PREPARING FOR ARRIVAL

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DOCUMENTS TO BRING

This section lists the important documents you should bring with you to the United States.

Documents to Bring

Plan to bring with you to the United States any important documents that relate to your legal, medical, and academic history. While traveling to the United States and while in the country, it is important that you carry all important documents on your person. Do not put them in a suitcase. Do not loan or give them to anyone unless that person can show some form of identification stating that he or she is authorized to receive them.

Legal Documents

As a foreign national entering the United States, you must have certain documents as evidence of your legal status. These include:

- valid passport, issued by your country, with at least six months validity beyond your entry date;
- nonimmigrant visa stamped inside your passport by a consular officer of a U.S. embassy or consulate);
- Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019 form);
- Arrival-Departure Record (I-94 form), which will be issued to you, usually on the airplane before landing, filled out by you, and reviewed and stamped by the immigration officer at your point of entry into the United States. You may have additional clearance procedures on arrival, in which case you will be directed to a private work station where a photograph and electronic (non-ink)

These documents define your legal status. They are necessary for your entry and stay in the United States, and for any temporary departure from and reentry into the country. It is extremely important that you keep these official documents valid at all times. Failure to do so may cause problems with your stay in the United States. It is also a good idea to bring an official copy of your birth certificate, as this may be requested when applying for various forms of identification and other documents in the United States. If you are married and your spouse will accompany you, bring a copy of your marriage certificate or other proof of marriage. Be sure to obtain notarized translations of these certificates if they are not in English.

Certificates of Immunization and Vaccination

Ask at the U.S. embassy or consulate whether you must have a medical examination and/or immunization(s) before entering the United States. Regulations are different for each country of origin. Inform the U.S. embassy or consulate if you plan to visit other countries before going to the United States because this might affect the
requirements for you. Major airlines often can supply information on U.S. entry requirements from other countries. Your doctor also might recommend additional immunizations. For more information, look at the World Health Organization homepage on international travel and health at http://www.who.int/ith/.

Prescriptions for Medication and Eyeglasses and/or Contact Lenses

When you enter the United States, you must declare medications you are carrying on customs forms. Certain drugs may not be brought into the country. If you have questions, check with the U.S. embassy or consulate before you leave home. If you take prescription medicine on a regular basis, bring a sufficient supply and a copy of the prescription, written in English. If you depend on eyeglasses, it is a good idea to bring an extra pair, if possible, and a copy of your eyeglass prescription, written in English. Although you may feel more comfortable using medications from home for headaches, colds, upset stomach, or minor injuries, aspirin, ointments, and other remedies are readily available in the United States. A pharmacist can advise you.

Medical and Dental Records

If possible, bring detailed and up-to-date medical and dental records for yourself and any dependents traveling with you. It is also a good idea to make sure these records reflect recent visits to your local health care professionals for general examinations, blood tests, dental and eye checkups, x-rays, and so on. This will not only help your U.S. doctors get a better idea of recent or past diagnoses and treatments, but may also help you avoid repeating these tests in the United States at greater expense.

Academic Documents

Bring your diploma, official transcripts from secondary schools, colleges, or universities. If you are a student, bring any syllabi, catalogs, bulletins, course descriptions, or other relevant materials issued by the secondary school or university you have attended most recently; these records can be very helpful if questions arise concerning academic credit or your placement in courses. If you are a scholar, remember that as a scholar, you are allowed by the University of Minnesota to take up to one graduate class per semester. In case you decide to take classes, you might also want to bring items you consider to be relevant for class placement.

International Driver Permit

An International Driving Permit is not a driver license. The permit only verifies that you hold a valid driver license in your home country. Your foreign driver license, not the International Driving Permit, allows you to drive legally in Minnesota. Contact the authorities in your home country to get an International Driving Permit. If you are not a resident of the US, you cannot apply for an International Driving Permit after you arrive in the US. You are not required to have an International Driving Permit to
drive in Minnesota, but the permit has value. The permit verifies, in several languages, that you have a valid foreign driver license. A police officer who cannot read the language on your foreign driver license can read the permit. A final note: Different states have different rules. What applies in Minnesota may not apply in other states. If you have not obtained an International Driving Permit in your home country before coming to the U.S. you might be able to obtain one by contacting your home country embassy or consulate.

Home Country Driver License in Minnesota

You can also drive by carrying your home country Driver License. If your Driver License is not in English, you also need to obtain and carry an official Minnesota Certified translation (which you can obtain from a licensed translator).

Contact Information

Include with your documents the name, address, and telephone number of the individual at the University of Minnesota to contact in case of a travel delay or an emergency.
Also include the name, address, and telephone number of a contact person at home and the name, address, and telephone number of your country’s consulate in the United States and of your sponsoring agency (students).

Remember:  *Do Not Pack These Items In Your Checked Luggage!*