

## Scams & Fraud

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While at MVCC we hope that you will not be contacted by someone attempting to “[scam](#)” or [defraud](#) you of your money. As is true anywhere in the world, there are people who attempt to take advantage of international students, but with a little knowledge you can learn how to identify a scam and avoid falling victim to the scheme.

### Common Scam Themes:

- The caller ID or phone number looks like a government agency or police.
- A claim is made that you owe money or have committed some kind of fraud.
- A caller or letter will use fear, threats, and intimidation to get what they want.
- A scam requires immediate action.
- A scam includes punishment (often threats of deportation or arrest) for not acting immediately.
- A scammer will keep you on the phone for a long time and will not let you hang up to call back later.
- A scammer will use lots of legal-sounding language such as “federal regulations” and “visa fee” to sound as legitimate as possible.

### Important for Students to Know:

- Department of Homeland Security may call you regarding your SEVIS record, but they will never ask for money over the phone.
- Ask for a caller's name, ID badge, and phone number and request that you call them back.
- Do not cash checks that arrive in the mail unexpectedly.
- Do not sign contracts without reading them and fully understanding the content.
- It's a good idea to check how much of your information is public, such as your phone number and address.

### Common Scams:

- Third Party tax forms attempt to collect the refund that is rightfully yours.
- Rental scams where your deposit money is taken and no one meets you with the keys to move in.
- Online scams when purchasing items on Craigslist or EBay or through PayPal.
- Calls demanding an “international student tax” or “visa fee” which directs the victim to wire money or buy gift cards.
- A website charging fees to enter the Green Card Lottery.

### Report to the Coordinator of International Student Services:

- If you receive a concerning or suspicious call.
- If a letter arrives in the mail which includes threats for not acting.

- If an employer is acting unethically by requiring you to pay money to receive a job offer, or an employment agency is offering to create fake credentials.
- **Remember: when one person reports a scam, OISS can alert all of our international students and scholars.**

**Resources for More Information:**

- [Federal Trade Commission](#) pamphlets in several languages.
- USCIS webpages on [how to avoid scams](#) and also where to [report a scam](#).