



International Student Pre-Arrival Guide

2020-2021

Action Items That Need Your Attention

	<input type="radio"/> Initiate your UMN e-mail account (page 4)
	<input type="radio"/> Apply for your student visa (page 5) or begin the visa transfer process (page 8)
	<input type="radio"/> Plan your arrival date (page 10)
	<input type="radio"/> Complete the International Student Preparation Course (page 12)
	<input type="radio"/> Submit English language test scores and transcripts, if necessary (page 15)
	<input type="radio"/> Submit your immunization form to Boynton Health Service (page 17)
	<input type="radio"/> Plan your finances (page 21)
	<input type="radio"/> Research temporary and permanent housing options (page 21)
	<input type="radio"/> Attend a pre-departure orientation in home country, optional (page 22)
	<input type="radio"/> Plan transportation from the airport (page 24)
	<input type="radio"/> Remove registration holds (page 11)
	<input type="radio"/> Take an English proficiency test, if needed (page 15)
	<input type="radio"/> Submit your documents through MyISSS after entering the USA (page 13)
	<input type="radio"/> Attend ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14)
	<input type="radio"/> Attend Global Gopher Events, optional but recommended (page 26)

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Welcome

Dear Student,

On behalf of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) in the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, congratulations on your admission to the University of Minnesota! We are excited to have you join us soon on campus.

Our Twin Cities campus is centrally located in the exciting and friendly cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Minnesotans place a high value on education, and they also realize that hosting international students is an important component of what makes the University of Minnesota a vibrant and globalized campus. We think you will find this a warm and accepting community.

The staff of ISSS is ready to help you accomplish your academic and career goals. Our office provides:

- Information to help you adjust to the University and American culture,
- Advising and counseling services to help you maintain your immigration status and succeed at the UMN,
- Academic and career support, and
- Educational and social programs to help you meet students from the USA and around the world.

Please read this guide carefully and complete the activities explained at iss.umn.edu/new. It is very important that you understand this information so you can successfully begin your studies at the University of Minnesota. If you have any questions, please email issnew@umn.edu.

We are delighted you chose to study at the UMN, and we look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,



Barbara Kappler, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean,

International Student & Scholar Services



Did You Know?

6,400 international students from 130 world locations attend the UMN.



Initiate Your UMN Email

Your University email address is the official form of communication at the University of Minnesota. Official announcements from the University, your department, professors, and ISSS are sent to this email address. Your tuition bill will also be emailed to this account.

You are responsible for knowing any information sent to you through your University email.

Go to umn.edu/initiate to initiate your email account. You can leave empty the field asking for a Social Security Number if you do not have one.

Attention Students in China

The UMN uses Google as our email and applications platform. We are aware that this may make it difficult for incoming students living in China to access their UMN email account. Initiate your account and review the other recommendations at z.umn.edu/chinatech.

Before the start of classes, most (but not all) offices will send communications to both your UMN email and the personal email address you provided on your application for admission.

We recommend signing up for the UMN China Office's WeChat official account: 明尼苏达大学驻华代表处UMN (UMN_Beijing_Office). You can learn more about the China Office at china.umn.edu.

! Create a Strong Password You Will Remember

You will be required to create a complex password that includes letters, numbers, spaces, and/or special characters (for example, ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & () - _ + =).

It is important that you select a password you will remember. While it is possible to reset your password, this process can be difficult for students who are not physically in Minnesota.

We recommend you write down a hint to help you remember your password. The Office of Information Technology has suggestions for how to create a password that will be easy to remember at z.umn.edu/strongpassword2.

Need Help With Email?

If you need help initiating or accessing your email, you can contact the UMN's Technology Help service desk (called 1-Help) by email, phone, or chat. Learn how at z.umn.edu/1help.



Information Technology

Training & Events News & Alerts

New Students: Start Using Technology

Soon before you arrive on campus, you can set up your University account and start using University technology resources and services.

Search

Review z.umn.edu/newstudentech if you want to know more about email, wifi, or other technology-related questions.



Obtain a New Visa

If you are a Canadian citizen, you do not need an entry visa. Skip to page 7.

If you are currently in the USA in F-1 or J-1 visa status and plan to remain in that same visa status, skip to “Visa Status Transfers” (page 8) for instructions on how to transfer your F-1 or J-1 SEVIS record to the UMN.

There are two main categories of visas given to international students: F-1 and J-1. Most international students in the USA hold an F-1 visa. If you received an I-20 document from the UMN, you will apply for an F-1 visa. If you received a DS-2019, you will apply for a J-1 visa.

1. Review Your I-20/DS-2019 and Sign the Bottom

Review the spelling and order of your name on the visa document, and confirm that it **exactly** matches how your legal name is written at the bottom of the identity page in your passport (the page that has your picture).

It is essential that your information is printed identically on **all** of your immigration documents (I-20/DS-2019, passport, and visa), and you should **always** write it the same way when completing your visa application and any other forms.

If there is a mistake or the name on your I-20/DS-2019 does not match your name in your passport, contact the office or agency that issued your document (review the list on the back of this book).

If all of the information is correct, sign and date your name on the bottom of your I-20/DS-2019. Additionally, if you have an I-20 and are younger than 18 years old, your parents/guardians must also sign your document.

I-20 Example

DS-2019 Example

2. Pay the SEVIS Fee at www.fmjfee.com

New students must pay the SEVIS fee before applying for an entry visa or entering the USA. This fee is charged by the Department of Homeland Security, and it is not administered by UMN. You cannot pay the fee until you have your I-20 or DS-2019 document in your possession. To pay the fee, go to www.fmjfee.com.

3. Complete the Visa Application Form (Ds-160) and Schedule Your Visa Interview Appointment

You should plan to apply for a visa at the USA embassy/consulate that is closest to where you live. You can find the official list at www.usembassy.gov. This website also includes specific instructions for scheduling an appointment.

We recommend scheduling your appointment as soon as possible after you receive your I-20/DS-2019. To learn the estimated wait time for obtaining a visa at your local embassy, visit z.umn.edu/doswait.

When completing the visa application, write your legal name exactly as it is printed in your passport and provide complete and truthful information throughout the application. If you do not have housing reserved in the USA but you are asked to provide an address in the USA where you will stay, you can use ISSS's address (301 19th Ave South, Suite 190, Humphrey School, Minneapolis, MN 55455).

4. Prepare Your Documents for Your Visa Interview

Follow the instructions from the embassy regarding what to take to the appointment. Typically, you will be asked to provide the following documents:

- Valid passport
- I-20 or DS-2019 document
- Admission letter (or print out of electronic admission notification)
- Documented proof of financial support for one year or more (scholarship or assistantship letter, bank statement, etc.)
- Receipt of SEVIS fee payment
- Visa application forms (available from the USA embassy/consulate)
- Any documents requested by embassy/consulate

5. Prepare for Your Visa Interview

The visa interview will be a very brief meeting with a consular officer. Be prepared to explain why you want to study at UMN, how you are planning to pay for your stay, and what your plans might be after you graduate. Always answer truthfully! If you have questions or concerns before the visa interview, we recommend that you contact the EducationUSA office closest to you (a list is available at z.umn.edu/edusacenter).

Once you receive your visa, check the accuracy of the information on it. Contact the USA embassy or consulate if you find a mistake.

Additional items to Know

If You Have Dependents

Your spouse and children under age 21 are eligible to accompany you to the USA with a dependent visa (F-2 or J-2).

You must request a dependent I-20 or DS-2019 document for each of your eligible dependents. Dependents are not required to pay the SEVIS fee.

For more information, contact the UMN office responsible for your documents (review the list on the back cover of this book).

Note: F-2 visa holders are not permitted to work in the USA, and they cannot study full-time at a university or other post-secondary institution.

Visa Denials

If your visa is denied, ask the consular official to provide a written explanation of the denial. You can then contact ISSS for assistance by emailing iss@umn.edu with “Visa Denial” in the subject line.

Administrative Processing and Security Clearance Checks

Some visa applicants are subject to additional screening that will delay the issuance of the visa. This is NOT always a final denial. Most applicants who are subject to administrative processing or a security clearance check will receive a visa within one to two months. It can take longer sometimes.

You cannot prevent additional screening or security clearance, and neither ISSS or your department can intervene to speed up the process.

! Attention Canadian Citizens

Canadian citizens can enter the USA in student status without obtaining an F-1 or J-1 entry visa in their passport. However, Canadian citizens must obtain an I-20 or DS-2019 and pay the SEVIS fee (page 6) before entering the USA.

Do NOT enter the USA in tourist status (B1/B2 or Visa Waiver). Individuals with these immigration statuses are not eligible to register for an academic course of study.

Upon entry, you must present to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, admission letter, proof of financial support for at least one year, and receipt of SEVIS fee payment (page 6).

If you are a Canadian citizen who is currently in the USA in F-1 or J-1 visa status and plan to remain in that same visa status, you must transfer your F-1 or J-1 SEVIS record to the UMN (page 8).



Transfer Your Existing Visa

You are considered a “Visa Status Transfer Student” if you currently hold F-1 or J-1 status at another institution in the USA and plan to remain in the same immigration status (F-1 or J-1) when at the UMN. This includes students who are transferring to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities from another UMN school. If this does not describe you, skip to page 10.

J-1 Transfer Students

1. Meet with a J-1 adviser at your current school to discuss your intent to transfer to the University of Minnesota. They will determine your SEVIS transfer “effective date” and schedule your SEVIS record to transfer to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
2. Submit the DS-2019 Application for New J-1 Degree-Seeking Students Form found z.umn.edu/jfincert, so a UMN DS-2019 form can be created for you.
3. After arriving at the UMN, scan and submit your documents in MyISSS (page 13) before attending your ISSS Check-in and Welcome Session.
5. Update your “Mailing Address” (your Minnesota address) on **MyU**. Directions are available at z.umn.edu/issaddress.
6. Register full-time for classes.
7. Once you have completed the ISSS Check-in and Welcome Session and registered for classes, you must meet with a J adviser* at ISSS (190 Humphrey School) within 25 days to obtain your UMN DS-2019.

** Sponsored students should request to meet a Sponsored Student adviser.*

! Will You Travel Outside of the USA During this Process?

If you are currently on a J-1 student visa and you are traveling outside the USA before starting your UMN studies, you need to obtain a new DS-2019 to re-enter the USA. This document will be automatically created after your record has been released to UMN by your previous institution.

If you cannot obtain your DS-2019 before departing the USA, you must arrange for it to be mailed to your overseas address. **You cannot use your previous institution’s documents to reenter the USA after your SEVIS record has been released to the UMN.**

You must also have a valid entry J-1 visa in your passport. Contact an ISSS adviser for more.

F-1 Transfer Students

Step 1: Receive a UMN Transfer Pending I-20

1. Contact the international student advising office at your current institution and inform them of your intent to transfer to the UMN. An adviser at your current school will need to determine your **“Transfer Release Date”** and schedule your SEVIS record to be transferred to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities on that date.
2. Inform the University of Minnesota of your “Transfer Release Date”. The process varies based on what type of student you are:
 - A. If you will be an **undergraduate student** at UMN, you will be required to report your transfer release date on your “Undergraduate New Student I-20 Request” in MyISSS. There is no form for your current school to complete.
 - B. If you are entering a **graduate program** at UMN, you should submit the I-20 request form (found on your application status page) and wait for further instructions from the Office of Graduate Admissions about providing your transfer release information. You do not need to submit a transfer release form.
 - C. If you are entering a **professional school** program, you will complete a paper Transfer Release Form. This will be provided to you by your school of admission.

Step 2: Receive a Transfer Completed I-20

1. Complete all of your ISSS new student requirements:
 - A. International Student Preparation Course,
 - B. Submit your immigration documents to the Document Check form in MyISSS,
 - C. Attend your in-person ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14).
5. Update your “Mailing Address” (your address in Minnesota) on ***myu.umn.edu***. Directions are at ***z.umn.edu/issaddress***.
6. Register full-time for courses.
7. ISSS will email you within the first two weeks of the semester indicating your University of Minnesota “Transfer Completed” I-20 is available for pick up. Your Transfer Completed I-20s is your official University of Minnesota I-20.

! Important to Know

Your I-20 **cannot** be processed until your SEVIS record has been transferred to the UMN **on your transfer release date**.



Plan Your Arrival Date

Undergraduate students starting in Fall 2020 are required to arrive at the UMN by Monday, August 24, 2020.

Graduate, Professional, and Non-Degree students should plan to arrive 10 days prior to the program start date on their I-20 or DS-2019.

Spring 2021 students should arrive in the USA 10 days before the program start date on their I-20 or DS-2019.

If you plan to live off-campus, we recommend arriving 3 weeks before classes start so you will have enough time to find housing (review page 21 for more information about what you will need to know when selecting off-campus housing).

Students who follow these arrival date guidelines will be more prepared to begin their studies, as they will have sufficient time to do the following:

- Rest and recover from jet lag
- Remove registration holds (page 11)
- Submit their immigration documents in MyISSS (page 13)
- Attend their ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14)
- Attend any mandatory or optional orientations provided by their college or department
- Register for classes
- Take any necessary exams, such as a English proficiency test (page 15)
- Go to Graduate Assistantship training and complete paperwork for on-campus employment (if applicable, review page 20 for more information about what you will need to do before starting your graduate assistantship).

ISSS also strongly encourages new international students to attend Global Gopher Events and our other programs that occur before the start of the semester (review page 26). Past participants said these events and workshops taught them important skills needed to succeed during their first semester and allowed them to make new friends and have fun while waiting for classes.

! Be Aware

You are allowed to arrive in the USA up to 30 days before the program start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.

You **must** enter the USA no later than the start date on your I-20/DS-2019. If you will be delayed, email issnew@umn.edu as soon as you are aware of the delay.



Remove Registration Holds

Registration holds prevent you from registering for classes. They are placed on your record because you need to complete a requirement.

Below are brief descriptions of the registration holds commonly placed on new international student records. Many international students have at least two holds on their record when they arrive at the UMN.

AI Hold: “Determine Current Visa Status”

Office Placed By: International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

ISSS will remove this after you complete all three of your ISSS new student requirements:

1. Complete the International Student Preparation Course (page 12),
2. Submit your documents on MyISSS (page 13), and
3. Attend your ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14).

Undergraduate students will also need to complete a mid-semester program for new international students before registering for future semesters. ISSS will email more after classes begin.

AZ Hold: “ESL, English/Second Language”

Office Placed By: The Minnesota English Language Program (MELP)

To remove this, you may need to take an English proficiency test or register for a class. Review page 15 for more information about contacting MELP (z.umn.edu/melp).

! Caution

You **will not** be allowed to register until all holds are removed from your record.

It is essential that you remove any holds **before your registration time**.

MJ/MG Hold: “Grad School Final Degree/Transcript”

Office Placed By: The Graduate School

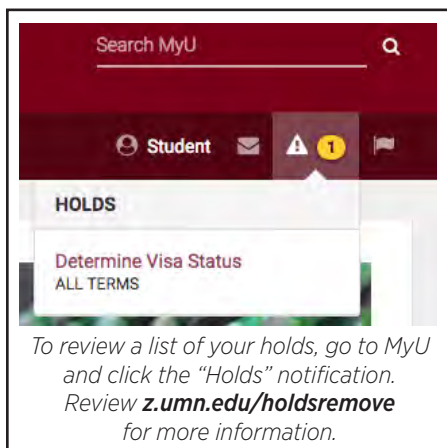
This hold indicates that the Graduate School needs a transcript or other record to complete your admission file. Learn more at www.grad.umn.edu/admissions.

FE and SFI Holds (“Financial Aid-Ineligible Plan and Not Eligible for Payment Plan”)

Non-degree students only

Non-degree students do not need to resolve the FE/SFI holds. This hold is for administrative purposes only, and they will not prevent you from registering at your appointed time.

You should resolve any other holds that are on your record.





Complete the International Student Preparation Course

All new international students are required to complete the International Student Preparation Course.

This course was developed specifically for new international students **like you** so that you can know what to expect as you prepare for your arrival to the University of Minnesota. You should complete this course as soon as possible as it will give you a better awareness of your visa status and resources available on-campus.

The International Student Preparation Course has helpful modules that address some of the questions most frequently asked by international students, including:

- What is International Student and Scholar Services, and how can you help me before and after I arrive at the University of Minnesota?
- What do I need to do BEFORE and AFTER I arrive?
- How do I register for classes?
- What it is like to study or teach in the USA?
- What do I need to know about employment in the USA?
- What do I need to travel?
- What resources does the campus have to support my cultural adjustment?

There is an AI “Determine Current Visa Status” Hold (page 11) on your student record. This hold will prevent you from registering for classes until you complete the International Student Preparation Course, submit your documents in MyISSS, and attend your ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14).

Review iss.umn.edu/new/online.html for information about how to begin.

! Attention Undergraduate Transfer Students

All undergraduate transfer students must complete **two** online courses: the International Student Preparation Course and the Transfer Student Online Orientation (see [checklist.umn.edu](https://iss.umn.edu)).

You must complete **both** of these items before attending your in-person Transfer Student Orientation and ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session. You may be delayed in registering if you do not complete both before arriving at orientation.



Submit Your Documents Through MyISSS

After you arrive in the USA, you must scan and submit your immigration documents using the “Document Check” form on MyISSS (myiss.umn.edu). These documents include:

- Your I-20 or DS-2019
- Passport biographical page
- F-1 or J-1 visa (except citizens of Canada)
- I-94 record of entry to the USA

Review iss.umn.edu/new/docs.html for the full list of the documents you will need.

Please note:

- You must submit these documents before your ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session (page 14). You may be delayed in registering for classes if you have not done so.
- You will use your UMN email and password to log into MyISSS (if you have not initiated your email, review page 4).
- To avoid complications, ensure the text on your documents is legible, and make sure all of the complete document shows in the image.

You cannot upload your documents until you arrive in the USA because you will receive your I-94 record when you enter the USA (page 23).

To avoid complications when registering, upload your documents as soon as possible after you receive your I-94 record. You should also bring your documents to your ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session.

To submit your documents, go to myiss.umn.edu, click on “Admissions”, and “Document Check.”



Attend ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session

Upon arrival, all new international students are required to attend an in-person ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session. At this session, ISSS staff will verify that you completed your Document Check form in MyISSS and provide you with essential information about maintaining your visa status.

ISSS will temporarily or permanently remove the AI “Determine Current Visa Status” hold from your record once you have completed all three requirements.

Undergraduate Students will attend ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session during their New Student Orientation (Freshman or Transfer). If you have not selected your orientation date, review your New Student Checklist at checklist.umn.edu.

Graduate and Professional Degree Students will register for ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session while completing the online International Student Preparation Course (page 12). Your ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session will be separate from any other orientation you may attend. DO NOT register for ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session at a time that conflicts with other requirements.

Review communications you receive from other departments regarding their required and/or optional orientations.

Non-Degree Students will register for ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session while completing the online International Student Preparation Course (page 12). All Non-Degree students will also have a separate, required orientation with their exchange coordinator. Information will be sent by your exchange coordinator.

! Important

All new international students should complete the online International Student Preparation Course (page 12) as soon as possible. Upon arrival in the USA students must submit their visa documents to the Document Check form in MyISSS as soon as possible.

Students who have not completed both of these requirements at least 24 hours before attending their ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session may be asked to reschedule. This may result in the student being delayed in registering for classes.



Determine If You Need to Take an English Proficiency Test

Strong language skills are important for any student to be successful at the University of Minnesota, and we are committed to supporting students as they develop their skills while at the UMN.

Students without a valid English test score, or a score below the minimum required by the University, may be required to take an English test when they arrive on campus. They may also be required to take a supportive English class during their first semester, in addition to their other coursework.

If you have an AZ hold on your student record (page 11) instructing you to go the Minnesota English Language Program, please arrive by the mandatory arrival date (page 10) so you have enough time to take the test.

For information about minimum test scores, how to send your scores to the UMN, and the English as a Second Language course requirements, go to z.umn.edu/intlenglishreq.

If you are interested in enhancing your English skills before beginning your academic classes, the Minnesota English Language Program (MELP) offers an Intensive English Language Program during the summer.

The program features:

- Classes in academic English
- Friendly, experienced teachers
- Advising and support services designed for international students
- Access to the University's many resources and facilities
- On-campus housing available

MELP also offers American English courses during the school year for credit, including courses focused on:

- Grammar
- Pronunciation
- Reading and Writing
- Listening & Speaking.

To learn more, review z.umn.edu/melp or email esl@umn.edu.

Student Resources

Welcome to the University of Minnesota's website for multilingual students!
We offer English language help with...

Speaking	Confidence
Reading	Writing
US Culture	Grammar
Vocabulary	Campus Resources

Go to esl.umn.edu to review self-study materials, practice quizzes, tips, videos, and links to provide English language practice with speaking, vocabulary, reading, American culture, and more!

Submit Your Official and Complete Academic Secondary School Record

Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Students Only

Successful completion of secondary school/high school graduation is a requirement for enrollment at the University of Minnesota.

To verify that you have met this enrollment requirement, you must submit official and complete academic documents from your secondary school(s) along with proof of high school graduation (for example, graduation certificate or leaving exam results).

Official and complete academic record and proof of high school graduation may include exam results such as, but not limited to, IB, IGCSE, O/AS/A-level, HKDSE, SPM and CISCE/CBSE.

For country-specific requirements, visit z.umn.edu/adintldocs.

To be considered official, documents must:

- Be the original or an attested copy. **Scanned or electronic copies are not considered official.**
- Be mailed in a sealed, stamped envelope directly from the school, college, or university.
- Have been issued within the past year.
- Be in the original language and include (if they are not in English) a certified true English translation.

Arrange to have your documents submitted directly to the Office of Admissions at:

University of Minnesota
Office of Admissions
240 Williamson Hall
231 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis MN 55455

! Important

School records for undergraduate degree-seeking students must be submitted by **July 1** for those starting in the fall or **January 15** for students enrolling in spring.



Learn About Health Insurance, Health Care, and Immunizations

Medical expenses in the USA are extremely high. In fact, one day in the hospital in the USA can cost well over \$10,000, even for routine care. Because of this, it is important to understand your health insurance and where to go for health care.

All international students (and their dependents) must purchase the University-sponsored Student Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) unless they are eligible for a waiver (for more about waivers, review z.umn.edu/shbpwaiver). You will automatically be enrolled in the SHBP after you register for courses.

Students holding a qualifying graduate assistantship will be eligible to enroll in the Graduate Assistantship Plan (GAHP) as an alternative to the SHBP.

Do not purchase alternative insurance from a private insurance company for yourself or your dependents.

Email the Office of Student Health Benefits at umshbo@umn.edu if you have questions about the SHBP or the GAHP. Additional information can be found at shb.umn.edu.

Dependent Insurance

International students are required to enroll any dependents (spouse or children) who are in the USA in F-2 or J-2 status in the Student Health Benefit Plan. Dependents are not enrolled automatically in the plan. An enrollment form should be completed and returned to the Office of Student Health Benefits within 30 days of their arrival.

Go to shb.umn.edu to obtain this enrollment form.

Pre-Existing Conditions

Bring copies of your medical records and a list of medications with you to the USA if you have a health condition that requires ongoing care (diabetes, heart problems, asthma, depression, etc.). This will help prevent interruptions in care.

Do You Have Health-Related Questions?

Visit z.umn.edu/boyntonintl to learn about getting immunizations, transferring your medical records/prescriptions, and more.

! Submit Your Immunization Form

Minnesota law requires all students to be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, and diphtheria. Review the immunization requirements and complete the online or printable immunization form at z.umn.edu/immunizationreq.

You may obtain your vaccinations in your home country or once you arrive. You can get vaccinations at Boynton Health or another clinic if you are unable to get vaccinated before arriving in the USA. Immunizations are covered by the student insurance plans.

If you do not complete the vaccination form before the start of classes, a registration hold will be placed on your record for the following semester.

Plan Your Finances

Your I-20 or DS-2019 is a legal document that reflects the estimated expenses for tuition, fees, insurance, supplies, and living expenses. When you completed the financial certification form, you indicated that you have sufficient funding to cover those expenses.

The University and the USA government hold you responsible for the information you provided on the form. If you do not have the funds to cover these costs, you should defer your enrollment until you obtain adequate funding.

Bring Funds For Your Immediate Expenses

When planning for arrival, prepare to bring sufficient funds to pay your immediate expenses, such as a security deposit and two months' rent, phone and electricity charges, and, possibly, the purchase of warm clothing.

We recommend that you open a bank account in the USA soon after your arrival (review [z.umn.edu/intlbanking](https://www.z.umn.edu/intlbanking) for more). There are several different banks located near the University of Minnesota campus. When choosing a bank, ask if money can be transferred into the account from overseas if you plan to have money transferred to pay tuition, fees, mandatory health insurance, and ongoing living expenses.

If you choose to bring large amounts of money, we recommend carrying traveler's checks rather than cash (review page 23 for information if you and/or those traveling with you will bring more than \$10,000 USD in cash or checks). Do not put money in your checked baggage; you should carry it at all times.

Know Your Employment Options

Visa regulations vary about when/how international students can work in the USA. Additional information about employment is available in the International Student Preparation Course.

On-Campus Employment

J-1 students whose DS-2019 forms are issued by the UMN and all F-1 students may work on-campus for up to 20 hours a week during an academic year.

NOTE: All new UMN employees must complete paperwork and provide documents on or before their first day of their employment. Review the information at [z.umn.edu/form19](https://www.z.umn.edu/form19) or page 20.

Off-Campus Employment

Off-campus employment is prohibited for F-1 students during their first academic year in the USA. J-1 students need to receive approval from their J-1 sponsor prior to starting employment in the USA.

! Please Note

On-campus student jobs are great opportunities to gain skills and experience. They can provide partial support, but they do not pay enough to cover a student's living expenses.

Understand Your Assistantship or Fellowship

If you are a graduate student with an assistantship, your first paycheck will most likely not be issued until a month after the start of your assistantship. Therefore, you should bring funds to cover your initial expenses.

Your assistantship or fellowship may not cover all your expenses, so plan your budget and calculate how much additional money you may need for the rest of the year. The total value of your appointment or fellowship may be subject to a deduction of, as much as, 28 percent to cover taxes on the value of your tuition waiver.

Review page 20 for more information about what you must do to begin your assistantship or fellowship on time.

Pay Your Tuition with Flywire

International students can pay tuition online through their Student Account by using Flywire. This is a service that allows you to bypass international transfer fees and access foreign exchange rates that are more favorable than those offered by banks.

To do this, go to the “My Finances” tab of MyU (www.myu.umn.edu) and select “International Payment” when making your payment.

You will need to create an account with Flywire, so have your student ID and information available. Learn more at z.umn.edu/intlpay.



Attention Sponsored Students

If your financial sponsor (home country government, USA government, international organization, employer, bank, etc.) needs to be billed by the UMN, you must email a billing authorization, financial guarantee, or financial support letter to issspon@umn.edu before the beginning of the semester. You must also provide an updated letter to ISSS each year if your funding is renewed on an annual basis.

This letter must be on official letterhead, be written in English, and state that the University of Minnesota is to bill the sponsor directly. In addition, the letter must include the following information:

- Your full name
- The length of time for which the funding is granted
- What items are to be billed (for example, tuition, fees, and/or health insurance)
- The address to where the UMN must send your bill
- The name of a contact person
- Any limitations or exclusions on the funding (for example, a specific degree or major)
- The signature of your sponsor

The University **cannot** send an invoice to the sponsor until we receive this letter. The University does not accept wire transfers on behalf of individual students outside the Third-Party payment process.

If You Have a Graduate Assistantship

Most graduate assistantships start one week before the start of classes, but some departments have an earlier orientation. Review all of the following information as there are important steps you must take to start your assistantship.

Complete the Necessary Paperwork On or Before Your First Day of Employment

You will be required to do the following before you can begin work:

- Complete all of your ISSS New Student Requirements (pages 12-14):
 1. Complete the International Student Preparation Course,
 2. Submit your immigration documents to the Document Check form in MyISSS, and
 3. Attend your in-person ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session.
- **On or before your first day of work:** You must complete a I-9 form with the Office of Human Resources. Call 612-624-8647 to make an appointment to bring your documents and complete the necessary paperwork. You will not be allowed to start work until you have completed your I-9 paperwork. Review the documents you will need to bring to this appointment and other information at z.umn.edu/workdocs.

Note: Failure to begin working on your start date may result in a loss of salary and/or a portion of your tuition and health care benefits.

Obtain a Social Security Number (SSN)

You will be asked for your SSN when you complete your I-9. The UMN allows you to submit your I-9 before you obtain one. You will then need to travel to the Social Security Administration (SSA) office to apply within 10 days of starting work, and you must report your SSN to your unit's Human Resources department once you receive it.

! Do Not Go to the SSA Too Early

It is important that you understand and travel to the SSA office at the correct time as your application will be rejected if you go to the office too early. **Do not go to the office until you complete all of the following items:**

1. Complete all your ISSS new student requirements (pages 12-14).
2. Register for full-time classes.
3. Update your Mailing Address in MyU.
4. Obtain the necessary paperwork needed to apply for a Social Security Number (review z.umn.edu/ssniss to determine the correct documents for your visa type).
5. **Wait 10 days after completing these requirements** before traveling to the SSA to submit your application for an SSN. The SSA must be able to verify your Port of Entry record and UMN course registration in SEVIS, and it can take 10 days for the information to be available in their system.



Find Housing Options

Reserve Temporary Housing, if Necessary

For Fall 2020, new international students can stay in the International Early Arrival Housing from July 29 to August 23, 2020. At only \$30 a night, this temporary on-campus housing is an affordable option for new students needing somewhere to stay before they can move into their permanent on- or off-campus housing.

Please note:

- Only students can stay in International Early Arrival Housing; students traveling with other family members need to find another housing option.
- Students who will live on-campus during the school year will be required to move into their assigned housing on August 27 or 28, 2020.
- Students who will live off-campus during the school year will be required to move out of the temporary housing by 6:00 p.m. on August 28, 2020. No exceptions will be made, so ask if you will be able to move into your permanent housing on August 28. You may need to find another temporary housing option until September 1.

Visit housing.umn.edu/international to make a reservation in the International Early Arrival Housing.

There are no temporary housing options available for students arriving in the spring. Students needing temporary housing options for spring should consider the options listed at housing.umn.edu/international.

Explore the On-Campus Housing Options at housing.umn.edu

All new first-year undergraduate students are guaranteed housing, but you must confirm your enrollment and apply for housing by May 1, 2020. **Apply as soon as possible** since housing assignments are done in the order received. The online housing application requires that you pay a fee with a major credit card. Email housing@umn.edu if you have any questions.

Transfer, graduate, and professional students: You need to apply for housing online. **You will only be considered for on-campus housing after first-year undergraduates receive rooms.** Be prepared to find off-campus housing.

There are a limited number (approximately 200) of guaranteed spaces for **undergraduate transfer** students. Priority is given to students who select one of the transfer Living Learning Communities. Review housing.umn.edu/transfer for more information.

Non-degree student housing: You will receive instructions on how to apply for on-campus housing from your program coordinator. Do not complete the online application.

Family Student Housing is available to students who are married, partnered, or have children, but it is in high demand. Information is available at housing.umn.edu/family. Individual graduate and professional students are also eligible to live at these facilities.

Did You Know?

There are over 30 Living Learning Communities (LLC) on-campus where you can live with students who share your interests. One of these is the Global Gopher Community for international and USA students (page 27). Learn more at housing.umn.edu/llcs.

Research Off-Campus Housing

Start researching your housing options early (we recommend starting at least 4 to 6 months before your arrival). You may be asked to sign a lease at least 2 months before you can move in.

Useful resources for finding and understanding off-campus housing include:

- Off-Campus Housing: ocl.umn.edu
- Off-Campus Housing Listing: z.umn.edu/offcampuslisting
- Student Legal Services: sls.umn.edu

! Understand Your Legal Responsibilities When Renting Off-Campus

You should visit an apartment in-person before signing a lease (a legal contract that you agree to rent a place for a specific time period); however, this may not always be possible. Research the manager and/or company that owns the property thoroughly before signing a lease.

Many apartments use a 12-month lease. Please review the information at z.umn.edu/tenantguide to learn more about the rights of tenants.



Attend a Pre-Departure Orientation (Optional)

Attend an EducationUSA Pre-Departure Orientation in Your Home Country

EducationUSA offices all over the world offer pre-departure orientation sessions to international students preparing to depart for the USA. These sessions address frequently asked questions about living in the USA, succeeding at a USA university, and the logistical issues involved with moving and entering the country. For details, visit educationusa.state.gov/find-event.

Attend The UMN's Undergraduate Pre-Departure Orientation in China

The University of Minnesota's China Office offers two Pre-Departure Orientations for new undergraduate students in May each year. These sessions, hosted in Beijing and Shanghai, provide information that is specific to the University of Minnesota. For details, please visit china.umn.edu.



Arrive in the USA

Prepare for Inspection at Your Port of Entry

You will need to present the following documents to a Customs and Border Protection officer when you arrive in the USA. Keep these documents close to you during your travel. **Do not pack them into your luggage**, as you will not be allowed to retrieve your luggage until you have gone through immigration.

- Your passport and entry visa
- I-20 or DS-2019 document
- Form 6059, “Customs Declaration” (given to you as you arrive)

You may also be asked to provide additional documents, such as proof of financial support and/or UMN admission.

When completing your paperwork, always spell your name *exactly* as it appears in your passport and visa.

Get Your I-94 Travel Record

An I-94 is a record of your travel to the USA. You should check the accuracy of your I-94 after you arrive in the USA and keep a copy for your records. This will be one of the documents you must submit in MyISSS (page 13).

- If you arrive via air or sea, your I-94 will be recorded electronically, and you can access and print your electronic I-94 arrival record after inspection at i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94.
- If you arrive via a land border, you may be given a paper Form I-94 record. To save time at the border, apply for a land border I-94 arrival record seven (or fewer) days before your arrival at i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94.

For more, review z.umn.edu/cbpintvisitors.

! Will You and Your Family Bring More than \$10,000 USD in Cash Or Checks When You Enter the USA?

You will be required to file a report with Customs and Border Protection when you enter the USA if you bring cash or checks worth \$10,000 USD or more (USD or the foreign equivalent). The USA government allows you to carry any amount of currency or other monetary instruments into the USA, but the funds may be confiscated by the USA government if you fail to report amounts of \$10,000 or more.

If traveling with family members, including your parents, your family must file a family declaration if you, collectively, bring \$10,000 or more into the USA. This declaration will list all of the funds being brought into the USA.



Transportation to Campus from the Airport

Ride the Gopher Chauffeur

(Available August 7 - August 23)

For those arriving in Fall 2020:

The UMN's Gopher Chauffeur gives students free rides from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to the University of Minnesota campus and several nearby hotels. The van departs hourly between 10:20 a.m. and 9:20 p.m.

The Gopher Chauffeur is not available for the spring semester.



Visit z.umn.edu/airportrides to learn more about the Gopher Chauffeur and submit an online reservation (this is strongly preferred, but not required)

Other Transportation Options

There are many ways to get to the University of Minnesota campus from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport.

Below is basic information, and more information is available at z.umn.edu/msptranspo.

- **Light Rail Transit:** The Blue Line leaves the airport every 10 minutes during peak hours and every 10 to 15 minutes at other times of the day. Tickets are sold at ticket machines at the rail station.
- **Buses:** City bus service is provided by Metro Transit. For bus fare and route information, call the 24-hour automated system at 612-341-4287.
- **Shuttles:** SuperShuttle is a shared shuttle that costs approximately \$20 per person. If you have more than 3 pieces of luggage you will be charged an extra fee. Bus, van, and limousine service can be scheduled.

- **Taxis:** Taxi service is available for approximately \$40-\$50. A \$6.25 fare will be displayed on the Taxicab meter when you start your trip. This fee includes a \$2.50 "flag drop" fee and a \$3.75 airport access fee. Use taxis and shuttle services that have the name of the company clearly marked.
- **App-based Ride Services:** Uber, Lyft, or another app-based ride services pick up on Level 2 of the Green Parking Ramp, above the Ground Transportation Center.

International student organizations may also offer to assist you with transportation from the airport. Contacts are available at gopherlink.umn.edu.

Information for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is committed to making the University accessible and inviting for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities. If you have an apparent or non-apparent disability you should contact the DRC.

Contact the DRC as early as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations. An Access Consultant will assist you with disability-related concerns that affect learning and student life. You can also contact the DRC if you have questions about what constitutes a disability that requires an accommodation.

The primary responsibility of the Access Consultants is to determine your eligibility for services and to facilitate the process of identifying appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

Please contact the Disability Resource Center at least one month before your arrival if you have additional questions or wish to register for services.

Disability Resource Center
180 McNamara Alumni Center
200 Oak St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA
Phone: 612-626-1333 (v/tty)

Email: drc@umn.edu

Web: disability.umn.edu

Support for International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Students

International Student and Scholar Services, in collaboration with the Gender and Sexuality Center, provides specific support and resources for international LGBTQIA students.

LGBTQIA International programs, events, and activities address issues related to international gender and/or sexual minority identities and work to connect international LGBTQIA students with each other. Please contact the center at gsc@umn.edu.

In addition to these programs, ISSS and the GSC provide individual support and a safe space to discuss your feelings and concerns.

To discuss further, contact Chirayu Dongre (dongr044@umn.edu or 612-626-4797) or Nasreen Mohamed (moha0015@umn.edu or 612-626-7100). Review z.umn.edu/isssslgbt information.



Participate in the ISSS New Student Programs (Optional)

ISSS organizes programs and events where international students can make new friends and gain leadership skills. Some of these programs start before classes begin, so sign up now!

International Buddy Program (IBP)

Undergraduate and non-degree students only

The International Buddy Program wants to ease your transition to the University of Minnesota! As part of IBP, you will be matched (based on mutual interests) with a current undergraduate student to be your mentor.

Your mentor will contact you before you travel to campus to help you prepare, guide you around the UMN and Twin Cities, teach you about academic and support resources, and be a familiar face on campus. IBP also hosts fun events throughout the semester!

Application is required, and only a limited number of students will be selected!

iss.umn.edu/programs/Interbuddy
ibp@umn.edu

Global Gopher Events

Fall: All international students

Spring: Undergraduate and non-degree students only

Fall Dates: August 19-27, 2020

Spring Dates: To Be Announced

Start your UMN experience in the best possible way with Global Gopher Events! This is a special opportunity for you to meet other new international students, prepare for classes, discover the University's amazing services, and get advice from experienced international student leaders.

Registration requested.

iss.umn.edu/programs/ggumn



Want to Know More Ways To Be Involved?

In addition to the programs organized by ISSS, there are more than 1,000 student groups at the University of Minnesota.

Joining a student group is a great way to meet students with similar interests (such as academics, volunteering, and sports), make new friends, and become a student leader. Visit ***gopherlink.umn.edu*** to review a full directory of student groups.

International and Chinese Parent Orientation Programs (iPoP and ChiPOP)

International parents are encouraged to register for the International or Chinese Parent Orientation Programs. These international student specific orientations are a supplement to the main Parent Orientation hosted by Orientation & Transition Experiences.

These programs are an opportunity for parents to ask questions directly to the staff who specialize in working with international students. The Chinese orientation is delivered in Mandarin.

iss.umn.edu/programs/parent
ipop@umn.edu

Global Gopher Community

Undergraduate and non-degree students only

The Global Gopher Community is a Living Learning Community that brings together international and domestic students to create a global experience.

Students cultivate cross-cultural leadership skills through developing friendships. Residents have the opportunity to attend fun events and group outings, participate in cross-cultural projects, and connect with on-campus leadership opportunities. Additionally, students can help plan the community's events by joining the Global Gopher Community Leaders Group.

Reserve your spot by selecting Global Gopher Community as your First Preference in the Living Learning Community section of your housing application

iss.umn.edu/programs/ggc

Other ISSS Programs

ISSS organizes programs for international students wishing to gain leadership experience and meet other students.

Many of these programs will accept new students during your first semester. Learn more at iss.umn.edu/programs.

Cultural/Social

- **Cross-Cultural Discussion Groups:** Gathers small groups of international and domestic students to explore cross-cultural issues and perspectives.
- **Small World Coffee Hour:** Invites all students to learn about new cultures in a relaxing social environment.

Leadership Opportunities

- **Cross-Cultural Leadership Retreat:** Creates a highly interactive, high-energy retreat that is a living laboratory of what it takes to work with people from different cultures.
- **Culture Corps Program:** Enables international students to share their unique perspectives inside and outside of the classroom.
- **International Student Advisory Board:** Student leaders who provide advice to departments about how to improve the international student experience.
- **International Student Ambassadors:** Provides leadership opportunities to undergraduate students as they share what life is like as a UMN international student.
- **MATCH (Minnesota Ambassadors Taking College Home):** Empowers international students to share their experience of studying at Minnesota with students when they are home.

Problems with Your I-20 or DS-2019?

If you need to change the information on your I-20 or DS-2019, contact the office/ agency that issued it.

If you have an I-20, contact the following:

- Undergraduate Students: issnew@umn.edu
- Graduate Students: gsquest@umn.edu
- Professional Degree Students: Your college's admissions office

If you have a DS-2019, contact the following:

- Issued by the UMN: issjast@umn.edu
- Issued by a different J-1 program (for example, Fulbright): Your placement office

Want to Talk to a Current International Student at the University of Minnesota?

Our International Student Ambassadors are here to help!

Visit intlstudy.umn.edu to review the blogs, photos, and videos made by our Ambassadors. They share about the student experience at the UMN and what it is like to transition, study, live, and achieve here.

Have a question? Email intlstudy@umn.edu or follow them on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



For all other questions about being a new international student,
email issnew@umn.edu!



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