Dear New International Students,

We know you probably have a lot of questions about planning for fall. This document includes information for new international students and provides responses to the most frequently asked questions. We are working with departments across the University to develop plans that will give you the flexibility needed to ensure you can begin your studies at the University, whether that is here in Minnesota or online from your home country.

We will continue to update this document as information becomes available. We also encourage you to regularly read the emails sent to your UMN email from ISSS and other departments. For individual questions, please email isssnew@umn.edu. Click on the links below to read answers grouped by topic area:

- University Fall Planning
- Immigration
- Visa Appointments
- Health and Campus Safety
- Health Care and Benefits
- Housing

For More Information:
- Safe Campus: Return to Campus
- Office of Undergraduate Education
- Orientation and Transition Experiences
- Graduate School
- Housing & Residential Life

Attention Returning International Students: This document is for new international students. Please see ISSS's information for returning students.
University Fall Planning

Q. What is the University’s plan for the fall?

The Board of Regents has approved a framework for resuming in-person instruction and reopening residence halls and campus services this fall in ways that are consistent with public health guidance and provide flexibility for students, staff, and faculty. Courses will be offered in a variety of options, including in-person, fully distanced, hybrid, “HyFlex,” and others. Please review the message sent by President Joan Gabel and the return to campus plan and student general frequently asked questions for more information.

Q. How can I be informed about changes and updates?

ISSS is working with offices across campus to develop plans to support international students during their transition to the University. ISSS and other offices across campus will continue to provide updates and guidance on changes. To ensure you receive these updates, you should do the following:

● Regularly check your UMN email. If you have not already, please claim your UMN email account so you are able to receive these messages.

● For students who will be starting school during this summer or fall, complete the International Student Preparation Course and any other online orientations. ISSS and other offices will update the information when decisions are announced.

Q. Who should I contact if my plans change?

- Undergraduate Students: Admissions (admissions@umn.edu) and your college of enrollment.
  - Additional information: Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Graduate and Professional Students: Your program/department.
- Non-degree Students: Your program coordinator.
- Sponsored students: Your sponsoring agency and the sponsored student program at isssspon@umn.edu.

Immigration

Q. Can you send me an electronic copy of my I-20?

Electronic I-20 delivery is available for some types of I-20 requests, but not all. The University of Minnesota continues to issue hard copies of Initial Attendance I-20s for students who will be new to the U.S. or have a gap of more than 5 months between their previous U.S. program and their start at UMN.
Q. If the situation makes it unfavorable to be in the United States (either because of safety concerns or flight issues), am I allowed to take online classes from my country instead? Or am I allowed to take fall semester off and defer my enrollment?

The University of Minnesota is seeking various ways to provide flexibility and support to students who are not able to arrive on campus in the fall semester or who choose to change their plans based on the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Undergraduate students** need to contact their college of enrollment to change their classes to be online in the fall. For new freshmen who want to defer enrollment, contact the Office of Admissions to request. ISSS will issue a new I-20 or DS-2019 for a future semester.

- **Graduate and professional students** need to contact their program. Each graduate and professional program is exploring alternative learning options and/or deferring students’ admission until they are able to arrive in the U.S. You will need to be issued a new I-20 or DS-2019 for a future semester.

- **Non-degree seeking students** need to contact their program coordinator.

- **Sponsored students** need to contact their sponsoring agency and the sponsored student program at isssspon@umn.edu.

Q: In case of visa delays, can students begin classes online from home and arrive on campus later in the fall to continue classes in-person?

If you do not have your entry visa at the start of fall semester or shortly after the semester begins, the University recommends enrolling in your courses remotely.

To determine the latest date you can arrive:

- **Undergraduate students** need to contact their college of enrollment
- **Graduate and professional students** need to contact their program.
- **Non-degree seeking students** need to contact their program coordinator.
- **Sponsored students** need to contact their sponsoring agency and the sponsored student program at isssspon@umn.edu.

Q. Will the 4/22/2020 Executive Order suspending entry of immigrants to the U.S. apply to Fall 2020 new international students?

The Executive Order does not apply to international students and scholars. Review our website for more information.

Q. If I study online from my home country for Fall 2020, will I be eligible for CPT (curricular practical training) starting Summer 2021?

No, to be eligible for Curricular Practical Training, a student must study in the U.S. for a full academic year.

International Student and Scholar Services

isss.umn.edu | isss@umn.edu
Visa Appointments

Q. I'm having difficulties scheduling an appointment for my visa interview. What can I do?

We recommend checking whether appointments are available at another consulate. Some consulates have announced plans for scheduling future visa appointments while others have not, so while the consulate nearest you may not have appointments available, another one in your country or nearby may.

Please continue to check your UMN email and the ISSS website. We are hopeful that updated information will be announced soon regarding visa appointments, and we will communicate this information once it is available.

Q. If I paid the SEVIS fee and cannot get a visa appointment, will I be refunded the $350 fee?

If you plan to defer your admission, your SEVIS fee will be applied to the new term.

Health and Campus Safety

Q. What is the University of Minnesota's plan to ensure students are safe this fall?

The University of Minnesota is developing substantial plans and procedures regarding safety this fall. Please refer to the Return to Campus webpage for more information.

Health Care and Benefits

Q. Does the student health insurance cover me if I were to get sick?

Yes, please review the Office of Student Health Benefits website for more information about the Student Health Benefit Plan or the Graduate Assistant Health Plan. You can also email umshbo@umn.edu if you have additional questions about your insurance plan.

Housing

Q. I have questions about living on- or off-campus. Who should I contact?

For questions about on-campus housing, please review the Housing and Residential Life website for more information.

For questions about living off-campus, please review the Off-Campus Living Office webpage which provides an overview of the neighborhoods surrounding the university and some things to be aware when you are renting in the US. You will need to contact your landlord or apartment manager directly to get information about renting a specific property. Check the reviews of a specific rental property for you to know whether it is suitable for your needs. Student Legal Services can also provide assistance with reviewing your lease or providing advice on negotiating with your landlord.
Q. **If the fall term ends the week of Thanksgiving, can I shorten my housing contract?**

If you will be living in on-campus housing, please review the [Housing and Residential Life website](https://housing.umn.edu/) for more information.

If you will be living off-campus, contact the landlord or apartment manager about making changes to your contract. You can also review the [Off-Campus Living Office](https://offcampus.umn.edu/) webpage.

Q. **If I have already signed a lease to live off-campus but will not be taking classes on-campus in the fall, what can I do?**

More likely than not, you have a legally binding contract, so you will likely need to find somebody else to take over the lease. You should contact your landlord or apartment manager directly to see if they would be willing to let you out of the lease early. [Student Legal Services](https://law.umn.edu/) can also provide assistance with reviewing the language in your lease and ideas about ways to negotiate.

Q. **Will I be able to live on campus over Winter Break?**

For students with an on-campus housing contract, there are options for break housing. Historically the on-campus apartments and a few residence halls remain open. More information about break housing will be available in mid-July.