

WCU International Programs & Services: Scam & Fraud Prevention

While at Western 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 and scholars, 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.
- ❑ The use of gift cards to repay some form of debt.

❑ Important for Students and Scholars 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 International Program and Services:**

- ❑ If you receive 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, International Programs and Services 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](#).
- ❑ <https://www.usa.gov/housing-scams#item-211837>
- ❑ <https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft>
- ❑ <https://oig.ssa.gov/newsroom/scam-awareness>
- ❑ <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog>
- ❑ <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/pass-it-on/imposter-scams#>
- ❑ <https://youtu.be/i4nCy6Xs6R8>