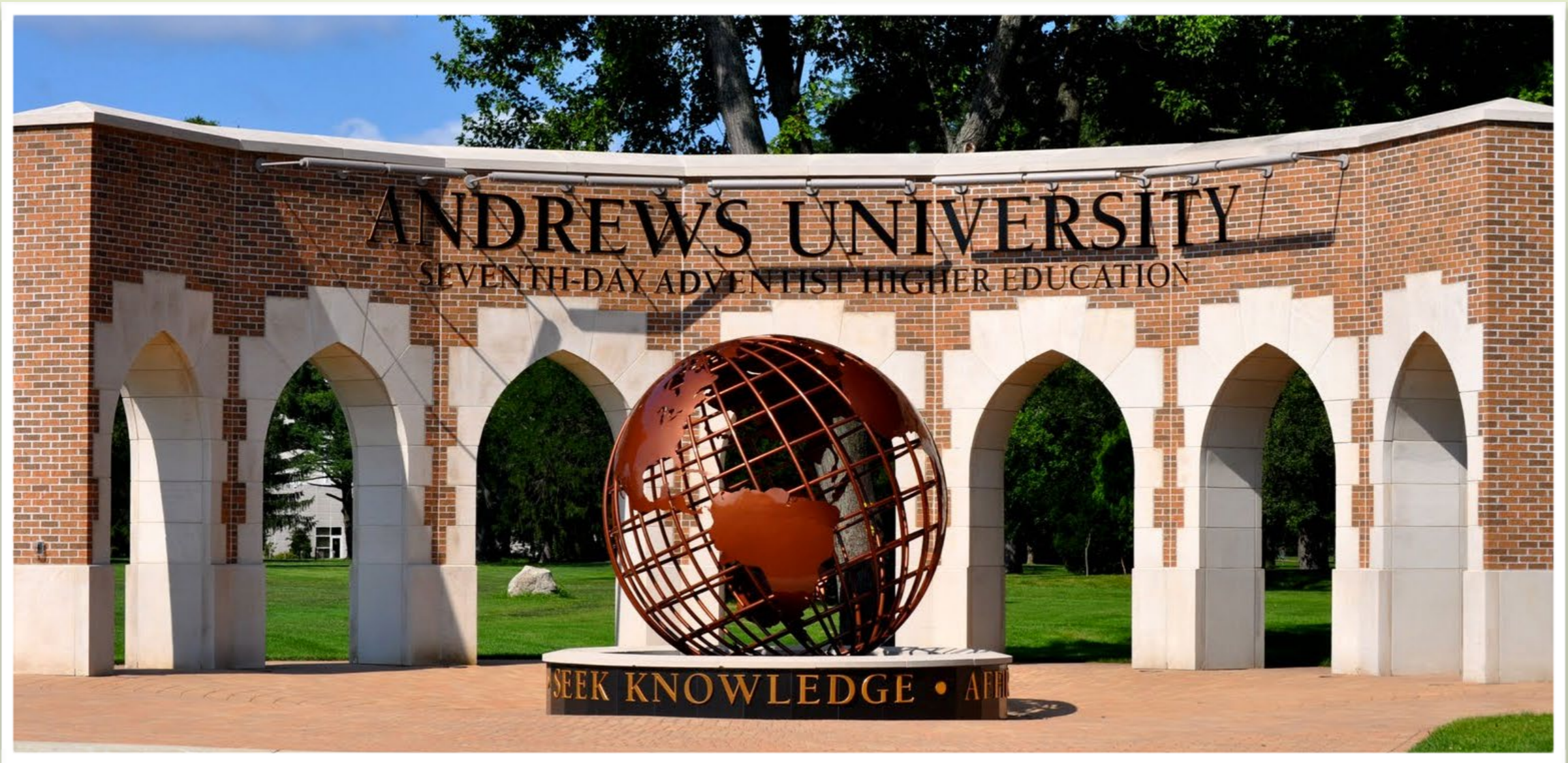


Immigration Information for F-1 Visa Students

Spring 2025



Welcome All New International Students!

Office of International Student Services and Programs (OISSP)

This orientation guide is for new undergraduate and graduate international students in Spring 2025.

Welcome to all of you!

Office of International Student Services and Programs (OISSP)

Christian Stuart

Associate Dean for International Education

College of Education and International Services (CEIS)

CEIS



OISSP

OISSP Staff

- **Silmara Ferreira**
International Student Services Director
- **Dionne Gittens**
International Financial Advisor
- **Jennifer Pena-Alvarez**
International Financial Advisor
- **Sonia Wilches**
International Student Services Coordinator

Contact Information

Email: iss@andrews.edu

Phone Number: 269-471-6395

Office Location: Administration Building 307

Office Hours:

- **Monday-Thursday** 9 AM – 12:30 PM / 1:30 PM – 5 PM
- **Friday** 9 AM – 12 PM

F-1 Immigration Orientation

This presentation will cover:

1. Initial Check-in
2. Important Terminology
3. Immigration Documents
4. Maintaining Status
5. FAQs
6. Final Announcements

1. Initial Check-in

As a new international student, you will need to complete a check-in process:

- Read and understand the information in this presentation: *Immigration Information for F-1 Visa Students*
- Submit a completed **Statement of Acknowledgment** (the form is included in your orientation packet)

Initial Check-in

If you are attending the International Student Orientation, we are completing the Initial Check-in together right now:

- We are going through the presentation together
- You will complete and leave the **Statement of Acknowledgment** form at your table

(If you are not able to attend the orientation, please submit the completed Statement of Acknowledgment as soon as possible by emailing iss@andrews.edu)

Arrival Documents

We also need to see your Arrival Documents:

- Signed I-20
- Passport with your F-1 visa
- Emailed copy of your I-94 arrival card

You can present your I-20 and passport **right now** in the International Student Orientation or bring them to the International Student office in AD 307.

You can submit your I-94 after we explain it in this presentation.

2. Important Terminology

You may have come across the following acronyms:

DHS, SEVP, SEVIS, DSO, and USCIS

DHS and SEVP

DHS = Department of Homeland Security

This is the government agency that has oversight over non-citizens in the U.S.

SEVP = Student and Exchange Visitor Program

This agency is a part of DHS. SEVP manages schools, as well as F-1 students and F-2 dependents.

SEVIS

SEVIS = Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

This is a web-based database used by SEVP to maintain information on SEVP-approved schools and F-1 students and their dependents.

Your I-20 is issued and maintained through SEVIS.

SEVIS

SEVIS = Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

Any changes that happen regarding your program (example: change in name, major, degree level, or program end date) must be reported through SEVIS.

DSO

DSO = Designated School Official

DSOs are the contacts between a school and SEVP, and most communication happens through SEVIS.

Only a DSO may issue, update, and sign an I-20 or make changes to your SEVIS record.

Your DSOs at Andrews are **Silmara Ferreira** and **Sonia Wilches**. They are here to help you maintain your F-1 student status and answer any questions you have.

USCIS

USCIS = United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

This is an agency within DHS that authorizes immigration benefits for non-citizens.

These benefits can include off-campus work authorization and changing to another visa status while inside the United States. Most benefits require an update to your SEVIS record before you can apply.

3. Immigration Documents

As an international student, you have several different immigration documents that can affect your status inside the United States:

- Passport
- F-1 visa (stamped in your passport)
- Form I-20
- Form I-94

Passport

Your **passport** must be valid at all times. This means that it cannot be expired while you are in the United States. If your passport is close to being expired, you must renew your passport within 6 months of the expiration date.

F-1 Visa

Your **F-1 student visa** is used for your entry into the United States as a student.

Your visa may expire while you are in the United States, and you do not have to renew it until you travel outside the U.S. and reenter in F-1 status again.

Visas may only be renewed at U.S. embassies and consulates outside of the United States.

(NOTE: Students from Canada and Bermuda do not need an F-1 visa)

Form I-20

Your **Form I-20** is what permits you to study in the United States.

It should always reflect your current academic status, including your correct degree level and major.

Form I-20

Your I-20 must be valid at all times. If it is about to expire and you are not finished with your program, you will need to request an extension.

Keep all original copies of your I-20 – you may need them later.

If you need to make any changes to your I-20 (examples: major changes, extending program end dates), please send an email to iss@andrews.edu.

Form I-20

You received your initial I-20 through email.

In the first half of this new semester, you will receive another email to pick up a new version of your I-20 with “ink signatures” from a DSO. The new version will also have the **travel endorsement** on the second page.

Please watch for this email and follow the directions carefully for how to pick up your updated I-20.

Form I-94

Your **I-94** is your Arrival/Departure Record. It is evidence of your admission to the U.S., immigration status, and authorized period of stay.

Please email your Most Recent I-94 to the International Student Services office this week to avoid registration holds.

How do you obtain the I-94? See the next slide!

Form I-94

How to obtain your Form I-94:

Follow the Get I-94 directions on the Quick Links document in your orientation packet. Once you have your I-94, you can take a photo of it and email it to iss@andrews.edu or bring it in person to AD 307.

(If you do not have access to the Quick Links document, you can go to: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)

4. Maintaining Status

While you are studying in the United States, you must stay in legal status at ALL times in the following ways:

- ✓ Reporting Requirements
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Work During Program
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Program Completion

Reporting Requirements

You are required to report the following information to International Student Services within **10 days** of the date of change so it can be updated in your SEVIS record:

- Change in name
- New address or phone number
- Change in program (major) or degree level
- Change in student status (i.e., withdrawal or in-absentia)
- Change in immigration status

Academics

To maintain status, students must meet the following academic requirements:

- Attend all your classes and make satisfactory progress towards the degree programs stated on your I-20
- Enroll **full time** in 12 or more credits (undergraduates), 8 or more credits (graduates), 9 or more credits (MDiv), in the Fall and Spring semesters
- Summer is considered “annual vacation” and you can choose to take classes or to take a break if you studied in the previous spring semester and intend to study in fall

Academics

To maintain status, students must meet the following academic requirements:

- All classes must be taken in person in Spring 2025 as part of a required full-time load.
- Obtain authorization from ISS before dropping below full-time enrollment

Work During Program

There are two types of work F-1 students may do while studying:

- On-campus employment in a student job
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

On-campus Employment

- You may work on campus up to 20 hours a week in a student job when school is in session in both the Fall and Spring semesters; during school breaks you may work more than 20 hours a week
- DHS authorization is not required prior to beginning on-campus employment

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- F-1 students can apply for Curricular Practical Training, or CPT, to work full-time off campus
- The CPT must be connected to a required class taken during the entirety of CPT
- Before CPT eligibility, you must first maintain F-1 status for at least two academic semesters (9 months)
- CPT is approved for one academic semester at a time
- CPT will not be authorized for a student in their final semester and cannot cause a delay in the time it will take to complete the program of study

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

After you graduate, you will have the opportunity to work at least one year in your field of study while keeping your F-1 status active.

In order to be authorized for OPT, you must first work with a DSO in the International Student Services office – **DO NOT apply for OPT on your own.**

When you begin your last year of study, please talk to a DSO to learn more details about OPT.

Travel During Program

International students may leave the United States for a short period of time and reenter to continue their program if they hold the appropriate travel documents:

- Unexpired I-20 endorsed (signed) by a DSO on page 2.
Note: a **travel endorsement** must be less than 12 months old at the time of re-entry to the United States
- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa

If you plan to leave the U.S. during your studies, consult OISSP before leaving to avoid immigration problems.

Program Completion

Once you graduate, you have a **60-day grace period** after the end of your program. During this grace period, you have the following options:

- Apply for a post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) – i.e., working 12 months in your field of study
- Transfer Out to another SEVP-approved school
- Begin a new degree program at Andrews University
- Leave the United States

You must choose one of these options before the end of your 60-day grace period.

Failure to Maintain Status

Failure to maintain status may jeopardize the benefits of your F-1 status, including your ability to:

- Work in the United States
- Continue your education in the United States
- Reenter the United States
- Bring dependents to the United States
- Attempt any future entries into the United States

5. FAQs

During your program, it is important to know the **answers** to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that international students have – you might have some of them right now.

Here are some common questions and their answers.

When should I see a DSO?

Contact a DSO (Silmara Ferreira or Sonia Wilches) in International Student Services if you are:

- Traveling outside of the United States soon
- Changing your name
- Requesting a program extension or shortening your program
- Adding dependents
- Needing to drop below full-time enrollment
- Planning to perform research outside of the Berrien Springs campus
- Planning anything that you think may have an impact on your immigration status

When and how should I extend my I-20?

If you are near the program end date on your I-20 but will not finish your program before the end date, you must request an extension. **Please understand that this is your responsibility!**

This should be done a minimum of **30 days** before your program end date to allow time for processing. Please contact International Student Services at **iss@andrews.edu**.

If you do not request an extension before your program end date and you do not graduate, you will be out of status.

Can I take online classes if I have an F-1 visa and I-20?

If you are on the Berrien Springs campus with an active I-20, you must take a **full load of in-person classes**. Up to one online class per semester may count toward the courseload requirements, but please talk to a DSO before you decide to take an online class.

Do I need to purchase the Andrews University health insurance plan?

Yes.

International students are required to purchase the university plan. Students from Canada and students sponsored by a company may have an exception.

For details, please email the Student Insurance office at stuins@andrews.edu.

How do I obtain a Social Security Number and Card?

Once you find a job on campus, you will need to go to the Social Security office in Benton Harbor to obtain a social security number and card.

For more information, don't hesitate to contact the International Student Services office.

When can I take vacation?

Andrews University is on a semester system. Your I-20 requires you to take a full load of classes in both the Fall and Spring semesters.

Summer (early May to early August) is the university's annual vacation period. You can take a break or work during summer without taking classes; you can also choose to take classes, but you are not required to.

Note: if you are starting on-campus studies in the summer, you must take a full load of classes during that first summer.

Where do I go if I have a question about tuition, finances, and/or my financial statement?

If you have already arrived on campus and have an active I-20, please email your **financial advisor**.

If you need to extend the program end date on your active I-20 or change programs on your I-20, please contact an international financial advisor at **isfs@andrews.edu**.

Where do I go if I have a question and I don't know the answer?

If it is a general question about maintaining your status or any aspect of your life as an international student at Andrews University, please email **iss@andrews.edu**.

If you have questions about finances (and you have already emailed your financial advisor), please email **isfs@andrews.edu**.

Remember to email only one email address – if you email multiple addresses, it might take us longer to respond.

6. Final Announcements

Complete the **Statement of Acknowledgment** document and leave it at the orientation session.

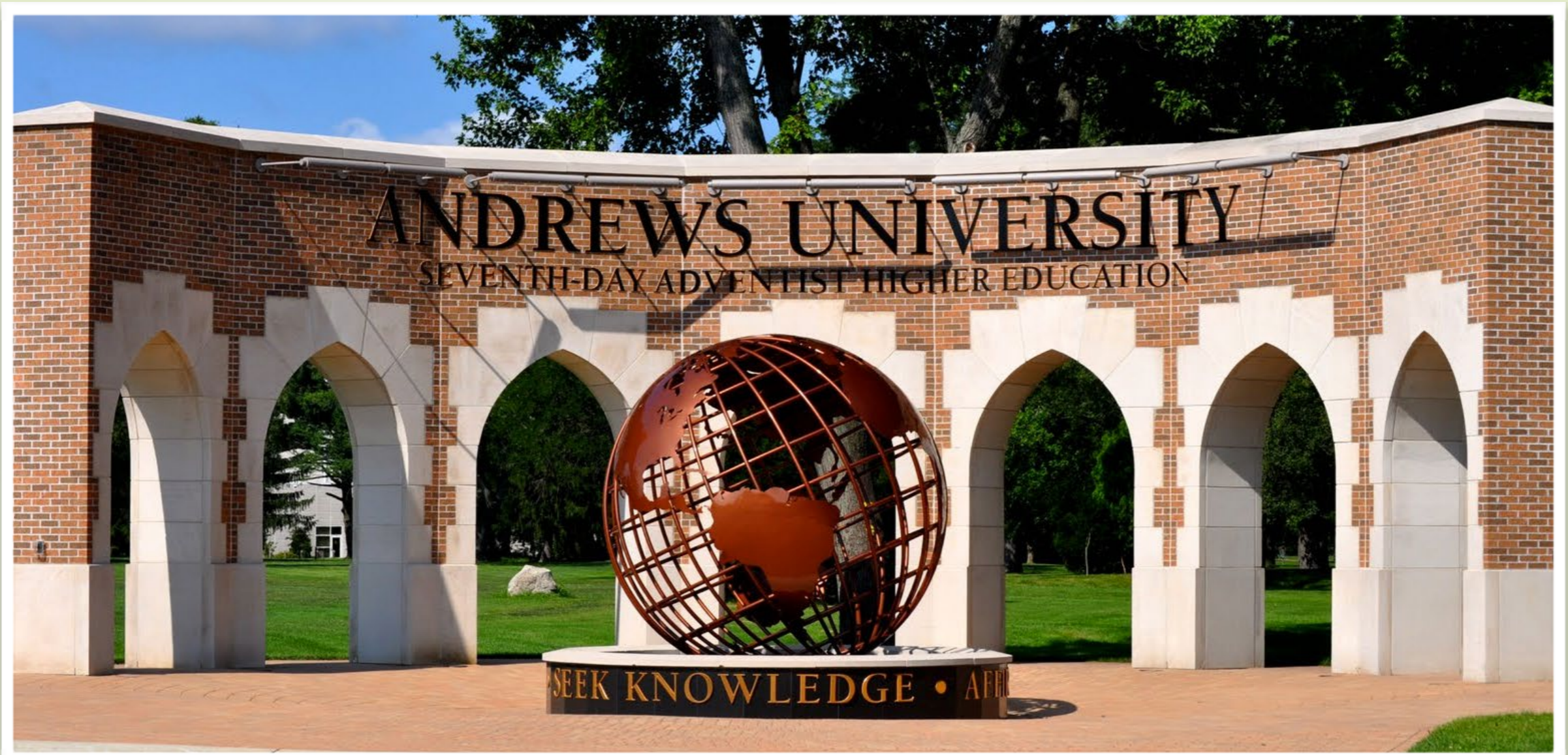
If you did not attend the orientation session in person, please contact iss@andrews.edu ASAP.

Final Announcements

Receive your passport and I-20 back and email your I-94 to iss@andrews.edu or come to the office in person (AD 307) to submit it.

If you are not attending an orientation session: come to the International Student Services office (AD 307) to submit your Arrival Documents.

Thank you!



Have a great semester!