**BE AWARE OF SCAMS!!!**

There has been an increase in scams targeting international scholars. In addition to the housing scams. other scams target scholars to obtain personal information (identity theft) or to obtain money. Scammers could be strangers posing as university official, US or home government official or police. They may send you a form in the mail that looks like a legitimate government form asking for personal information, or they may send an official looking letter stating you are about to be arrested or deported due to failure to pay a bill or due to a crime that you did not commit. They may approach you on social media or post an ad selling something, renting an apartment or looking for a roommate. Their social media profile will look real. **They have a way to use “real” government numbers in the caller ID! You can receive a call from “US Government,”** “**Spam Fraud,” ‘Risk Alert,” and so on. DO NOT pick up these calls.** How can you tell if it might be a scammer?

•             If you see something for sale and the price is too good to be true, it may be a scam

•             A sense of urgency is created; you need to pay a deposit immediately or loose the opportunity

•             A caller demands payment immediately by wire transfer, third party payment site or gift cards.

•             If a person states you are a victim of identity theft and provides proof telling you some personal information that they know (which they found on social media or stole before contacting you).

•             If they offer to “transfer” your call to the police (they will just transfer to another scammer)

•             If they are demanding, threatening, making you feel scared, making you promise not to hang up the phone, and not to tell anyone else

•             If they ask you for your personal ID numbers and passwords

•             They offer to pay something for you, but pay more than the amount and then ask for you to refund them difference

Scammers also have been known to contact the family of an international scholar using the same and similar techniques. **Please keep in mind that the US government would not demand payment over the phone and will not threat you with deportation or jail. If you receive a suspicious call or if you are targeting with a suspicious email or letter, please alert J Advisor.**

Please refer to the links below for helpful resources to educate yourself about protecting yourself from scams:

•             <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://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/pass-it-on/imposter-scams)

•             <https://youtu.be/i4nCy6Xs6R8>

**Housing Scams** – There has been an increased number of international students becoming victim of a variety of scams including ones that involve off-campus housing. If you are looking at ads, watch out for deals that seem too good to be true (excellent location or quality of housing, but at much lower price than usual), misspelled words in the ad, the contact person does not answer your questions, and/or requires that you exchange money/wire money before seeing the property.  Please review the helpful presentations at the off-campus students’ website before signing a lease to learn about scams and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant:  <https://och.gmu.edu/resource>