

# Staff Resource Guide: New Graduate International Students

University of Minnesota

Fall 2018

**ISSS**

International  
Student & Scholar  
Services

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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

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## International Student Pre-Arrival Information

After admission, all new international students can access pre-arrival information from two 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 regardless of college. A link to the guide is also available in the [New Student section](#) of the ISSS website.

### 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 certain expectations and requirements. Students are encouraged to complete the International Student Preparation Course as soon as possible, and they must complete it at least 24 hours before their Immigration Check-In appointment (information below).

There are five required sections:

1. Introduction videos from President Kaler and ISSS Assistant Dean Barbara Kappler
2. Upon Arrival at the University
3. Immigration Regulations
4. Academics
5. Health Insurance and Campus Safety

There are also several optional sections in the International Student Preparation Course, such as “Housing” and “Diversity at UMN.” We invite you to view the information by visiting [iss.umn.edu/new/online.html](https://iss.umn.edu/new/online.html) to see how to enroll.

To streamline communication from incoming international students, ISSS uses the email [issnew@umn.edu](mailto:issnew@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 Information

### International Student Arrival Date and Immigration Check-In

#### International Student Arrival Date

New graduate students are recommended to arrive 10 days before the start date on their immigration documents. Students with assistantships are given a report by date of August 22, but it is recommended that they 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.

#### Immigration Check-In

All new international students are required to attend Immigration Check-In with ISSS prior to removal of the AI Weekly Immigration Check-In sessions will be held on Wednesday afternoons in June and July. In August and the first week of September, two-three sessions will be held per week.

The purpose of Immigration Check-In is to give ISSS staff the opportunity 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.

At Immigration Check-In, ISSS staff will:

- Review documents for accuracy and verify arrival in SEVIS.
- Remove the AI (Determine Visa Status) hold.
- Instruct students about removal of other negative service indicators (holds) such as the AZ (English Proficiency) or MJ/MG (Graduate School Admissions Office) hold.
- Instruct students with assistantships to confirm their appointments with their departments and visit Payroll Services to complete the I-9 process (see below for more about Social Security sessions).
- Introduce students to ISSS services and programs.
- Highlight important immigration regulations and university policies.

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

Students will be able to register for classes after completing Immigration Check-In and making sure all other holds are either temporarily or permanently removed. International students are unable to enroll in courses prior to their physical arrival on campus and completion of Immigration Check-In. ***Situations that may delay a student's ability to register include:***

- Not completing the International Student Preparation Course: Students who report to Immigration Check-In without completing this requirement will be asked to reschedule their session.
- Not bringing the necessary documents to Immigration Check-In (a list is available at [issnnew.umn.edu/new](https://issnnew.umn.edu/new)).
- Not resolving other registration holds.

Please direct questions to the Immigration Check-In Coordinator, Calli Thompson, at [issnnew@umn.edu](mailto:issnnew@umn.edu) or ext. 6-8414.

## **Additional New Student Activities**

### **Global Gopher Events (August 20-August 31)**

[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](#) by July 14. Please direct questions to Nasreen Mohamed: [moha0015@umn.edu](mailto:moha0015@umn.edu), ext. 6-8494.

### **Social Security Sessions**

ISSS will be coordinating special sessions with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to facilitate the process new international students need to follow to apply for a Social Security Number. These sessions will take place in August; dates are yet to be determined. Students attending Immigration Check-In during the weeks prior to the sessions will be provided with details, including the specific dates, times, and how to register. Questions can be directed to Calli Thompson at ISSS: [thom2769@umn.edu](mailto:thom2769@umn.edu).

## English Language Requirements and Support

### Supporting Non-native English Speaking International Students at UMN

#### Students Who Have NOT Met the Minimum English Requirement = AZ Hold

##### 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 subscore in reading or writing (score below 550 pbt, 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), 80 MELAB, or 75 MN Battery (with subscore of at least 83 Writing)).

Upon arrival, students have three options:

1. Submit official test scores that meet the requirement,
2. Take the MN Battery Test offered through the Minnesota English Language Program and achieve the minimum score required, or
3. Register for and pass the appropriate ESL credit courses.

Most graduate students who do not yet have the minimum English score and do not test high enough on MN Battery Test take ESL 5302: Academic Writing.

##### 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 scores 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 minimum, but below the department minimum, it is up to the department to decide if the student needs 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 advisor 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. Students come to the Minnesota English Language Program (MELP) office for initial AZ advising. During this:
  - a. The ESL Requirement Policy is explained to students.
  - b. Students register for the MN Battery, if desired (and AZ hold is temporarily removed).
  - c. If the student chooses not to take MN Battery, the student is given a permission number(s) for any required ESL course(s) (and AZ hold is temporarily removed).
2. The student meets with his/her college advisor and discusses required ESL class(s)
  - a. Students and advisors decide on how to work the required ESL class into their schedule .
  - b. Advisors or students contact MELP for any additional permission number(s): 612-624-1503.
3. Students register for classes.
4. MELP contacts any students (and their advisors) who haven't registered for their ESL classes. Students must take required ESL classes during their first term on campus.
5. The AZ hold is permanently removed after students pass all of their required ESL classes or meet MN Battery test score minimum.

## 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. Course listings are found on the Minnesota English Language Program [website](#).

## English as a Second Language Courses

### Credit Courses Fall 2018

#### GRAMMAR COURSES:

##### **ESL 3102, Grammar for Academic Purposes (4 credits)** *In-person and online sections offered*

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.

#### 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.

#### OTHER COURSES

##### **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 closely related major. Writing for business communication, self-editing skills, communication styles, presentations, telephone communication.

##### **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.

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

See [www.esl.umn.edu](http://www.esl.umn.edu) or contact Bethany Peters, ESL Faculty and Staff Liaison, at [bethanyp@umn.edu](mailto:bethanyp@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:

- [Student Counseling Services](#) (612-624-3323)
- [Boynton Mental Health Clinic](#) (612-624-1444)
- [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (612-626-7100)

For more information about mental health resources, go to [www.mentalhealth.umn.edu](http://www.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 welfare.

The earlier ISSS receives reports about an international student’s well being or disruptive behavior, the more effective interventions can be. If further assistance is needed to stabilize the student, ISSS staff can accompany the student to a medical provider or the hospital. ISSS staff work closely with 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:

Mingzhi Li	<a href="mailto:lix0887@umn.edu">lix0887@umn.edu</a>	612-626-7100
Barbara Pilling	<a href="mailto:pilli003@umn.edu">pilli003@umn.edu</a>	612-624-9519
Duane Rohovit	<a href="mailto:rohov002@umn.edu">rohov002@umn.edu</a>	612-626-4797
Gabriele Schmiegel (Especially government sponsored international students)	<a href="mailto:schm0535@umn.edu">schm0535@umn.edu</a>	612-626-7428
Alisa Eland	<a href="mailto:eland@umn.edu">eland@umn.edu</a>	612-626-7100 or 612-626-7445
Drew Smith	<a href="mailto:smit2039@umn.edu">smit2039@umn.edu</a>	612-625-7965

## 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)

[East Meets West- Bridging the Advising Divide](#)

[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](http://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](#)

[Retaining International Students](#)

### 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](#)

[The American Educational Administrator: Examining Some Assumptions](#)

[Recognizing and Addressing Cultural Variations in the Classroom](#)

## University of Minnesota International Student Specific Resources

[Support for International Teaching Assistants who are Non-Native Speakers of English](#)

*Consultations, workshops, online resources, and Partners of English Program available through the Center for Teaching and Learning.*

[Academic Resources for UMN International Students](http://z.umn.edu/internationalstudents) ([z.umn.edu/internationalstudents](http://z.umn.edu/internationalstudents))

*This is a comprehensive guide that will help advisers and student the navigate resources at the UMN. It is broken into sections for 1. adjusting to U.S. culture, 2. making American friends, 3. English language skills, 4. writing a paper, 5. citing sources, 6. giving presentations, 7. participating in class, 8. test taking, 9. working in groups, 10. choosing a major, 11. managing stress, 12. time management, and 13. working as a Teaching Assistant*

[Writing Resources for Non-native Speakers of English through the Center for Writing](#)

[Understanding the University of Minnesota Library System: A Guide for International Students](#)

*Created by UMN library staff and available to students in English, [Chinese](#) and [Korean](#) languages*

[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 | [jsss.umn.edu](http://jsss.umn.edu) | [jsss@umn.edu](mailto:jsss@umn.edu) | 612-626-7100

Theresa GanglGhassemLouei

*For general advising and immigration based questions.*

[t-gang@umn.edu](mailto:t-gang@umn.edu)

612-624-5225

Calli Thompson

*For questions about Immigration Check-In*

[jsssnew@umn.edu](mailto:jsssnew@umn.edu)

612-626-8414

Deanne Silvera

*For questions about short-term exchange students*

[silve025@umn.edu](mailto:silve025@umn.edu)

612-624-9512

Nasreen Mohamed

*For questions about Global Gopher Events and International Preparation Course*

[moha0015@umn.edu](mailto:moha0015@umn.edu)

612-626-8496

Gabi Schmiegel

*For questions about students who are sponsored financially by a government, company or agency*

[schm0535@umn.edu](mailto:schm0535@umn.edu)

612-626-7428

Duane Rohovit

*For questions about GLBT international student support*

[rohov002@umn.edu](mailto:rohov002@umn.edu)

612-626-4797

### Graduate School Admissions

309 Johnston Hall | <http://www.grad.umn.edu>

Jim Rowan

Assistant Department Director

[j-rowa@umn.edu](mailto:j-rowa@umn.edu)

612-626-7454

Suzan Koroglu

Program Coordinator

[korog001@umn.edu](mailto:korog001@umn.edu)

612-625-2306

### Minnesota English Language Program

20 Nicholson Hall | [ccaps.umn.edu/esl](http://ccaps.umn.edu/esl) | 612-624-1503

Hal Nevels

Student Services Specialist

*For permission numbers, questions about classes*

[esl@umn.edu](mailto:esl@umn.edu)

612-624-1503 or 612-626-8426 (direct)

Sara Schroth

MELP International Student Adviser

*Works with students in Intensive English Program*

[schro861@umn.edu](mailto:schro861@umn.edu)

612-625-7888

Emeline Rogers

Program Associate, AZ holds

*For questions about AZ holds and permission numbers*

[etrogers@umn.edu](mailto:etrogers@umn.edu)

Mike Anderson

Director, English Language Programs

[ande1819@umn.edu](mailto:ande1819@umn.edu)

612-624-1183

#### For More Information

The ISSS Website ([jsss.umn.edu](http://jsss.umn.edu)) has a wide variety of information for students, scholars, and departments about visa regulations and ISSS's service and programs. A page with information for academic advisers is at [jsss.umn.edu/Departments/aadviser](http://jsss.umn.edu/Departments/aadviser).

ISSS emails a Weekly Update that contains announcements about important deadlines, visa requirements, events for international students, ISSS services, and more. All international students are automatically signed up for this email. If you would like to subscribe or read past issues, go to [jsss.umn.edu/weeklyupdate](http://jsss.umn.edu/weeklyupdate).

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) offers a variety of training options to help UMN colleges, departments and staff work effectively with international students, scholars, and colleagues. We offer these sessions for all UMN staff periodically throughout the semester, and we will also work with departments to create personalized training tailored to their unique needs. Our trainings range from sessions focusing on specific visa regulations to intercultural skills development and suggestions for advising international students. For more, see [jsss.umn.edu/training](http://jsss.umn.edu/training)