Dear Graduate and Professional School Colleagues,

The goal of this resource guide is to provide you with information and resources that will help you in assisting international students during the first semester.

By creating a smooth transition, international students are more likely to succeed academically and be fully engaged in their graduate experience. International students are defined as students here on non-immigrant visas whose primary purpose for being in the U.S. is to study full-time. International students make up approximately 19% of the graduate and professional student body.

Together our vision is to create an inclusive and engaged international learning community!

International Student and Scholar Services
The Graduate School
Minnesota English Language Program

Contents
Summary of Changes and Request for Assistance................................................................................................................. 3
International Student Pre-Arrival Information................................................................................................................... 4
What Is MyISSS? ......................................................................................................................................................... 6
English Language Requirements and Resources ............................................................................................................. 6
English as a Second Language Courses ......................................................................................................................... 8
Students Experiencing Personal Difficulties or Mental Health Issues ............................................................................ 9
International Student Articles and Resources ................................................................................................................ 10
Contact Information .................................................................................................................................................... 11
Summary of Changes and Request for Assistance

Dear colleagues,

At the time of this writing, much remains unknown about the fall. There are several questions for incoming international students and scholars. Departments are deciding whether their classes will resume this fall in person, continue online, or be a combination of the two. In addition, U.S. Embassies across the globe remain closed, and while some have begun posting future visa appointments, it is not known yet whether these appointments will occur. This could make it harder for international students to obtain visas if/when the current travel restrictions are lifted.

ISSS is working with people across the University to develop contingency plans in the event that international students cannot arrive to begin classes on-campus this fall. The information in this Guide, however, does not address these contingencies due to the many variables that exist. This information is written for advising international students who will be on-campus in the fall.

Changes to New Student Processes

ISSS has shifted the ISSS Check-in and Welcome Session online. As such, all new international students must complete the following steps before starting classes this fall*.

1. The student must complete the International Student Preparation Course. Students are expected to complete the course before their New Student Orientation.

2. As soon as possible AFTER they arrive in the USA, international students must complete an online ISSS Check-In. This requirement has two parts:
   - The student must upload and submit their immigration documents to ISSS using the “ISSS Check-in: Document Check” form in MyISSS.
   - Complete an ISSS Check-in and Welcome Online Session. They will access the session through a link on the “ISSS Check-in: Document Check” form within MyISSS.

Students who will be taking classes online from their home country in the fall will not need to complete the online ISSS Check-In until the Spring semester.

The AI Registration Hold will not take effect until 9/1/2020 so students can register online for Fall 2020.

Request for Assistance

Please discuss the need to enroll in Duo with your international advisees. Students in China or embargoed countries must take extra steps to enroll.

We ask that colleges and departments only link to ISSS’s New Student website (isss.umn.edu/new) rather than individual requirements (such as giving a link directly to the International Student Preparation Course) as this will decrease the likelihood of out-of-date information being given to students.

To help you and your students understand the number and order of steps they need to follow, we provided them with a Graduate, Professional, Non-Degree & Exchange Students timeline and checklist that you can use as a guide when talking to international students.

Please feel free to contact Kabir (Nasreen) Mohamed, Director, Student Engagement (moha0015@umn.edu) if you have additional questions.

* Please Note: A decision has not yet been made regarding ISSS’s check-in processes for spring.

Please encourage all incoming international students to email isssnew@umn.edu if they have questions for ISSS as they prepare for their first semester at the University of Minnesota.
International Student Pre-Arrival Information

After admission, all new international students can access pre-arrival information from three main sources.

Pre-Arrival Guide for New International Students

After confirming enrollment to the University, students are emailed a Pre-Arrival Guide along with their immigration documents. The guide contains general information relevant to all new international students. A link to the guide is also available in the New Student section of the ISSS website, although this Guide was published before the changes were made to our new student process due to COVID-19.

International Student Preparation Course

The International Student Preparation Course is a tool to help new international students prepare for their arrival at the University by learning about expectations and specific requirements. Students are encouraged to complete the International Student Preparation Course as soon as possible.

Modules include:

1. Introduction Videos from ISSS Assistant Dean Barbara Kappler
2. Preparing for Arrival
3. Requirements Upon Arrival
4. Enrollment
5. Academics
6. Employment
7. Travel
8. Cultural Adjustment

We invite you to view the information by visiting isss.umn.edu/new/online.html.

ISSS Emails

ISSS regularly sends email to all incoming international students. As Google applications are banned in some countries, ISSS sends these emails to both the student’s UMN email address and the personal email in their record. These emails include both reminders about what tasks they must do to ensure the removal of their AI hold along with information about ISSS’s services and programs.

To streamline communication from incoming international students, ISSS uses the email isssnew@umn.edu for all questions from new students. Please direct students to this email account as they prepare for their first semester at the University.

International Student Arrival Date and ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session

International Student Arrival Date

ISSS recommends new graduate students arrive up to 10 days before the start date on their immigration documents. Students with assistantships are given a report by August 26, and they should also plan to arrive up to 10 days before to allow enough time to complete paperwork.

International students are only allowed to enter the U.S. within 30 days of their program start date. This means that the majority of students will not be entering the U.S. until August. However, students who are currently in the U.S. and studying at another U.S. institution may arrive on campus throughout the summer.
ISSS Check-In through MyISSS - **REQUIRED**

AFTER students arrive in the USA, they must scan and submit their immigration documents to ISSS using the “Document Check” form on MyISSS (myisss.umn.edu) to complete the requirement, which has two parts:

1. **Submit immigration documents to ISSS (Document Check)**

   The purpose of the Document Check is to give ISSS staff the opportunity to review all new international students’ immigration-related documents and verify their eligibility to study in the United States. This is a requirement mandated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and ISSS has been given this responsibility on behalf of the University of Minnesota.

   A list of the required documents is available on the ISSS website. Students will not receive one of the documents they must submit (their I-94 entry record) until they arrive in the United States.

2. **ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session - **REQUIRED**

   The ISSS Check-In and Welcome Online Session is housed within Canvas, and for Fall 2020 admits it will replace the in-person session that students have traditionally attended on their orientation day.

   Students will access the ISSS Check-In and Welcome Online Session through a link provided in the “ISSS Check-In: Document Check” form in MyISSS.

   Through the ISSS Check-In and Welcome Online Session, students will learn about:

   - Services and programs offered by ISSS.
   - Requirements for the permanent removal of the AI registration hold, and information about how to remove the AZ (English Proficiency) hold.
   - Relevance of immigration regulations throughout their time in the USA in F-1 or J-1 status.

**When can a new international student register for classes?**

The AI Registration Hold will not take effect until 9/1/2020 so students can register online for Fall 2020. Students may register for classes throughout the summer; the hold will not prevent their registration until the effective date of 09/01/2020. The AI hold will be permanently removed once students have completed both of their ISSS new student requirements: 1. the International Student Preparation Course, and 2. their ISSS Check-In: Document Check through MyISSS.

After 09/01/2020, situations that may prevent a student’s ability to register for classes or modify their existing course registration include:

- **Not completing the International Student Preparation Course.**
- **Not uploading legible copies of all the necessary documents to MyISSS** (a list is available at isss.umn.edu/new/docs.html).
- **Not resolving other registration holds.**

Students who will be taking classes online from their home country in the fall will not need to complete the online ISSS Check-In until the Spring semester.

Please direct questions to the ISSS Check-In and Welcome Session Coordinators, Calli Thompson and Katie Bridges, at isssnew@umn.edu.
Additional New Student Activities

Global Gopher Events (August 27-September 1)

Global Gopher Events are activities for international students designed to support their cultural transition to the University of Minnesota. The activities will allow students to connect with each other and provide a cultural context of the U.S. higher education system. The goals of the program are to increase knowledge of academic and social support resources tailored specifically for international graduate students. During the events, students will be able to choose from various workshops and activities such as an “Academic Resources Tour for Graduate Students,” “What to Expect in the First 30 Days of Graduate School,” and “How to Communicate with Americans.” The program includes opportunities for new graduate students to build connections with each other as well as current graduate students.

The Global Gopher Events schedule and registration will be posted online when it is available. Please direct questions to Kabir (Nasreen) Mohamed: moha0015@umn.edu.

Social Security Sessions

It is currently unknown whether there will be any on-campus Social Security application sessions in 2020. If SSN sessions are scheduled, ISSS will publicize them directly to students through email. If we are unable to host any on-campus sessions this year, students will need to apply for their Social Security Number at a Social Security Administration office; however, they should visit the SSA’s website as the field offices have been closed due to COVID-19.

What Is MyISSS?

ISSS continues to move our visa-related processes online to MyISSS (myisss.umn.edu). MyISSS (launched in 2018) allows international students and scholars to submit requests to ISSS online, receive email updates and monitor the status of requests, and provide ISSS staff the information we need to process requests efficiently and accurately. We will continue moving our forms to this system in several stages.

Academic Advisers will receive an email if/when an international advisee submits a request needing their review and/or approval. The email will include information about how to log into MyISSS.

English Language Requirements and Resources

Regarding Students Who Have NOT Met the Minimum English Requirement

What is an AZ hold, and how does a student clear that hold?

The AZ service indicator is placed on a student’s record by the Graduate Admissions Office if the student is admitted with a low English proficiency test score or low subscore in reading or writing (score below 79 iBT, with subscores of at least 21 Writing and 19 Reading), 6.5 IELTS (with subscores of at least 6.5 in Writing and Reading), 75 MN Battery (with subscore of at least 83 Writing), or equivalent score on Cambridge Advanced or PTE Academic. Please note that the University of Minnesota does not use ‘super scores,’ so a student must achieve the minimum total score and each subscore on the same test.

Students who have AZ holds have three options:

1. Register for and pass the appropriate ESL credit course during the first semester in the degree program. (They take this class along with their other graduate courses),
2. Take the MN Battery Test offered through the Minnesota English Language Program and achieve the minimum score required, or
3. Submit official test scores that meet the requirement.

Most graduate students who have a low English score take ESL 5302: Academic Writing. This course is designed to support multilingual graduate students as they begin their graduate programs. This course will have an online option in Fall 2020.
What if a graduate program has a TOEFL requirement that is higher than the Graduate School minimum?
AZ holds are only placed on records for students who have an English test score below the University minimum or in special cases where the department requests that the student be tested on arrival. If a student scores above the University’s requirement but below the department minimum, the department will decide whether the student should participate in additional English language support.

What if students do not comply with the AZ hold requirement?
If a student drops their required ESL classes, both the student and their college adviser will receive an email notification that the student is in non-compliance. In this case, the student will be required to submit official TOEFL scores (or other accepted English test scores) before the AZ hold will be lifted and thus will not be able to register for future terms. See the Graduate Admissions website for a list of accepted English proficiency tests.

What is the AZ hold removal process?
1. For fall 2020, the student contacts the Minnesota English Language Program (esl@umn.edu) and sets up a Zoom appointment for AZ hold advising. At this appointment:
   a. The English proficiency admissions policy is explained to the student.
   b. The student is given a permission number to register for the required English as a Second Language (ESL) course (and the AZ hold is temporarily removed).
   c. If the student wants to take the MN Battery Test to meet the requirement, they register for the test and the AZ hold is temporarily removed.
2. The student meets with their college adviser.
   a. Students and advisers decide on how to work the required ESL class into their schedule.
   b. Advisers or students contact MELP for any additional permission number(s), if needed: 612-624-1503 or esl@umn.edu.
3. The student registers for classes, and
4. The AZ hold will be permanently released after the student passes their required ESL classes.

Students who do NOT have low English proficiency scores
What if I have an international student advisee who does not have an AZ hold, who I think could benefit from more English support?
It is important to keep in mind that any test score is an indication of proficiency, but some students with high test scores might still benefit from language support, especially during their first year on campus. While these students are not required to take ESL classes, some may benefit from support in certain aspects of language. It is a natural process for any graduate student to continue to build their language skills while in a graduate program. There are various courses that can support graduate students in polishing their English skills for their discipline and preparing for future careers in their field. Course listings are found on the Minnesota English Language Program website.

Is there additional English support for new students?
Student Writing Support will be offering face-to-face and online writing consultations for all University of Minnesota students, at all stages of the writing process.

There are also online resources for English language development available to students at esl.umn.edu.
English as a Second Language Courses

Credit Courses Fall 2020

Many courses will be offered online for Fall 2020; check the class schedule for more information.

**GRAMMAR COURSES:**

**ESL 3102, Grammar for Academic Purposes** (4 credits)
Course content focuses on improving accuracy and range in English grammar. Topics that are especially relevant to academic writing, such as conciseness and smooth connections between sentences, are emphasized.

**LISTENING AND SPEAKING COURSES:**

**ESL 3551 sec 001: English Pronunciation** (4 credits)
The course content and activities center around improving the production and perception of the sounds of the English language: individual sounds, rhythm, intonation, word and sentence stress, and linking phenomena in fast speech.

**ESL 3602 sec 001: Speaking for Academic Purposes** (4 credits)
The course activities focus on academic interactions such as lectures, presentations, seminar-style discussions, and informal exchanges. Students will learn to present themselves professionally/socially in collegiate settings.

**ESL 5008, English for Professional Settings** (2 credits)
This course is designed for graduate students seeking to improve their English speaking skills for professional settings. The course helps students polish their English skills for interacting with colleagues, interviewing for academic positions, and conference presentations.

**WRITING COURSES**

**ESL 5302: Academic Writing** (4 credits)
The course content emphasizes the writing process — developing ideas, drafting, revising, and editing. Students practice different genres of academic writing, work on refining their ability to incorporate source material into writing, critiquing writing, and matching writing to audience and purpose.

**ESL 5006: English for Business Interactions** (2 credits)
The course content is designed for high-intermediate to advanced non-native speakers of English who are currently business majors or in a closely related program. Writing for business communication, self-editing skills, communication styles, presentations, telephone and online meeting communication.

Resources for faculty and staff in supporting multilingual students at the UMN

The website [esl.umn.edu](http://esl.umn.edu) is a resource for faculty and staff working with multilingual students. It has tips and suggestions for creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for multilingual students and tips for helping students find resources to continue their language development throughout their academic program.

See [esl.umn.edu](http://esl.umn.edu) or contact LeeAnne Godfrey, ESL Faculty and Staff Liaison, at berg1207@umn.edu.
Students Experiencing Personal Difficulties or Mental Health Issues

If you work with an international student who is demonstrating unusual behavior or is experiencing personal difficulties or mental health issues, the following campus resources can offer assistance. Because of the stigma that some students attach to “counseling,” it may help the student be more comfortable if you tell him/her/them that these offices have staff who help students deal with a variety of difficulties. You can also contact a counselor from one of these offices directly to consult with you about the student. The counselor can help you determine if a referral or other resources are needed.

The following campus offices offer counseling to international students:

- **Office of Student Affairs (OSA) Care Program** (612-625-2517)
- **Student Counseling Services** (612-624-3323)
- **Boynton Mental Health Clinic** (612-624-1444)
- **International Student and Scholar Services** (612-626-7100)

**NOTE:** While university employees are working from home, to make an appointment to talk to an ISSS staff member by phone, go to [z.umn.edu/isssphone](z.umn.edu/isssphone).

For more information about mental health resources, go to [mentalhealth.umn.edu](https://mentalhealth.umn.edu).

International Students in Crisis

If you are concerned about an international student’s well being or disruptive behavior, please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). ISSS has an experienced crisis team whose members work with international students who are in crisis or exhibit behavior that is disruptive and/or possibly indicative of more serious problems. Possible behavioral indicators of more serious problems include international students who (a) do not consistently attend class, (b) are missing from normal activities, (c) exhibit disruptive behavior, or (d) appear to not be functioning well. ISSS staff can usually find a way to contact an international student and check on his/her/their welfare.

The earlier ISSS receives reports about an international student’s wellbeing or disruptive behavior, the more effective interventions can be. If further assistance is needed to stabilize the student, once we are able to be back on campus and have student contact, ISSS staff can accompany the student to a medical provider or the hospital.

While the UMN is under “stay at home” rules, if in-person help is needed with a student, UMPD is a good resource. ISSS staff work closely with the OSA Care Program, SCS, Boynton Mental Health Clinic, and Fairview University Medical Center. In addition, ISSS is represented on the University Behavioral Consultation Team and the University Community Response Team. Referrals from the academic advising community and collaboration with advisers are instrumental in assisting international students.

If you are concerned about an international student, please contact one of these ISSS advisers from the ISSS Crisis and Counseling Team:

- Charles Dania  [cdania@umn.edu](mailto:cdania@umn.edu)  612-625-8351
- Chirayu Dongre  [dongr044@umn.edu](mailto:dongr044@umn.edu)  612-626-4797
  (Designated counselor for international LGBTQIA+ students)
- Eric Kroetsch [kroe0063@umn.edu](mailto:kroe0063@umn.edu)  612-626-8643
- Peiying Shi [shixx300@umn.edu](mailto:shixx300@umn.edu)  612-626-8643
  (Chinese counselor and also works with LGBTQIA+ international students)
- Drew Smith  [smit2039@umn.edu](mailto:smit2039@umn.edu)  612-625-7965
- Alisa Eland  [eland@umn.edu](mailto:eland@umn.edu)  612-626-7100 or 612-626-7445
International Student Articles and Resources

University of Minnesota

ISSS Tips for Native English Speakers: Speaking with Non-Native English Speakers

NACADA Clearinghouse: International Student Resources

International Student Related Resource Links (additional articles besides those listed below)

Advising First Year International Students

Visa Status and Its Effect on International Student Academic Success

Journal of International Students (additional articles besides those listed below are at jistudents.org)

Developing Skills and Disposition for Lifelong Learning: Acculturative Issues Supervising International Doctoral Students in New Zealand Universities

NAFSA: Association for International Educators

Bridging the Gap: Recruitment and Retention to Improve International Student Experiences

Other Journal Based

Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students

Bridging the Gap in Expectations Between International Students and Academic Staff

Other Resources

The Transition In: Setting International Students Up for Academic Success

Recognizing and Addressing Cultural Variations in the Classroom

University of Minnesota International Student Specific Resources

International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Program

Training and support to non-native English speakers who teach courses and undertake other instructional responsibilities at the University of Minnesota offered through the Center for Educational Innovation. The courses, which are open to all non-native English speaking students and postdocs, focus on the discipline-specific oral communication skills needed in teaching.

Resources for Multilingual Learners

Online resources for enhancing English skills and information about other resources on campus.

Writing Resources for Non-native Speakers of English through the Center for Writing

ISSS International Student Support Programs

Cross-Cultural Discussion Groups, Small World Coffee Hour, and Leadership Programs
Contact Information

International Student & Scholar Services
190 Humphrey School | isss.umn.edu | isss@umn.edu | 612-626-7100
NOTE: While university employees are working from home, to make an appointment to talk to an ISSS staff member by phone, go to z.umn.edu/issphone.

Calli Thompson/Katie Bridges
For questions about ISSS Check-In
isssnew@umn.edu
612-626-8414

Sarah Krueger
For questions about Sponsored Students
issssp@umn.edu
612-626-5988

Theresa Gangl-Ghassemloeu
For general advising and immigration-based questions
t-gang@umn.edu
612-624-5225

Chirayu Dongre
For questions about LGBTQIA+ international student support
don@umn.edu
612-626-4797

Kabir (Nasreen) Mohamed
For questions about Global Gopher Events and International Preparation Course
moha0015@umn.edu
612-626-8496

Graduate School Admissions
309 Johnston Hall | grad.umn.edu

Jim Rowan
Assistant Department Director
j-rowai@umn.edu
612-626-7454

Suzan Koroglu
Program Coordinator
korog001@umn.edu
612-625-2306

Minnesota English Language Program
20 Nicholson Hall | ccaps.umn.edu/esl | 612-624-1503

Emeline Rogers
Program Coordinator
etrog@umn.edu
612-624-1503 or 612-625-2162 (direct)

LeeAnne Godfrey
Faculty Liaison
berg1207@umn.edu
612-625-7810

Diego Sanchez-Chavarria
Student Services Specialist
esl@umn.edu
612-624-1503

Mike Anderson
Director, English Language Programs
anded1819@umn.edu
612-624-1183

For More Information
ISSS has heard from staff and departments that they want more opportunities to know what information is being given to international students and to be updated on changes happening throughout the year. In response, we offer the following options to get updates:

• The ISSS website (isss.umn.edu) has a wide variety of information for students, scholars, and departments about visa regulations and ISSS’s services and programs. A page with information for academic advisers is at isss.umn.edu/Departments/aadviser.

• NEW! Staff, faculty, and departments wishing to receive the ISSS Weekly Update and other important messages sent to international students can join a new Google Group to receive a copy of these messages. We generally only send one to two messages a week to this group. There is not an option to select what types of communications you will receive through this list. If you wish to subscribe to only receive the ISSS Weekly Update sent to all international students, go to isss.umn.edu/weeklyupdate.

• NEW! ISSS offered a new “Introduction to International Student Advising” focused on advising graduate/professional degree students last year. Go to isss.umn.edu/training/advising.html to learn more about this and our other training options.