



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR HANDBOOK 2015-2016

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Services

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 - 4:15 p.m.
Friday: 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 - 4:15 p.m.

International students and scholars can meet with ISSS advisers by appointment or during Walk-In Hours held throughout the week. Please note, ISSS does not make same-day appointments. www.iss.umn.edu/office/hours.html.

ABOUT ISSS

Learn about our office's Work, Mission, Vision, and Values at www.iss.umn.edu/office. This website will also provide you with directions to us, ways to contact our office, when we have office hours, as well as, profiles of many staff members here to serve you!

COMMON RESOURCES

Specific for J Scholars www.iss.umn.edu/jscholar

Visit our J Scholar website for information regarding steps to take during pre-arrival, arrival, and post-arrival program periods.

ISSS Weekly Update www.iss.umn.edu/weeklyupdate

The ISSS Weekly Update is an electronic newsletter sent by e-mail weekly. Information provided includes office schedules, special events and news items which are important to the international population at the University. All international scholars are advised to subscribe to the Weekly Update.

Tax Help www.iss.umn.edu/taxes

Every spring, ISSS offers a combination of free workshops, software, and presentations designed to help foreign nationals determine their tax obligations and complete the necessary forms. ISSS advisors, however, cannot provide tax advice.

English Language Support www.iss.umn.edu/resources/esl

Visit our ESL website for several English language support resources, such as the Minnesota English Language Program (MELP).

Additional Resources www.iss.umn.edu/Resources

Check out our full Resources website to learn about Living in Minnesota topics and resources, such as: Disability Resource Center, GLBTA Programs Office, Banking, Climate, Transportation, and Housing.

WAYS TO ENGAGE

Discussion Groups www.iss.umn.edu/programs/disgroup

These groups provide a relaxed atmosphere for sharing experiences, thoughts, and feelings with a small group of international students and scholars. Intercultural discussion groups are usually offered each semester.

Small World Coffee Hour www.iss.umn.edu/programs/smallworld

Held every other Friday during the school year, this event provides an informal atmosphere in which to meet people from all over the world who share your international interests. Come take a break from your work, enjoy free coffee or tea, and get to know your University colleagues.

U.S. Cultural Values

No doubt you already know a great deal about the U.S. and perhaps even about U.S. Americans. Yet if you are new to the U.S. there are probably a few things that may surprise, and possibly frustrate, you about some common U.S. values. We describe a few here so that you may be prepared for these values and how they differ (or don't) from your own cultural values.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME

In the United States, time is treated like a tangible asset, and it is used carefully and productively. Time should not be “wasted.” Being “on time” (meaning arriving at the stated time) for appointments or meetings is often very important.

THE WORK ETHIC

Like people in many countries, U.S. Americans place a high value on hard work. However, they tend to feel personally responsible for their accomplishments and take personal credit for what they've done. It is believed that people achieve results on the basis of how hard they work, so they judge others by how hard they work and how task-oriented they are.

ACHIEVEMENT

A very high value is placed on a person's accomplishments and productivity. Individuals evaluate themselves and are evaluated by others in terms of their achievements and accomplishments.

INDIVIDUALISM

U.S. Americans view themselves first and foremost as individuals with both freedom and responsibility to manage their own lives, make their own decisions and accomplish their own goals. Families and friends are important, but individuals are expected to consider their own needs, desires, and values. In this culture, people are less comfortable being obligated to or dependent on others. People are also held individually accountable for things they have promised to do, and international scholars may find that they are expected to do more of their work independently than they are accustomed to at home.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING STYLE

While this varies greatly by region and family background, people in the United States generally place a higher priority on clear, factual communication. This means that at times, U.S. Americans may choose to be direct even if it means possibly hurting or embarrassing another person.

PRAGMATISM

U.S. Americans are pragmatic and oriented toward practical matters. They are attracted to things and ideas that are seen as “useful.” This goes together with the orientation toward work and achievement. There is a high value on being able to relate “theory” to “practice.”

Friendship in the United States

You may find that people in the United States have very different ideas than you do about making friends.

Because of the value put on friendliness, U.S. Americans sometimes misread people from other countries who are reserved or formal as being cold or rude. In the U.S., saying “Good morning,” “Hi,” or “Hello,” with a smile will usually indicate that you do not have any bad feelings towards colleagues, faculty, or friends. Until you get used to it, their friendliness (smiling and being sociable and helpful) can be confused with an invitation for a friendship.

U.S. Americans are often much slower to form deep relationships than first impressions may indicate. They may shy away from international visitors out of respect for your privacy or to avoid offense, so you may need to be the one to initiate friendships.

Because U.S. Americans are “doers,” it is helpful when trying to make friends to ask someone to do something with you: go out for coffee, movie, shopping, bowling, etc. Another approach is to join a club or activity on the campus or in your community.

Protocol

FIRST NAMES AND TITLES

There are strong regional and cultural differences within the United States with regard to formality and the use of titles with names. These include “Mr.” (pronounced “Mister” and meaning male, married or single), “Ms.” (pronounced “Miz,” meaning female, married or single), “Mrs.” (pronounced “Missus,” meaning a married female), “Prof.” (short for “Professor,” meaning someone who has a faculty appointment or tenure at a college or university), or “Dr.” (short for “Doctor,” meaning a medical doctor or someone with a Ph.D.).

In the Midwest, people generally use first names when speaking. This can make addressing professors, teaching assistants (TAs), and staff very confusing for international scholars when they first arrive. Do you call a professor by a title such as “Professor Brown,” or do you call her by first name, “Judith,” as you may hear colleagues do? Sometimes it’s one way, and sometimes it’s another, so how can you tell when each is appropriate?

It is best when dealing with professors and TAs to err on the side of politeness and use their titles — Professor, Doctor, Mr., or Ms. If you aren’t sure what to call a specific person, it is appropriate to ask them how they would like to be addressed. Research scholars, especially post-doctorate and professional associates, are more likely than students to be on a first-name basis with their supervisors. And most professors are on a first-name basis with each other. Office staff, receptionists, and secretaries are almost always on a first-name basis with scholars.

It is most important to remember that informality is not an indication of disrespect. It is simply a cultural habit that may indicate mutual respect, equality, and a willingness to engage in open dialogue and intellectual exchange.

PERSPECTIVES ON FRIENDSHIPS: U.S. AMERICAN AND CONTRASTING VIEWPOINTS

U.S. American

1. A friend is anyone from a passing acquaintance to a lifetime intimate.
2. Friends are often limited to an area of common interest, such as work, school, or recreation.
3. Friends gather to enjoy an activity together.
4. If someone has a problem, it is acceptable to go to a professional (i.e., counselor) for help.
5. Friends may be “dropped” if they do not live up to our expectations or standards of behavior.
6. Friendships cross genders.
7. Friendships cross generations.
8. One schedules time to see friends.
9. Americans act friendly and informally with almost everyone.

Contrasting

1. A friend is someone with whom one is very close.
2. A friendship embraces the whole person.
3. Friends gather just to be together.
4. Someone with a problem goes to a friend or family member for help at any time.
5. One tolerates a lot from someone who is a friend.
6. Friendships are made only with the same gender.
7. Friendships are made with people of the same age.
8. Friends are available at any time.
9. People who do not know each other maintain a formal relationship.

Adapted from *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, by E. C. Stewart.

Legal Issues

While many internationals may expect the U.S. to be the “land of the free”, it is often not long after arrival that sojourners realize this is a country of many rules and regulations. As you will see from the following description of some of the laws that may affect you, the rules and regulations are intended to protect the rights of the individual - the basis for our legal system.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Smoking indoors is prohibited by state law in all public buildings and in indoor places of employment (including restaurants and bars). Additionally, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus is "tobacco and smoke free," meaning smoking is not allowed anywhere on campus. Smoking, generally, is allowed outdoors. When in someone else's home, you should step outside to smoke, and smoking is prohibited in the common areas of apartment buildings and hotels.

Alcohol use in the United States is also regulated by law. In Minnesota, alcohol may not be legally purchased or consumed by anyone under the age of 21, and it may not be consumed while in an automobile. Driving while intoxicated is considered a serious crime, punishable by large fines, jail sentences, and the loss of driving privileges. Bartenders and others who serve alcohol (such as hosts of parties) can be held legally responsible if a guest becomes intoxicated and injures another person. It is also a serious crime to offer or provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21.

DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

Street drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates, and other mood-altering substances that are not prescribed by a medical doctor, may not be possessed or sold legally in Minnesota. Strict laws and severe penalties apply. Medications prescribed by doctors may not be sold or used by anyone other than the patient.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND STALKING

Sexual harassment and stalking laws legally protect individuals from being victims of sexual and other harassment. These laws apply to all within the U.S. - citizens, residents, and visitors.

Sexual harassment is the misuse of power that has sexual overtones and generally falls under the following circumstances: as a condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement, or in a situation that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance. Sexual harassment can be verbal or physical. As a result of sexual harassment laws, many U.S. Americans avoid physical contact with acquaintances; an exception to this is the hand shake, which is a recognized form of greeting.

It is also illegal to “stalk” an individual by following the person or continually making unwanted phone calls or other unwelcome attempts to contact another person. If you force unwanted verbal or physical contact on another person, you may violate Minnesota law as well as social norms.

If you have questions about what sexual harassment is, or feel you are being harassed, you are encouraged to contact ISSS. If you believe you were harassed by an University employee, you can file a report on UReports (www.ureport.ethicspoint.com) If you believe you are being stalked, contact the police.

DOMESTIC ASSAULT

Minnesota law prohibits individuals from inflicting bodily harm on their spouse or partner and children. Police have the ability, under the law, to arrest and jail a person, even if the victim does not want to press criminal charges.

U.S. CRIMINAL SEXUAL CONDUCT LAWS

It is important to have an understanding of the U.S. Criminal Sexual Conduct Code. Individuals have the right to stop sexual contact at any time. This means that when a person says “no” to any type of sexual contact, it violates the law if the partner attempts to emotionally or verbally coerce or physically force that person into continuing the sexual contact. Violation of the Criminal Sexual Conduct Code ranges from forced rape to improperly (without consent) touching the clothed or unclothed intimate body parts of another person. Violation of these laws can result in a prison or jail term of one to 30 years and/or a fine of \$3,000 to \$40,000.

If you have been sexually assaulted, you may file a criminal charge with local police. The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education on campus also has a 24-Hour helpline (612-626-2929) for victims of sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking. More information about their services is available at www.umn.edu/aurora.

SHOPLIFTING

You may find shopping here very different from what you are used to at home. Generally, merchandise is sold “self-service,” and clerks are not close at hand. It is very important when shopping in U.S. stores, especially very large stores, to use a cart or basket provided by the store. Never put a piece of merchandise in your pocket, your purse, or a fold of your clothing. If you do, it may appear to a store employee that you intend to take it without paying for it. In the past, such misunderstandings have led to international students’ arrests by the police on charges of “shoplifting.” Stores often have devices attached to items to prevent shoplifting, and you may sometimes find you are being watched by an employee or a hidden camera. Shoplifting is a crime, and you can be taken to court, even over a misunderstanding.

Personal Safety

As a large urban area, the Twin Cities is not free from crime. However, you can take some simple precautions to keep yourself and your belongings safe while you are living here. Trust your instincts regarding people and places, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. If you feel you are in danger, notify the police by calling 911.

To protect yourself and your property, we recommend the following:

- After dark, walk with someone else and stay on well-lit streets. Wear bright or light colors to increase your visibility at night.
- Do not give your name, telephone number, home address or email address to someone whom you do not know well. Ask the person for a contact number if you are interested in meeting again.
- You can suppress your personal information from the University web directory by going to www.myu.umn.edu and clicking on “My Info” and then “Directory Suppression.”
- Learn that it is acceptable to say “no” directly. Anything else may be taken as “yes” or “maybe.”
- Do not wear headphones, as they may decrease your ability to hear noises around you.
- When walking past people, looking at the ground or directly into someone’s eyes may make you seem vulnerable.
- If you feel threatened or harassed, talk to an ISSS counselor. They are trained to help people in this situation.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic if no sidewalk is available.
- Have your keys out and ready for use when approaching your building or car.
- Always carry enough money with you to take a bus or taxi.
- Do not leave any valuables—your briefcase, purse, books, etc., unattended.
- When using an ATM, try to find one in a well-lit and busy area. Avoid counting your cash where other people can see you.
- Lock your home whenever you leave it, as well as at night when you are sleeping.
- Do not let strangers into your home to use the phone or for any other reason.

More help on preventing crime is available on the University Police Department’s web site: www.police.umn.edu.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT

Identity thieves have specifically targeted international students and scholars at the University of Minnesota in recent years, so it is important for you to protect your personal information. Do not give out your credit card information or Social Security Number unless you know how it will be used, and never share these items by email or on an unsecured website.

It is especially important to be careful while online. Do not open, reply to, or click on links in a suspicious looking email (even if you know the sender or it appears to be from an official source). Learn more about protecting yourself from identity theft and how to determine if an email is fake at www.iss.umn.edu/resources/identitytheft.html.

WALKING ON CAMPUS

The University Police Department provides walking and biking security escorts upon request for all students, staff, faculty and visitors going to locations on the Minneapolis or St. Paul campuses or in the surrounding areas. These student Security Monitors are available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, and the service is free. You can request an escort by calling 612-624-9255, and a map of the program’s boundaries is available at www.police.umn.edu/escortboundaires.

There are also emergency phones and campus phones located around campus, where you can call 911 if you have an emergency.

Living In a Different Culture

Living in a culture different from your own is an exciting and often challenging experience. Besides finding housing, learning your job duties, and getting to know a new city, you will probably go through “cultural adjustment,” the transition to a new culture. Most people will experience some “culture shock” as part of this process.

WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?

“Culture shock” is the name given to a feeling of disorientation or confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one. Coming to the Twin Cities from another country, you will encounter a multitude of new and unfamiliar things. Your English might not serve you as well as you expected it would. You might not be able to convey your full personality in English, with the result that you think other people are seeing you as a child. As a result of all this you may feel confused, unsure of yourself, and lonely.

Symptoms

Some people are more affected by culture shock than others. People experiencing culture shock tend to become nervous and unusually tired. They may want to sleep a lot or may have difficulty sleeping. They may write many letters home. They may feel frustrated and hostile toward the local people. They may get excessively angry about minor irritations. It is not unusual to become very dependent on fellow nationals. All these feelings may make it difficult to deal with residents of the host country and use their language.

COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Different people react differently to culture shock. Some become depressed, or even physically ill. Others are stimulated by the new experiences. Below are some ideas that might be helpful to you.

Maintain your perspective

Try to remember that thousands of people have come to Minnesota from other countries and have survived (even when they arrived in the cold of winter).

Take some practical steps

In *The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning*, J. Daniel Hess makes these suggestions for people who are experiencing the loneliness or distress of culture shock:

1. Find people to interact with. Ask them questions. As you take an interest in them, your feelings will have a focal point outside of yourself.
2. Surround yourself with familiar things—a favorite jacket, a photo, music. Make your environment pleasant and reinforcing.
3. Slow down. Simplify your daily tasks. Relax. Let your emotions catch up with the newness all around you.
4. Develop patterns. Follow the same routine each day so that you get a sense of returning to the familiar.
5. Give expression to your feelings. Cry. Laugh. Sing. Pray. Draw a picture.
6. Revise your goals to accommodate detours instead of scolding yourself for failures.
7. Keep working on your language skills. Practice the American idiom, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”
8. Make a few small decisions and carry them out. Your resolve in small things will increase your confidence. Be assured that, however stressful, culture shock passes if you are willing to let the process of cross-cultural adaptation take its course.
9. Be patient with yourself and other people.
10. Adjustment is a gradual, day-by-day process. It normally takes some time—a few weeks, a few months, and maybe longer—for people to become comfortable in a new country.
11. Take care of yourself.
12. It is particularly important in times of stress to eat a balanced diet, get enough rest, and get regular physical exercise. Take breaks for recreation or socializing. Working constantly, without taking care of yourself, is a good way to make yourself sick and make your entire situation worse.

Realize you may be treated as a stereotype

On many occasions, international scholars will be responded to as “a foreigner” or “a scholar from country X.” The nature of that response will depend on each native’s previous experience with and ideas about “foreigners” or “people from country X,” not on anything about you personally. Try not to let this discourage you. Try to start some interesting conversations about the subject of stereotypes—what they are, where they came from, and so on. Remember that you probably have your own stereotypes about the host nationals.

Talk with experienced international visitors from your country and other countries and learn the local criteria for success

Their observations and advice can help you. Ask them what things they have found most bothersome, most interesting, or most perplexing. Ask them what sources of information and support have been most helpful.

Find out what is considered a good performance in research, social relations, and other aspects of your life here. You can get information about this from supervisors, colleagues, secretaries, neighbors, and many others.

Realize how the status of your role here compares to the status to which you are accustomed

Different societies attach different importance to roles or positions; for example, in many countries, the role of “research scientist” or “professor” is accorded more respect or status than it is in the United States. It can be difficult to adjust to having a lower social status than you are typically accustomed. It helps to recognize that you, personally, are not being downgraded; you just happen to be in a society where respect is expressed differently than is the case at home.

Avoid being excessively influenced by dramatic events

Newcomers to a society may have a particular, very noticeable experience from which they generalize about the new society and the people who live in it. In fact, the experience might be very unusual, and not a safe basis for generalization. For example, a new male international student found that his residence hall roommate removed all of his clothes when the international student was in the room studying or relaxing. The new international student at first supposed this was what U.S. students customarily did, and he wondered if he should do the same. He wisely asked around, and he found that his roommate’s behavior was not typical. If you have a dramatic experience that influences your opinions about local people, discuss the experience with others to learn whether it is typical or unusual.

Do what you think is appropriate and explain if necessary

This suggestion comes from Ju Daushen, a University of Iowa graduate student. He advises new students to act in the way they consider appropriate, and then, if the host responds in an unexpected way, to give an explanation of the culture and customs that led you to behave in the way you did.

Learn from the experience

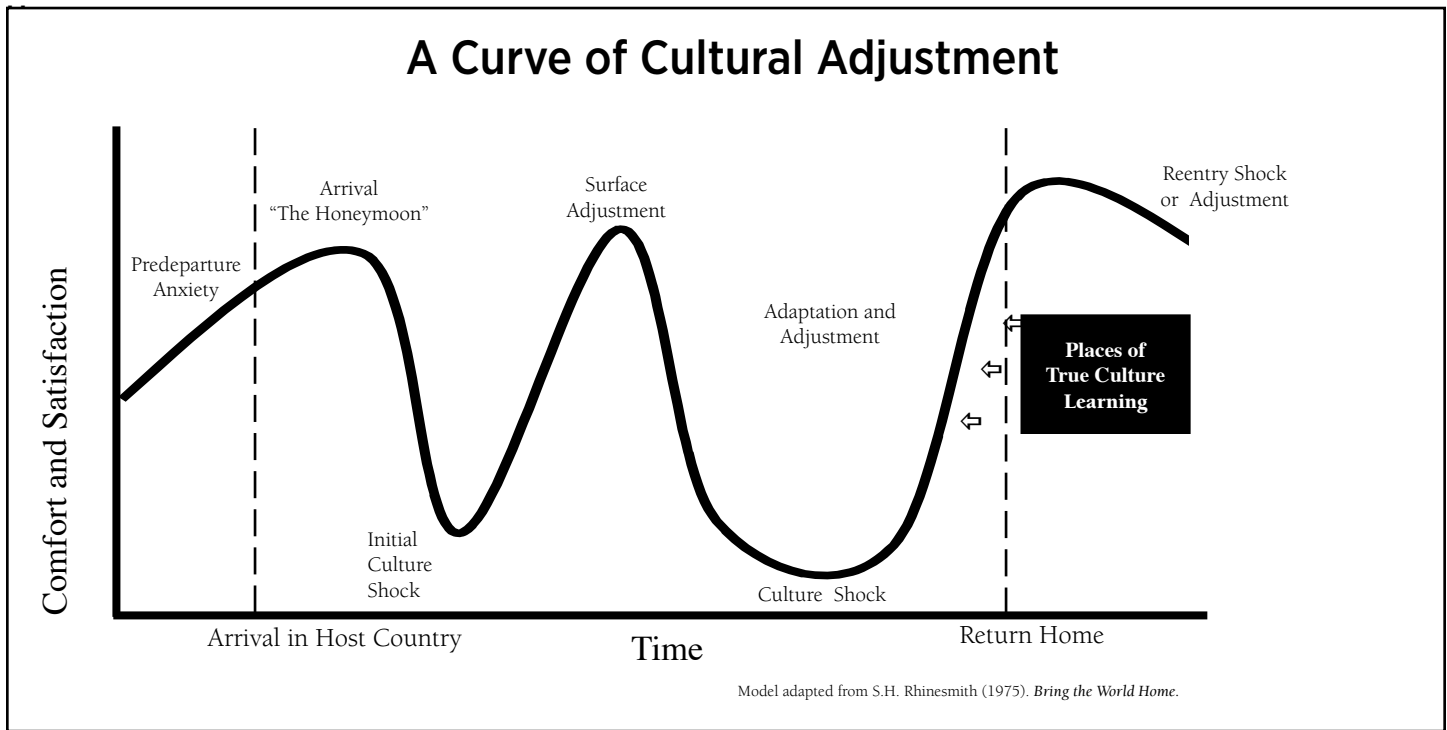
Moving into a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It gives you the opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living and compare it to your own. Here are some questions that you might try to answer as you encounter the local people:

- How do they make friends?
- How do friends treat each other?
- Who respects whom, and how is respect shown?
- What attitudes do they have about their families?
- What is the relationship between males and females?
- How do people spend their time? Why?
- How do they deal with conflicts or disagreements?
- What do they talk about?
- What kind of evidence do they seek or use when evaluating an idea or trying to win an argument?

You can compare the answers you get to the answers you would get to the same questions in your country, and you can help yourself develop a better understanding of your own society and the one where you are living now.

Visit ISSS

A discussion with an ISSS adviser can help achieve a useful perspective on culture shock and insights into U.S. culture.



UNDERSTANDING THIS MODEL OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Predeparture anxiety

There's a lot to do before going to another country. People often become overwhelmed with details and are nervous about leaving family and friends for so long. Boarding the plane can bring enthusiasm back.

“The Honeymoon”

Just like with many new relationships, the first reaction to a new culture is often euphoric. You have finally arrived after months, maybe years, of planning. The differences in scenery, food, language, or customs can be exhilarating!

Initial culture shock

This is where the excitement of differences can often quickly turn to frustration. For many, the shock can come at the first meal when familiar foods are nowhere to be found. For others, it is the realization that speaking a second language all day is not only exhausting, it's frustrating to feel limited in your communication. For others, the initial shock is an accumulation of many factors, including the lack of familiar faces and cultural cues.

Surface adjustment

This can occur when you have settled into a new routine. Maybe you have successfully completed your first work project or have become friends with some of your new colleagues.

Culture shock

This is a state of mind you reach when the deeper differences between cultures are experienced and the novelty of the difference decreases. There may be unresolved cultural conflicts in the classroom, with friends, or with the society in general.

Places of true culture learning

Moving out of culture shock and into adaptation and adjustment is not simply a matter of feeling better. Rather, it requires understanding the reasons behind culture shock and developing personal strategies for dealing with cultural differences. Most sojourners cannot do this process alone; get help from others with international experience or from ISSS staff to understand U.S. culture and appropriate coping strategies.

Adaptation and adjustment

It takes time to adapt and adjust to your new environment. Skills you developed in previous transitions will help you when you encounter future intercultural challenges. Adjusting and adapting to a new culture requires the ability to know yourself well and to know the ways of the culture and its expectations of you.

Reentry shock or adjustment

The challenges of coming home can be many – the most significant can be that you did not expect it to be hard to come home. But it can be difficult, no matter how excited you are to see family and friends. Moreover, it can be hard to make sense of your experiences in the U.S., especially if you have to immediately find a job or return to your studies. With reentry, the goal is not to jump right back into everything – otherwise, why did you leave? You want to put your new found skills to good use: seeing things from another point of view, speaking another language, and learning of another area of the world. Staying connected with other international alumni is one strategy that can lessen the shock of reentry.

Information for Spouses and Children

Many visiting scholars bring their spouses and children with them to the U.S. Dependents here in J-2 status have different work and study benefits. You or your J-2 dependent should meet with an ISSS adviser for guidance prior to applying for work authorization. Visit our J-2 website for more information: www.iss.umn.edu/j2visa.html

It is important to remember that visa laws are different for people on "dependent" visas (such as J-2 and H-4), and it is common for spouses to feel a loss of independence and feelings of isolation or loneliness. Spouses who have been in this position advise that the best way to overcome these difficulties is to go out and meet other people. This may seem frightening at first, but the new spouse will meet others who feel the same frustrations, and talking with them can be quite helpful.

A good way to meet other people around campus is through ISSS-sponsored events such as Small World Coffee Hour, dance workshops, and other cultural events. Another suggestion is to take an English conversation classes, join clubs or organizations, or do volunteer work. The Minnesota International Center (612-625-4421) is a good source of information on these activities.

The U of M Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) has also been a very helpful resource for spouses of employed scholars. We recommend browsing the resources on their website and contacting them directly if you have related questions to their information and services: www.umn.edu/ohr/rap

The Twin Cities is home to people from all over the world; spouses can find cultural activities, religious assemblies, and ethnic markets, all of which are good opportunities to meet people with common interests. Many libraries, stores and restaurants carry free newspapers such as Asian Pages or La Prensa which advertise local events and businesses.

For information on finding child care or enrolling children in school, pick up the ISSS brochure "Children: Day Care and School." Children also need time to adjust to being in a new place. In general they learn English very quickly, but school, day care, or baby-sitters may be frightening for them at first. Talk with their teachers to see if there are things you can do to ease your child's transition. The teacher may also be a good source of information about other activities, such as sports, music, or art, in which your child can participate.

Education in the United States

The following characteristics can help you understand how U.S. cultural values influence behaviors and expectations in the classroom. The value placed on individualism, achievement, importance of time, work ethic and pragmatism are evident in the following section.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U.S. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. cultural values listed in the previous section shape the academic environment in the following ways:

1. Active classroom participation is expected.
2. Time pressure is high. There are often, many small assignments due each week, so time management is an important skill to develop.
3. Critical thinking must be developed.
4. Independent thinking is highly valued.
5. Presenting ideas concisely in class is expected.

6. Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.
7. Competition is a common mind-set.
8. Achievement and hard work are highly valued; the finished product is most important.
9. Students must be responsible for themselves.
10. Equality—all students should be treated equally.
11. Informality is normal.
12. Direct and straightforward communication is expected.
13. Friendship is usually based on doing things in common—sports, studying, etc.
14. Combining theory and practice—the practical application of ideas—is emphasized.
15. Problem-solving orientation—“If it’s broken, we ought to be able to fix it!”
16. The scientific method and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.

Developed by Dr. R. M. Paige and S. L. Smith, University of Minnesota, October 1988; revised by R. Stuck, 1993.

STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Academic standards and practices are influenced by culture. What is considered appropriate academic behavior in your home country might be different from what is appropriate in the United States. Therefore, it is important that you understand U.S. standards and practices. Not meeting these standards can result in charges of academic dishonesty and possible expulsion from the University.

The U.S. definition of academic dishonesty is based on the cultural values of individualism, fairness, the idea that individuals must think and work independently, and a strong value of original thinking, creativity, and invention.

At the University of Minnesota, academic dishonesty is defined as any act violating the rights of another person in academic work, or involving misrepresentation of your own work. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, cheating on assignments and examinations; plagiarism (representing as your own work any part of work done by another); submitting the same (or substantially similar) work to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student’s work.

Exams and cheating

It is common in many countries for students to study and work together to prepare for exams. This is customary in the United States as well. However, once in the classroom, students are on their own. Students cannot copy or discuss answers with each other during an exam. It is essential in the U.S. education system that each student be evaluated individually on his or her own work. “Cheating” is defined as copying someone else’s work or taking prohibited information or tools to an exam.

Papers

“Plagiarism” is defined as copying the work of someone else and not naming your source. In the United States, this will be considered an attempt by you to pass off the ideas or words of another person as your own. Plagiarism is one of the most serious violations of the standards of academic conduct in the United States. It can ruin your academic career.

Of course, when you are writing a paper, you research many sources and present or summarize other people’s ideas. But you must name your sources and identify when you are using their words and ideas by these methods:

- Name your sources in the text
- Put quotation marks around words and sentences that you copy from someone else’s work
- Provide footnotes and endnotes (even when you are paraphrasing someone’s words)
- Include a list of references or a bibliography

Discussing ideas for a paper with friends is okay, but it is not acceptable to hand in papers that are the same as your friends’ or to let someone else write your paper for you, even though the ideas are yours.

Consult a publication manual from your field of study, such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, for specific guidelines on citing the written and spoken work of others. Ask in your department if a particular style or publication manual is used in your field.

Shopping

GENERAL ADVICE

In the United States, as in most countries, live by the rule Buyer beware! Compare prices—the same items are often sold at different prices in different stores. Ask your friends where to buy at bargain prices. “Want ads” in the newspapers list sales of used household goods and furnishings.

Prices in stores are normally fixed, and the customer does not bargain with the sales clerk. It is common, however, to bargain when you buy from a private individual.

When you buy merchandise:

- If you must buy on credit, calculate the total amount you will end up paying, not just the monthly payments. Many credit cards charge interest rates of 20% or more! Be sure to keep up with payments; the seller usually has the legal right to force you to return items if you don't.
- Read tags and labels. Check sales slips and written guarantees. Be sure you understand them; keep them in a safe place in case you need to return or exchange an item.

If a problem arises:

- Take your complaint to the store first, and write down the name of the person you spoke with; often they can solve the problem. Many buyers mistakenly fail to get in touch with the store before seeking outside assistance.
- Be prepared to wait a few days or a week; some complaints take time to be resolved.
- If, after a reasonable length of time, you have not received satisfaction from the store, collect all receipts and sales slips and call a consumer protection agency (e.g., the Better Business Bureau, see the following section) for help.
- Try to save copies of everything—bills, canceled checks, warranties, and correspondence—you have sent or received concerning the problem.

THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

The Better Business Bureau is a non-profit service organization designed to protect buyers. You can contact them to file a complaint or to learn if any complains have been filed against a company. Contact the local chapter at 651-699-1111, or online at www.bbb.org.

BEWARE OF SOLICITORS

Often people will come to your door, call you on the telephone, or stop you on the street and ask you to buy or sign up for something. Find out more about them, and never sign anything from solicitors unless you read it carefully and understand what you are signing.

You may receive letters in the mail that say “you may already have won” a large sum of money or some other wonderful prize. These are contests, and millions of these letters are mailed to people all over the United States. It is very unlikely that you will actually win anything. If the letter asks you to send money, throw it away—these contests are created to make a profit for the organizer.

FOOD STORES

Co-ops

There are several food cooperatives (“co-ops” for short) in the Twin Cities. Each is member-owned. All offer many foods in bulk. Spices are especially cheap, and some co-ops offer a good selection of cheese and bakery goods. Co-ops also sell personal hygiene products. Bring your own containers and bags.

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Seward Co-op | 612-338-2465 | 2823 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis |
| The Wedge Co-op | 612-871-3993 | 2105 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis |
| Hampden Park Co-op | 651-646-6686 | 928 Raymond Ave., St. Paul |

Grocery stores

Grocery stores sell all types of food, fresh, frozen, and canned (referred to as “staples”) and spices. Some also sell toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste, and paper products such as toilet paper, paper toweling, sanitary napkins, facial tissues, paper plates, and paper cups. Most supermarkets and many of the suburban discount stores are self-service.

Supermarkets

Because they stock larger varieties and quantities of foods, supermarket chains such as Cub are able to offer lower prices than other stores. Some full-service supermarkets, such as Lunds & Byerlys, offer special foods and will bag and carry your groceries for you, but the prices are frequently higher. Search online for the company's website to find a list of their locations and phone numbers.

Farmers Markets

Outdoor or "farmers" markets are open every day during spring, summer, and fall. You may buy fresh fruits, vegetables, and plants, many of which are locally grown. Other items including meats, bread, and flowers are also available. There is a large market in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The University of Minnesota has a Farmers Market that operates on Wednesdays during the summer, and there are several other farmers markets in the metropolitan area. See a list of additional farmers markets at www.minnesotagrown.com

CLOTHING, PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLIES, AND HOUSEWARES

Department Stores

Department stores sell shoes, clothing, appliances, furniture, fabrics, dishes, pots and pans, linens, towels, and toys. You can find them downtown and at the suburban shopping malls. Most mall hours are 9:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, Saturday 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., and Sunday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

The major Twin Cities department stores include JCPenneys, Macy's, Kohls, and Sears.

Discount department stores, such as Target and Walmart, sell fair- to good-quality items for discount prices. You can find them near downtown and in the suburbs.

Hardware Stores

Hardware stores sell many household goods, small appliances, and tools. There are hardware stores near each of the campuses.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies are the only places that sell doctor-prescribed medicines. Many drugs may only be obtained with a doctor's prescription in the United States. If you get a prescription from a doctor, you may have it filled at a drugstore or at the pharmacy located in Boynton Health Service, where the cost is usually less.

Non-prescription drugs, often called “over-the-counter” medications— aspirin, cold tablets, vitamins, some contraceptives (e.g., condoms), etc., are in plain view on drug store shelves. If you do not see the item you are looking for, ask the pharmacist for help. There are also many drug store chains such as Walgreens and CVS Pharmacy, as well as pharmacies within supermarkets and discount stores.

Shopping Malls and Centers

The first shopping mall, Southdale, was built in Edina, Minnesota, in the 1950s. The architect wanted to bring the convenience of small-town centers to the suburbs, so a suburban dweller could drive to one place for all his or her business or shopping needs. In Minnesota, it was also important to have all the stores under one roof to avoid the problem of taking children in and out of the cold weather. The stores all opened onto an indoor plaza. The idea was, of course, successful!

Today shopping malls are typically “American,” and Minnesota is the home of the giant Mall of America, completed in 1992. A shopping center or “strip mall” is usually smaller and does not have an indoor plaza.

Malls and centers close to the University include the Rosedale and Har Mar Malls (both near Snelling Avenue & Highway 36, in the St. Paul campus vicinity), Midway Shopping Center (University & Snelling Avenues, St. Paul), Quarry Shopping Center (northeast of the Minneapolis campus near the intersection of 35W and 280) and Apache Plaza Shopping Center (37th Avenue N.E. & Silver Lake Road).

Sports and recreation

UNIVERSITY SPORTS

www.gophersports.com

The University of Minnesota offers many exciting athletic teams to watch as well as recreational opportunities you may participate in. The University's athletic teams are nicknamed the "Golden Gophers" after a common Minnesota furry animal.

The men's athletic department has teams in these sports: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, gymnastics, hockey, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, and wrestling.

The women's athletic department has teams in the following sports: basketball, cross country, golf, gymnastics, hockey, rowing, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, and volleyball.

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

The Twin Cities is home to a number of professional sports teams, including the Twins (baseball), Vikings (football), Timberwolves (men's basketball), Lynx (women's basketball) and the Minnesota Wild (hockey). There are also minor league teams, in baseball (St. Paul Saints), soccer, and other sports.

SPORTS FACILITIES AND AMATEUR TEAMS

If you enjoy participating in athletic and recreational activities, the University offers a large variety of sports and recreational activities in which you may participate. The University Recreation Center and Mariucci (ice) Arena on the Minneapolis campus and the St. Paul Gym on the St. Paul campus are available for your use if you purchase a membership. These excellent facilities offer recreation in basketball, weight training, racquetball and squash, aerobics, swimming, ice skating, wall climbing, and more, along with intermural sports. Information about these resources is available on the University Recreation and Wellness website at www.recwell.umn.edu.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

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