New ISS Software

International Student Services (ISS) is excited to let you know that we will soon be implementing a new software product that will allow international student document requests to be processed in a more efficient and transparent manner. ISS has purchased Terra Dotta software and we have been using it internally for several months now. Soon, all international students (prospective, current, and former) will be contacted to create an account in Terra Dotta and, through this account, students will be able to submit processing requests to ISS electronically, upload supporting documentation into the system, and track the status of their requests. We will be sending out more information throughout the summer about the release of the new software.

New U.S. Address & Phone Requirement

Before students can create a Terra Dotta account, their Texas A&M University record must first be fully up-to-date. It is essential that all international students have valid address and phone number information in the Howdy Portal. However, the specific requirement related to international student address and phone number has changed.

The specific address type that ISS uses has changed from the "Student Local Mailing" address type to the "Student Local Physical" address type. This change was necessary for two reasons:
1. F-1 and J-1 students are required to report the address where they are <u>physically residing</u> in the U.S., and students in other immigration statuses are encouraged to report this as well. It is simply more logical to require that the address of physical residence be entered as the "Student Local Physical" address rather than the "Student Local Mailing" address.
2. Ensuring that all international students have a valid "Student Local Physical" address is the 1st step in granting students access to Terra Dotta. Only the "Student Local Physical" address type will feed into Terra Dotta (and therefore into SEVIS for F-1 and J-1 students).

The specific phone number type that ISS uses has remained the same – "Student Local/Current."

How to Update U.S. Address & Phone in Howdy Portal

A handout that includes detailed instructions and tips for how to verify and update the "Student Local Physical" address as well as a "Student Local/Current" phone number in the Howdy Portal has been updated on the ISS website and can be found at http://iss.tamu.edu/ISS/media/ISS-Files/ISS-PDF/Current%20Students/Updating-Your-Local-Address-Phone.pdf.

- **Helpful Tip:** It is required to enter a valid start date for an address but it is not required to enter a valid end date. If you enter an end date for an address and that end date expires, your record will appear as though you do not have a valid address until you add another, un-expired address. To avoid this, you can leave the end date field blank until you know the exact date that an address will no longer be valid.

It is not necessary to remove the "Student Local Mailing" address from the Howdy Portal if it is still valid but ISS can no longer use this address type for meeting immigration requirements. If a student's mailing address differs from their address of physical residence, the mailing address can be entered into Howdy as "Student Local Mailing" and the address of physical residence as "Student Local Physical." The "Student Local Physical" address cannot be a P.O. Box. The "Student Local Mailing" address can be a P.O. Box. Additional tips can be found on the handout at http://iss.tamu.edu/ISS/media/ISS-Files/ISS-PDF/Current%20Students/Updating-Your-Local-Address-Phone.pdf.

If a student needs to make a change to their international address, this will still need to be done by sending an email to iss@tamu.edu with the student's full name, UIN, and updated international address. The international address cannot be edited by the student in the Howdy Portal.

Enforcing New U.S. Address & Phone Requirement

From now on, ISS will be checking for a valid "Student Local Physical" address as well as a "Student Local/Current" phone number when processing any action for an international student. ISS encourages all international students to comply with the new address and phone requirement. However, this requirement is only enforced for students in F-1 and J-1 student status, as well as those applying to obtain F-1 or J-1 student status. More emails will be shared later in the Summer regarding the Terra Dotta software implementation and we will remind students about this change to the address requirement.

ISS is working to update all of our online and printed materials to reflect this policy change. In the meantime, if you are reviewing a document from ISS that states there is a requirement to maintain a valid "Student Local Mailing" address, please note this change and that the requirement is now to maintain a valid "Student Local Physical" address.

Please contact International Student Services (ISS) at 979-845-1824 or iss@tamu.edu if you have any questions at all about this change.

Sincerely,
International Student Services

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