and methodologies in my research and advocacy pathway. HRAP is at the forefront of capacity building in Human Rights.

With Humans Rights Watch, I learned the concept of ongoing trauma, which helps me to connect the rhetoric of trans rights being human rights, as what we see in Brazil is an ongoing trauma related to violence among trans communities. With Philantropia, I learned how large foundations in the U.S. work. With Storycorps, I learned more about the power of storytelling in Oral History research and art. With my colleagues from South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia I'm learning about their grassroots projects and also high-level advocacy with trans and LGBTQIA+ rights, and what is close to Brazil, and what is different. With my friends working with indigenous rights in Mexico and Bolivia I learn everyday about intersectionality, as well as from Haiti, Dominican Republic, Georgia and Serbia advocates.

What is the hardest thing about living here?

The hardest part is to be far away from my family and friends, to not see my cat and my girlfriends on a daily basis, and of course, to not experience the beautiful summer in Brazil. However, I view this unique experience as a way to strengthen my resilience, leadership, and bravery.

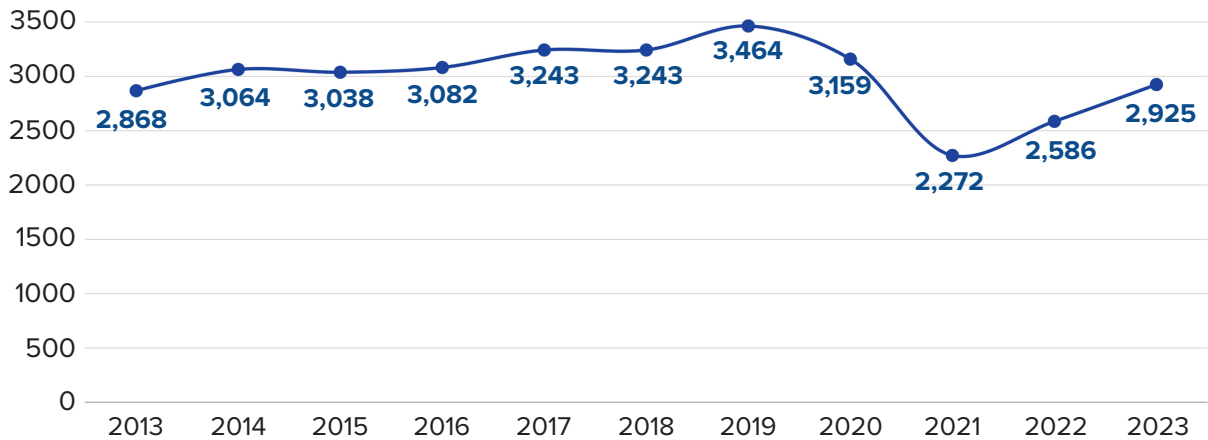
#issostories offers Columbia students and scholars the opportunity to share stories about their lives and advice on living in New York City and the U.S. Participants have their submissions posted through ISSO's newsletters, website, and social media channels.



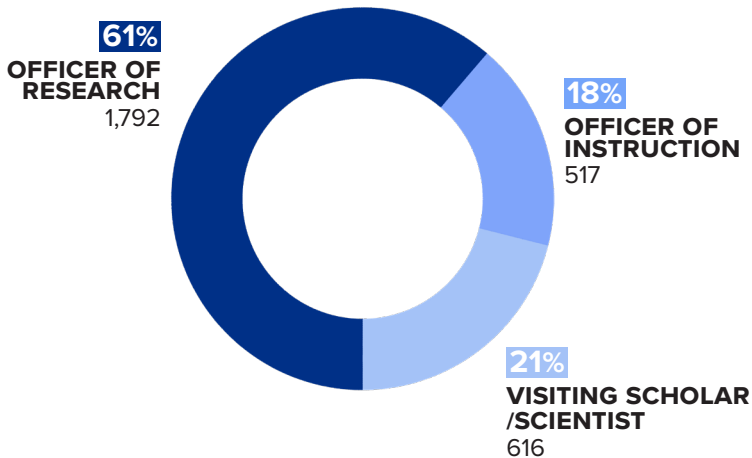
Faculty and Scholar Population Data

The ISSO participates in the annual national Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors survey which collects information on international scholars based on the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Columbia University hosts the third largest population of international scholars in the U.S. according to the latest 2022-2023 IIE Open Doors statistics.

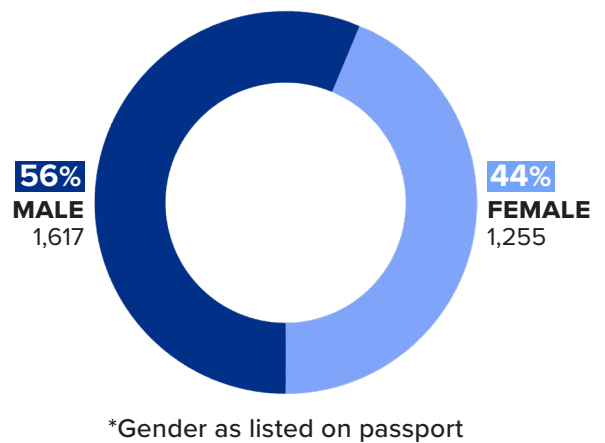
INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR POPULATION, 2013–2023



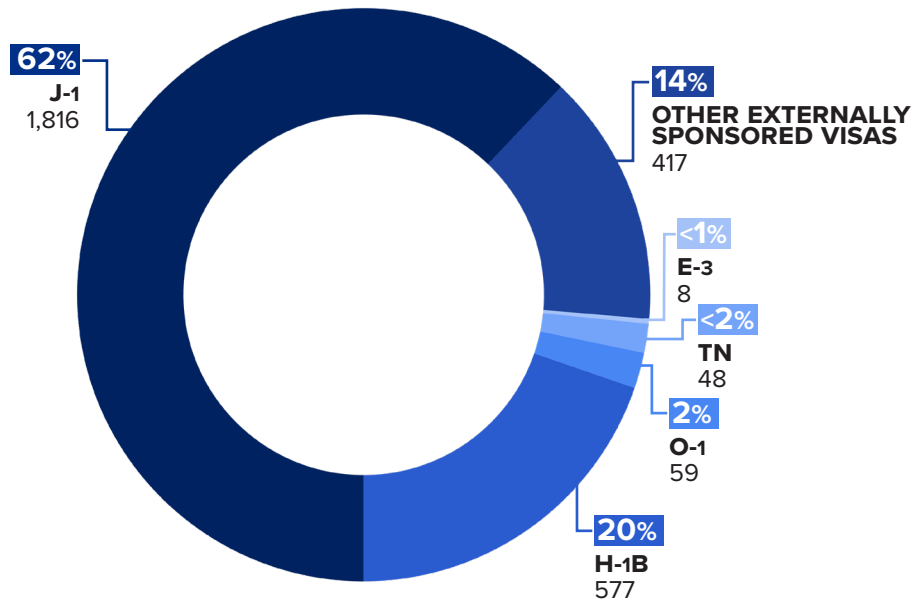
TYPE OF AFFILIATION



GENDER*



VISA TYPE



PERMANENT RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

23

EB-1 I-140
OUTSTANDING
RESEARCHER/
PROFESSOR

16

SH PERM
LABOR
CERTIFICATIONS

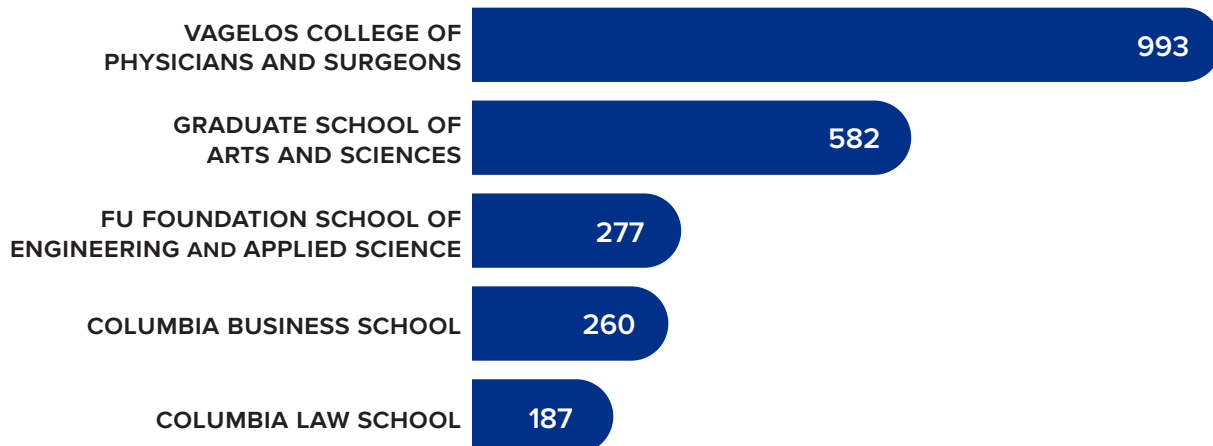
9

EB-2 I-140
NATIONAL
INTEREST
WAIVER (NIW)

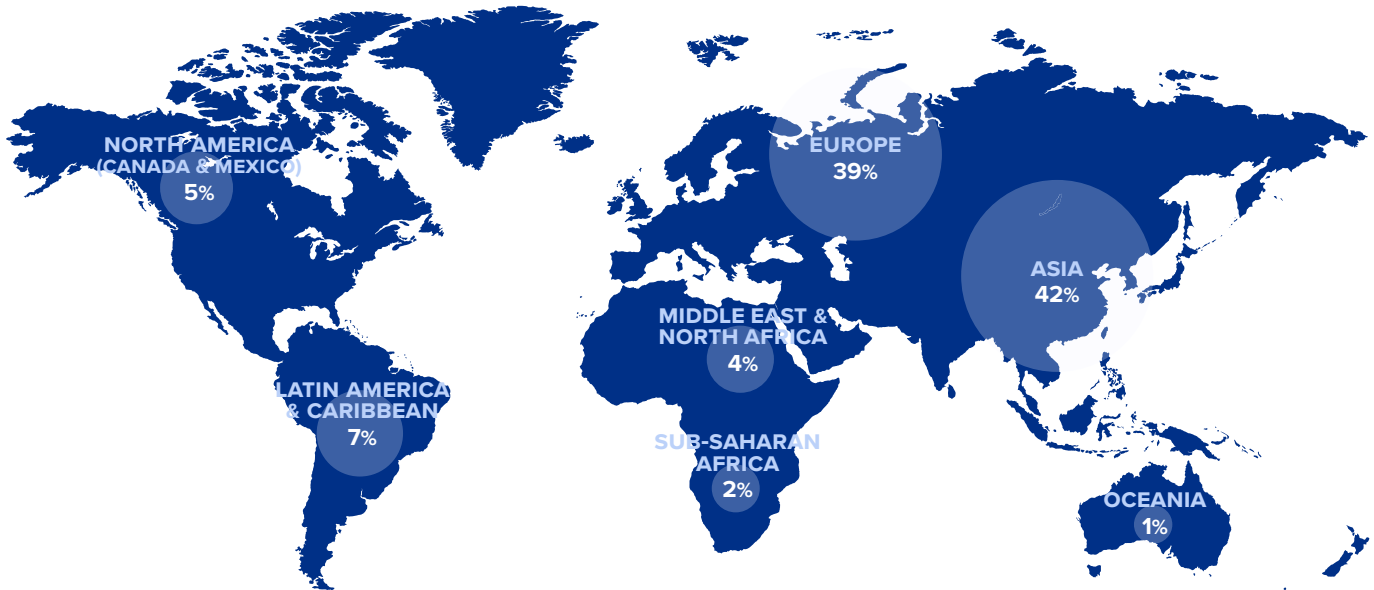
4

EB-2 I-140
BASED ON
CERTIFIED
PERM

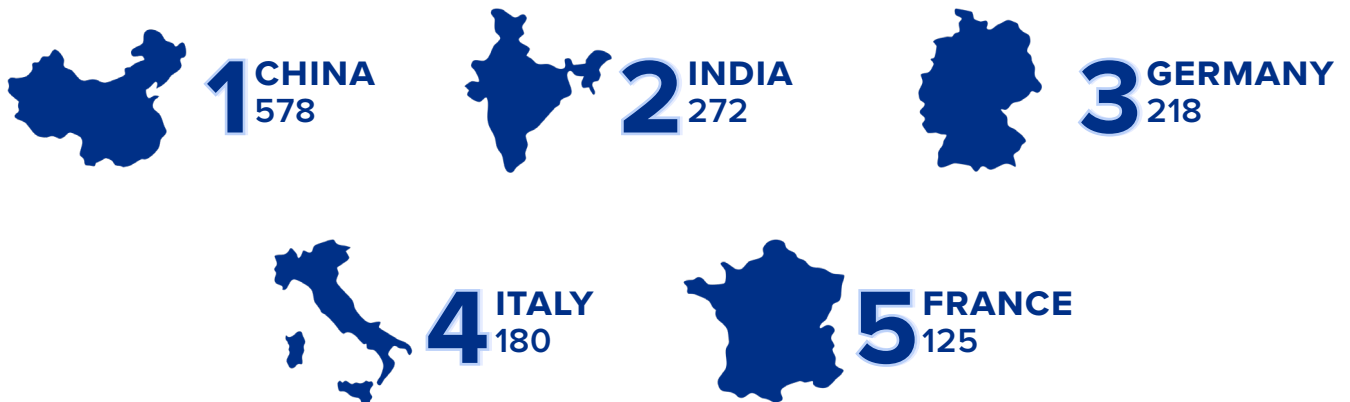
TOTAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS AT TOP 5 SCHOOLS



PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR POPULATION BY REGION



TOP 5 COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS



SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL SPOUSES, PARTNERS, AND FAMILIES

The ISSO provides opportunities for spouses/partners and their children to come together to share their experiences, practice English, and explore Columbia University and the New York City area.

Programs, Workshops, and Events

International Spouse and Partner Welcome Lunch

The ISSO hosts a lunch in which newly arrived spouses and partners meet other families already in residence.

The community shares a lunch together and listens to guest speakers who discuss childcare, volunteering, safety, and wellness.



Networking: The American Way and Creating a Fulfilling Life at Columbia

These two interactive workshops focus on the cultural adjustment process, personal and professional communication, and the challenges of starting a new life in a foreign country.



International Potluck Dinners

International students, faculty and researchers, and their families are invited to bring a favorite dish or beverage to share with others and enjoy an evening meeting new people.

English Conversation Classes

These small group classes held weekly during the Fall and Spring semesters help newly arrived spouses and partners gain confidence and competence in English, introduce U.S. customs, and provide an opportunity to make new friends.





“I contacted the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) because I wanted to create a group with other spouses like me, that share these same feelings and face the same struggles living abroad. Working as a volunteer for ISSO made my life fulfilled with a purpose and was a game changer to me: I started to practice my English, I made a friendship network and now I can say that I have an American family that supports me!”



— BRUNA PECHINI,
BRAZIL

“As an international spouse, being part of the International Spouse and Partner Network (ISPN) and attending their activities—such as the luncheons, the Weekly Conversational English Class, and the monthly outings—provided the perfect opportunities to connect with fellow peers. It made me feel part of a close-knit, supportive community. I genuinely appreciate the ISSO’s efforts in making our experience as international spouses authentic and enjoyable!”



— LAURA TAVAZZANI,
ITALY



COMMUNICATIONS

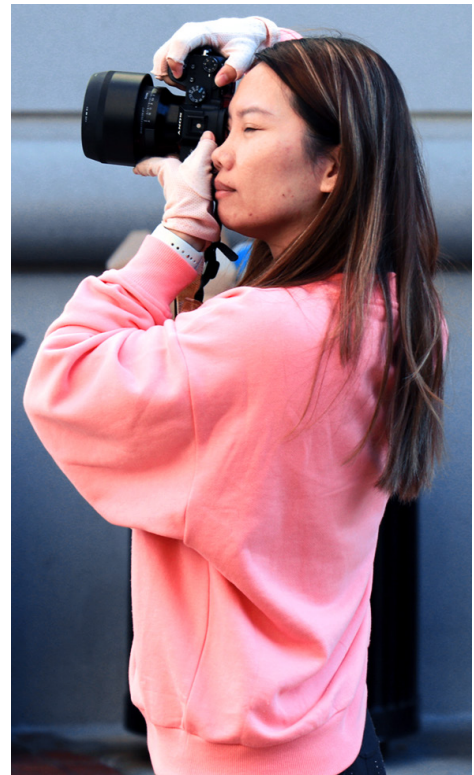
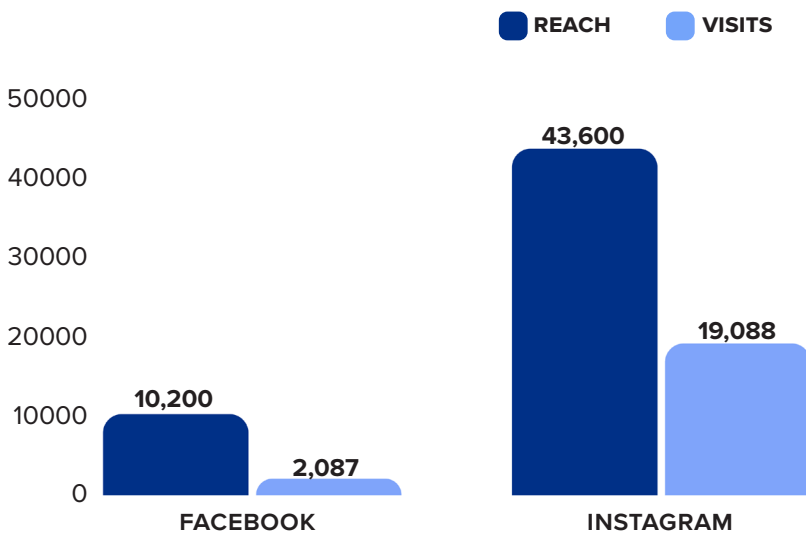
The ISSO communications team oversees, manages, and maintains all communications-related materials for the ISSO: website, email marketing, user testing, social media, interactive forms, and various other types of online communications. The communications team's attention is focused on ISSO's audiences and their user experience.

Active ISSO Social Media Accounts



Overall Social Media Trends

Comparing Instagram to Facebook in 2023, Instagram reached more users. Reach is the number of unique people who could possibly interact or view content.



WeChat

ISSO and Columbia University Global Centers | Beijing began this monthly collaboration on the popular Chinese instant messaging and social media app. Released monthly each semester, ISSO events and updates are shared regularly not only with WeChat users, but family, prospective students, and scholars in China.

5,273 **343** **SEPTEMBER** **1,181**
TOTAL TOTAL MONTH WITH MOST TOTAL VIEWS
VIEWS/IMPRESSIONS SHARES VIEWS/IMPRESSIONS IN SEPTEMBER

“As an international student, navigating the complexities of visas and immigration can be daunting, but the ISSO-Beijing Center’s WeChat column has been an invaluable resource. The bilingual updates have made understanding the process much easier and helped reduce the anxiety of moving to the U.S. for my studies at Columbia!”



— SEAN CHEN,
CURRENT STUDENT,
COLUMBIA ENGINEERING

“I always look forward to the ISSO-Beijing Center’s WeChat updates. The blend of campus activities, cultural adjustment tips, and immigration advice has been a lifeline as I adjust to life at Columbia. It’s like having a knowledgeable friend guide you through the ins and outs of campus life. Their support has made a world of difference!”



— BILLY ZHANG,
CURRENT STUDENT,
COLUMBIA ENGINEERING



Newsletters

As email is one of ISSO's main methods of communication, ISSOnews is sent weekly via email during the semester to students and monthly during the year to scholars. ISSOnews consists of immigration reminders, news, events, and stories for and from the international community.

ISSONEWS AUDIENCES

STUDENT ISSONEWS LIST



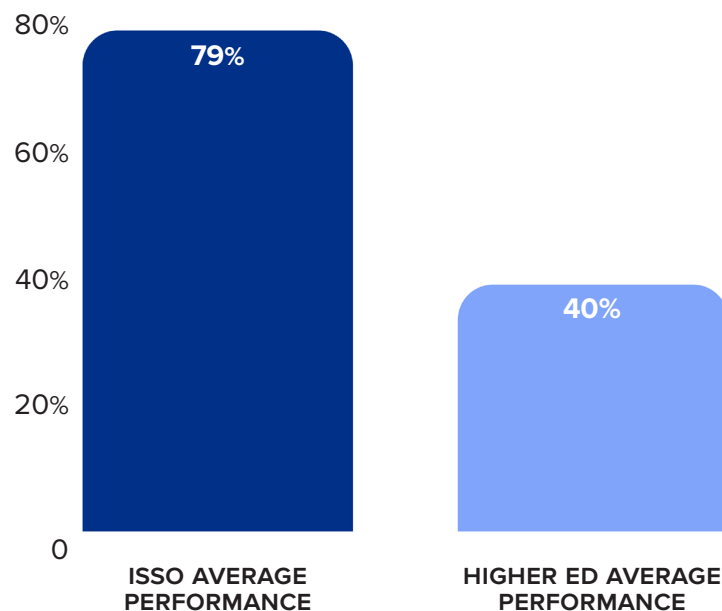
14,000+ SUBSCRIBERS

SCHOLAR ISSONEWS LIST



1,500+ SUBSCRIBERS

STUDENT ISSONEWS OPEN RATE



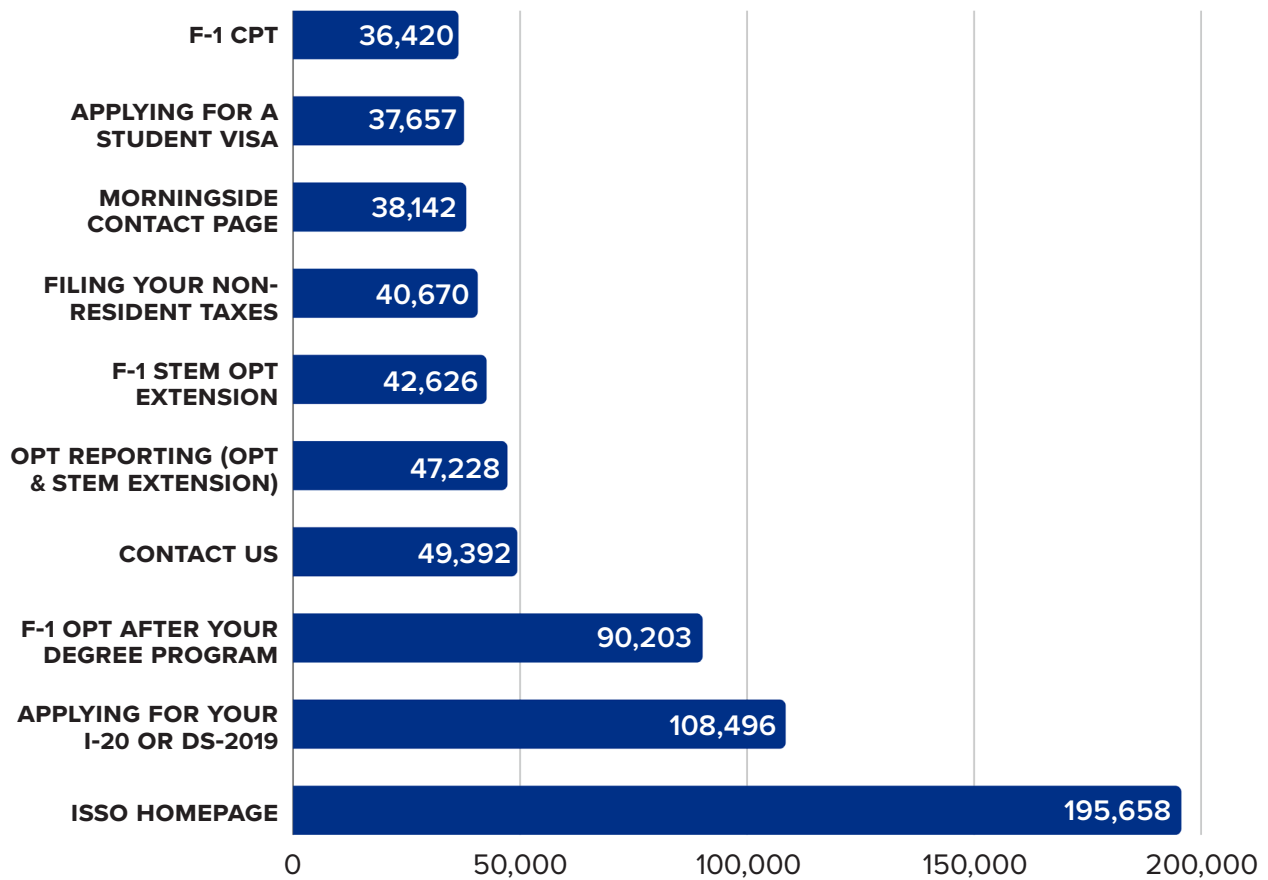
Website

1,305,080

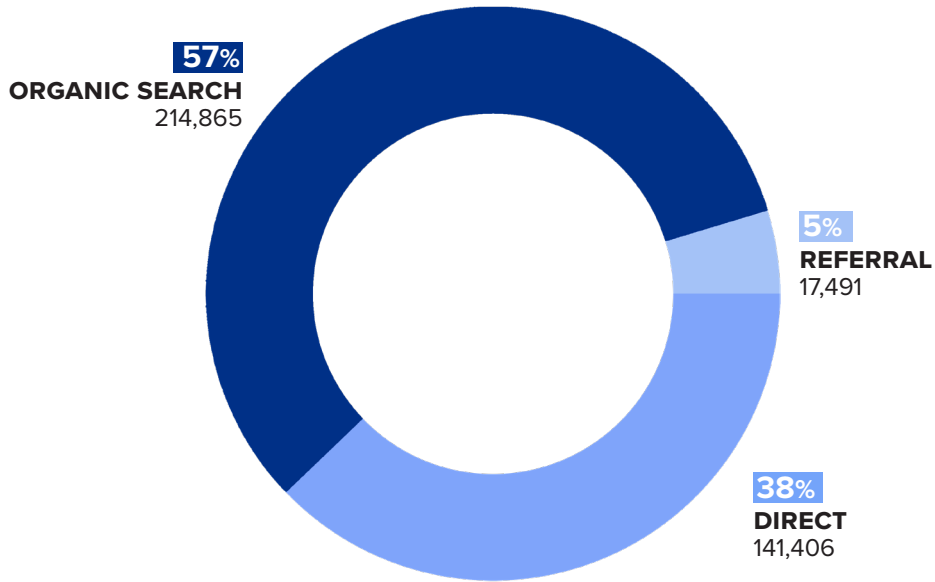
TOTAL WEBPAGE VISITS



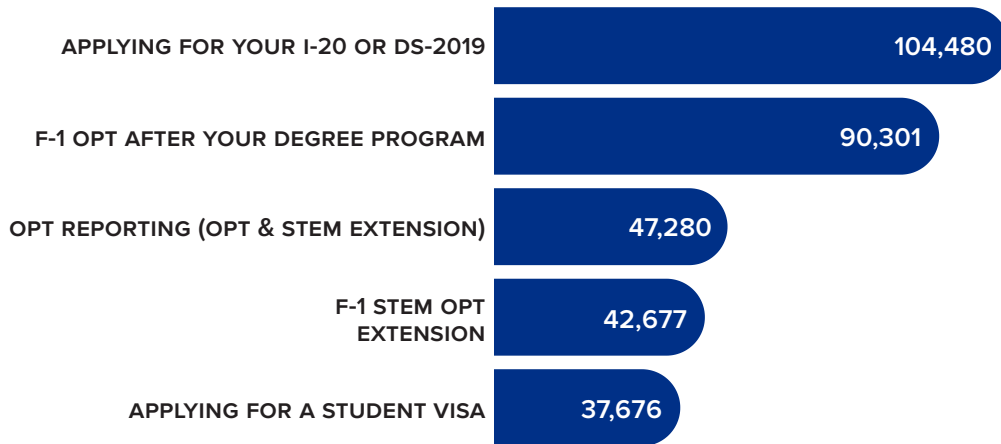
TOP 10 WEBPAGES



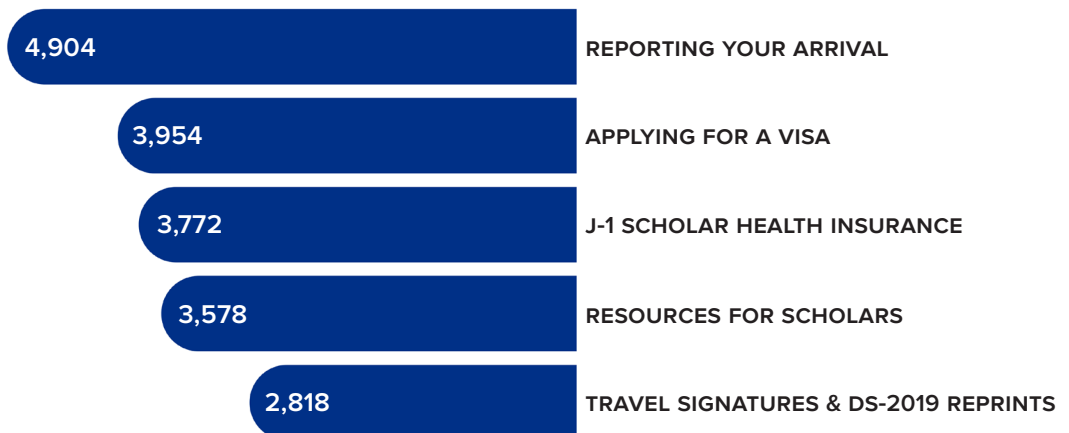
TRAFFIC ACQUISITION



TOP 5 WEBPAGES VIEWED BY STUDENTS



TOP 5 WEBPAGES VIEWED BY SCHOLARS



Appendix A:

GLOSSARY

Academic Training (AT)

A benefit of J-1 student status that allows students to work for the purpose of applying knowledge and skills learned during their program of study.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

A benefit of F-1 student status that authorizes students to participate in off-campus employment that is an integral part of the established curriculum of their degree program.

E-3

Visa category available to Australian citizens coming temporarily to the U.S. to perform services in a specialty occupation.

EB-1

Employment-based first preference immigrant visa; this classification for Permanent Residence is further broken down into EB-1A Extraordinary Ability and EB-1B Outstanding Professor or Researcher.

EB-2

Employment-based second preference immigrant visa; this classification for Permanent Residence is further broken down into Advanced Degree and National Interest Waiver (Exceptional Ability).

F-1

Most common student visa that permits foreign students to pursue a full course of study in a college, university, other academic institution, or accredited language training program in the U.S.

H-1B

Visa category available to foreign nationals coming temporarily to the U.S. to perform services in a specialty occupation.

I-140

Employment-based immigrant visa petition.

J-1

Foreign nationals participating in the Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program. J-1 Exchange Visitors at Columbia are commonly in student, professor, scholar, student-intern, or specialist categories.

O-1

Visa category available to foreign nationals who have demonstrated a career of extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics.

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

A benefit and 12-month extension of F-1 student status that permits students to remain in the U.S. after completing their academic program with employment authorization to work in their field of study.

Special Handling Program Electronic Review Management (SH-PERM)

The Special Handling PERM application is filed with the U.S. Department of Labor and requires that documentation attesting to the University's competitive recruitment process be maintained for a period of five (5) years.

STEM Extension Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT)

A 24-month extension of Post-Completion OPT that is available to students in F-1 status who completed a degree program in a government-approved list of STEM fields.

TN

Visa category available to Canadian and Mexican citizens employed in certain occupations as per the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

Appendix B:

DATA SUMMARY

International Students

Total number enrolled for Fall 2023 **by school**; includes international students in all visa statuses

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MORNINGSIDES AND MANHATTANVILLE CAMPUSES

| SCHOOL | TOTAL GRADUATE STUDENTS | TOTAL UNDER-GRADUATE STUDENTS | TOTAL NON-DEGREE STUDENTS | TOTAL ENROLLED STUDENTS |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE | 2,900 | 372 | 12 | 3,284 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES | 2,656 | | 66 | 2,722 |
| SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES | 2,418 | | 118 | 2,536 |
| COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL | 1,005 | | 29 | 1,034 |
| SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS | 850 | | 1 | 851 |
| COLUMBIA COLLEGE | | 647 | 63 | 710 |
| SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES | | 608 | | 608 |
| COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL | 535 | | 33 | 568 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION | 403 | | 4 | 407 |
| SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | 263 | | | 263 |
| SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK | 141 | | | 141 |
| COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL | 126 | | 1 | 127 |
| COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL | 40 | | | 40 |
| TOTAL | 11,337 | 1,627 | 327 | 13,291 |

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IRVING MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

| SCHOOL | TOTAL GRADUATE STUDENTS | TOTAL UNDER-GRADUATE STUDENTS | TOTAL NON-DEGREE STUDENTS | TOTAL ENROLLED STUDENTS |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH | 447 | | | 447 |
| SCHOOL OF NURSING | 21 | | 15 | 36 |
| VAGELOS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS | 33 | | 1 | 34 |
| COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE | 23 | | 7 | 30 |
| TOTAL | 524 | 0 | 23 | 547 |

Total number enrolled for Fall 2023 **by region**; includes international students in all visa statuses

| REGION | TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ASIA | 10,054 |
| EUROPE | 1,666 |
| LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN | 683 |
| NORTH AMERICA | 670 |
| MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | 414 |
| SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA | 221 |
| OCEANIA | 129 |
| UNKNOWN | 1 |
| TOTAL | 13,838 |

Requests Received

For CPT, Post-Completion OPT, STEM Extension OPT, and Academic Training **by school** (Jan–Dec 2023)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MORNINGSIDE AND MANHATTANVILLE CAMPUSES

| SCHOOL | TOTAL CPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL POST-COMPLETION OPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL STEM EXTENSION OPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL POST-COMPLETION AT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL REQUESTS RECEIVED |
|--|-----------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|
| FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE | 1,058 | 1,339 | 1,084 | 3 | 3,484 |
| SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES | 298 | 866 | 388 | 5 | 1,557 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES | 213 | 647 | 276 | 14 | 1,150 |
| COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL | 359 | 319 | 174 | 13 | 865 |
| SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS | 245 | 263 | 70 | 8 | 586 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION | 82 | 242 | 149 | | 473 |
| COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL | 184 | 263 | 2 | 4 | 453 |
| COLUMBIA COLLEGE | 113 | 109 | 59 | | 281 |
| SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES | 75 | 135 | 47 | | 257 |
| COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL | | 94 | 7 | | 101 |
| SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | 26 | 69 | | 2 | 97 |
| SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK | 15 | 46 | 3 | 1 | 65 |
| COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL | | 17 | 6 | | 23 |
| TOTAL | 2,668 | 4,409 | 2,265 | 50 | 9,392 |

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IRVING MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

| SCHOOL | TOTAL CPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL POST-COMPLETION OPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL STEM EXTENSION OPT REQUESTS RECEIVED | TOTAL REQUESTS RECEIVED |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH | 85 | 183 | 51 | 319 |
| VAGELOS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS | 1 | 14 | 4 | 19 |
| COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE | | 4 | | 4 |
| SCHOOL OF NURSING | | 3 | | 3 |
| TOTAL | 86 | 204 | 55 | 345 |

International Scholars

Total number of scholars by school/office, FY 2022 - 2023

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MORNINGSIDE AND MANHATTANVILLE CAMPUSES

| SCHOOL/INSTITUTE/OFFICE | TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARS |
|--|--------------------------|
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES | 582 |
| FU FOUNDATION OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE | 277 |
| COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL | 260 |
| COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL | 187 |
| ZUCKERMAN MIND BRAIN BEHAVIOR INSTITUTE | 133 |
| COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL | 129 |
| SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS | 80 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION | 66 |
| SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES | 66 |
| SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | 19 |
| COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL | 13 |
| COLUMBIA WORLD PROJECTS | 11 |
| SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK | 10 |
| UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES | 5 |
| COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS | 1 |
| TOTAL | 1,839 |

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IRVING MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

| SCHOOL | TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARS |
|--|--------------------------|
| VAGELOS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS | 993 |
| MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH | 67 |
| COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE | 20 |
| SCHOOL OF NURSING | 6 |
| TOTAL | 1,086 |

Total number of international scholars **by region**, FY 2022-2023

| REGION | TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARS |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ASIA | 1,177 |
| EUROPE | 1,101 |
| LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN | 185 |
| NORTH AMERICA | 144 |
| UNKNOWN | 122 |
| MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | 110 |
| SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA | 46 |
| OCEANIA | 40 |
| TOTAL | 2,925 |

Appendix C:

ISSO STAFF

Compliance

Maria Y. Reynoso

Interim Executive Director of ISSO
and Director of Compliance

Mazaher Tejani

Associate Director

Marc Mejia

Assistant Director

Tomasz Tuleja

Assistant Director

Dawn Hoffman

Senior Compliance Adviser

Evelyn Wang

Senior Compliance Adviser

Claire Rehbock

Data Analyst

Nikolas J. Baranco

Compliance Adviser

Morningside and Manhattanville Student Services and Programming

Samantha Lu

Director

Jennifer Soler

Associate Director

Regina Degnan

Assistant Director

Noelle Willecke

Assistant Director

Alexis M. Akagawa

Senior International Student
Adviser

Martha Baillargeon

Senior International Student
Adviser

Michelle Desikan

Senior International Student
Adviser

Jennifer C. Douglas

Senior International Student
Adviser

Sandra D. Hampton

Senior International Student
Adviser

Scott Keller

Senior International Student
Adviser

Simone Long

Senior International Student
Adviser

Daniel Kweku Anguah

International Student Adviser

Jacob Dyer

International Student Adviser

Seong Hwan Jeon

International Student Adviser

Mark Muszynski

International Student Adviser

Clayton Verberkmoes

International Student Adviser

Chuchu Xu

International Student Adviser

Shaquan Joseph

Call Center Representative

**Morningside and Manhattanville
Faculty and Scholar Services**

Jane Acton
Director

Elizabeth K. Basile
Senior Assistant Director for
O-1 and Permanent Residence

Kimberly Carr
Senior Scholar Adviser

Colleen Weiss
Senior Scholar Adviser

**ISSO-CUIMC, Columbia University
Irving Medical Center**

Kathleen McVeigh
Director

Gwyneth A. Smith
Senior Associate Director

M. Ximena Corley
Assistant Director

Hadija Wilson
Assistant Director

Stacey E. DiMarino
International Student and Scholar
Adviser

Information Technology

Kurtis Liang
Associate Director

Lana Alkhatib
Assistant Director

Communications

Ben Canning-Pereira
Assistant Director

Jocelyn Molina
Communications Specialist

Programming

Chad Goeden
Associate Director

Stacy Bile
Assistant Director, International
Student Engagement

James Lee
Assistant Director, International
Student Professional Development
Programming

Joseph Hanson
Program Manager

Credits

Project Management
Ben Canning-Pereira

Design
Jocelyn Molina
Marc A. Raymond

Data Analysis
Claire Rehbock
Evelyn Wang

Photography
ISSO Communications
Eileen M. Barroso

Iconography
Flaticon.com
Freepik.com





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International Students & Scholars Office

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Columbia University Irving Medical Center Campus
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