





SPRING 2024  
INTERNATIONAL  
GRADUATE  
STUDENTS'  
*PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>Important Dates</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Reporting Date	
Dates To Remember	
Looking Forward To Spring	
<b>Important Pre-Arrival Tasks</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Travel Arrangements</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Getting from the DSM International Airport to Ames	
To Book Your Shuttle	
<b>Housing Arrangements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
On Campus Housing	
Off Campus Housing	
Temporary Housing	
<b>Tuition &amp; Banking</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Placement Tests</b> .....	<b>8</b>
English Placement Test	
Oral English Certification Test	
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Submit Proof of Health Immunization Records	
Schedule a Health Screening Appointment	
Health Insurance	
<b>Your University ID Card</b> .....	<b>10</b>
ISU Card	
Submit Your Photo	
Have Your Photo Taken On Campus	
<b>Immigration Check In</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Employment Procedures</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Orientation</b> .....	<b>13</b>





# IMPORTANT DATES

## REPORTING DATE: JANUARY 11

You will need to arrive in Ames, Iowa by your mandatory reporting date of January 11, 2024.

If you have an emergency and are unable to arrive in Ames by January 11 or you would like to defer your admission to a future semester, you must contact the Office of Admissions at [admissions@iastate.edu](mailto:admissions@iastate.edu) to receive a late arrival letter or an updated I-20. Please note that arriving late will impact your course availability and academic success.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- University Holiday, Office Closed: Monday, December 25 and Tuesday, December 26
- University Holiday, Office Closed: Monday, January 1
- University Holiday, Office Closed: Monday, January 15
- Spring Semester Begins: Tuesday, January 16
- Spring Break: Monday - Friday, March 11 - 15
- Spring Semester Ends: Friday, May 10

## LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING

- Spring 2024 International Orientation: January 12

For more information regarding the Spring Orientation schedule, please visit our [website](https://isso.dso.iastate.edu/new-student-orientation/spring-orientation): <https://isso.dso.iastate.edu/new-student-orientation/spring-orientation>

# IMPORTANT PRE-ARRIVAL TASKS



## STEP 1

### Have you received your University ID Number and signed up for your NetID?

After receiving admission to the university, you will receive your 9-digit university ID number from the Office of Admissions. Be sure to keep this number on hand, as it will be used throughout your arrival process.

Your NetID is attached to your university email and is also used to log in to university accounts. Register for your NetID [here](#).

## STEP 2

### Have you received your form I-20?

By this point you should have received your I-20/DS-2019 form from your Admissions Representative.

If you have not yet received your initial I-20/DS-2019, please contact [Admissions](#) to see if any additional steps need to be taken.

## STEP 3

### Have you paid the SEVIS Fee?

Before you can apply for visa or enter the U.S., you will need to pay the SEVIS Fee, also known as the I-901 Fee.

To pay this fee please visit [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com).

After paying the fee, be sure to print out your receipt. You will need the receipt when applying for your visa.

If you have any questions regarding your SEVIS Fee, please refer to the [SEVIS Fee FAQ](#) or call 703-603-3400 for assistance.

Once your SEVIS Fee is paid, you are ready to proceed to step 4.

## STEP 4

### Applying for your Student Visa\*

After completing the above steps, you are ready to begin the visa application process. Please follow the [U.S. Embassy/Consulate](#) instructions to set up your visa appointment. You can also reference the guide that was provided by Admissions along with your form I-20/DS-2019. It is best to apply for your visa as early as possible to ensure that you receive your visa and arrive on time for your first semester at Iowa State.

*\* Students with a Canadian or Bermudian passport do not need to apply for a visa.*

## STEP 5

### Register for Orientation

To track important pre-arrival tasks, as well as register for orientation, please log into [Cystart](#) using the New and Former Students portal. You will need to request a Limited Services Pin in order to log in. Once in Cystart, click the Iowa State International Student Pre-Arrival Information link on your home page.

If you experience any difficulties logging in, please contact [isorient@iastate.edu](mailto:isorient@iastate.edu) and we will assist you.



## GETTING FROM THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO AMES

ISSO collaborates with **Executive Express**, a local car service company, to provide all new international students a **FREE** shuttle service from the Des Moines International Airport to Ames, Iowa.

Each student can transport two pieces of luggage and one lap item when traveling with Executive Express. Students will be charged \$15 per bag for each additional piece of luggage. This free ride from Executive Express is only available to new ISU international students, not their family members or returning ISU students.

Additional transportation services such as [Uber](#) and [Lyft](#) are available at your own personal expense.

## TO BOOK YOUR SHUTTLE

- Go to [www.executiveexpress.biz](http://www.executiveexpress.biz) to make a reservation.
- In the reservation screen choose “Log In” in the upper right-hand corner.  
**The username: isorient@iastate.edu**  
**Password: isucyclone (all lowercase)**
- After you are logged in, click on the three lines in the upper left-hand corner and choose “New Reservation”
- Enter your pick-up date and the pick-up time. This should be a half hour after your arrival time. You will receive your shuttle time in a separate email. **Your airport code is DSM.**
- Your drop-off location is where you will be staying once you reach Ames. If you are able, enter your permanent housing arrangements. If you are staying in interim housing, enter: **Maple Hall, 204 Beach Road, Ames, IA 50013-0025**
- For Vehicle information choose Shuttle/DO or Any Vehicle.
- Enter your first name, last name, cell phone number, and email address. In the additional information field enter your University ID number.
- Enter your flight information.
- Be sure “Direct Bill/Invoice” is selected for payment method and click “Book Now”

Keep your reservation/confirmation number. Other emails will follow providing your confirmation and shuttle time.

**Note:** At times through this booking process, you will see the cost of your trip. You will not be charged this amount. Through our arrangement with Executive Express, ISSO is billed directly.

If you have any questions, please contact [isorient@iastate.edu](mailto:isorient@iastate.edu).

# HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS



It is important to have your living accommodations arranged before arriving in Ames.

## ON CAMPUS HOUSING

Iowa State has a variety of on campus housing options for students.

Signing up to live on campus is easy! Your housing assignment is based off the date you submit your housing contract, not the date you accept your offer of admission.

You can make adjustments to your contract later. Follow the steps below and submit your housing contract!

1. Accept your offer of admission to Iowa State.
2. Log in to the [Housing Portal](#) to submit your contract. As part of this process, you will choose preferences (aka: places you'd want to live). Check out housing options [here](#). Not sure where you want to live? It's okay! You can adjust your preferences, add roommates or choose [learning communities](#) later.
3. Submit your contract and you're set!

*New student assignments are released beginning in mid-December.*

## OFF CAMPUS HOUSING

Ames has a variety of rental properties that exist off campus. If you are renting off campus only use reputable rental sites and avoid establishing rentals through sites like Facebook Marketplace.

The City of Ames website offers a [Rent Smart Guide](#) for individuals renting in Ames. It offers an overview of what renting in the city looks like and city policies regarding rentals.

## TEMPORARY HOUSING

ISSO recommends that students in need of temporary housing upon their arrival to Ames make reservations at the Gateway Hotel.

### To Make a Reservation:

- Call the Gateway Hotel at 515-292-8600
- Use the code "International Students and Scholars Office" to get the reduced rate

Currently the ISSO reduced rate for the Gateway is \$99 per night.

Reservations are dependent on hotel availability. The "International Students and Scholars Office" reduced rate does not apply during ISU home football games and graduation.

Alternative and independent arrangements can be made through [Airbnb](#) or [hotels in Ames](#).



## U-BILL

Iowa State University does not accept direct wire payments; all international payments should be facilitated through Western Union or wired to a bank account in the United States to then use for online payment on AccessPlus.

For more guides information about U-Bill, please review the new student resources from Accounts Receivable below:

- [U-Bill Informational Videos](#) (YouTube)
- [U-Bill Informational PowerPoint](#)

## INTERNATIONAL BANK PAYMENTS

### Paying your U-Bill

Iowa State University does not accept direct wire payments; all international payments should be facilitated through Western Union or wired to a bank account in the United States to then use for online payment on AccessPlus.

To learn more about payment types accepted in the United States and how to establish a bank account in the United States, follow the [International Students Accounts Receivable webpage](#).

## SETTING UP A U.S. BANK ACCOUNT

Iowa State University collaborates with [US Bank](#). However, you do not have to select US Bank as your bank account; it's optional.



## ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST

Incoming international students who are not native speakers of English, not enrolled in distance-only programs, or who do not meet at least one of the exemption criteria for the English Requirement must take the English Placement Test (EPT).

The English Requirement is different from the English proficiency requirement needed for admission to ISU. Students who are admitted to ISU may be required to take English classes to meet this requirement.

The EPT provides an opportunity for students to satisfy the English requirement. It evaluates students' English proficiency to determine whether they have the language skills needed to succeed academically at ISU or if they would benefit from additional English instruction in writing and/or oral communication. The results of the EPT lead to meeting the English requirement or assignment to take one or more English writing or oral communication classes. Students are only given one opportunity to demonstrate their English proficiency by taking the EPT. The one opportunity EPT is free of charge to ISU students.

***Please note that failure to take the EPT in your first semester may cause difficulties in planning your course of study and delays in your graduation.***

### EPT EXEMPTIONS:

Check the [English Placement Test webpage](#) and review the criteria listed under the Exemptions tab to determine whether you meet the English language requirement.

If at least one of the exemption criteria apply, you have met the English requirement and should not take the EPT. Your student records should be automatically updated to indicate that you have met the English requirement. You do not need to do anything for this process to occur. If you do not meet the English requirement, you need to take the EPT on campus in January.

Students who are confident that they have sufficient English proficiency may (re)take TOEFL iBT, IELTS, or Pearson PTE, at their own cost, to demonstrate their English proficiency. Required scores for meeting the English requirement are on the Exemptions tab of the EPT website.



# PLACEMENT TESTS



## EPT REGISTRATION:

Registration for spring term will open on December 28th. To register select the Registration tab for information about how to register. Note that you cannot register for the EPT more than two weeks before it is administered.

Students who need to take the EPT will need to take both parts:

- EPT Writing: **January 9 at 8:00 AM**
- EPT Oral Communication: **January 9, after the writing test in a half-hour time slot between 10:30 AM and 4:00 PM**
  - You will select a time when you register for the test.

Test descriptions, sample questions, scoring guides, and other information are available on the EPT website. If you still have questions after reading this information, email them to [ept@iastate.edu](mailto:ept@iastate.edu).

## ORAL ENGLISH CERTIFICATION TEST (OECT)

*Only for teaching assistants*

For graduate students with teaching assistantships, you will have to complete the in-person OECT prior to the start of the semester. To view available dates and learn more about registering for the OECT, please visit the [International Teaching Assistants Program website](#).

After you have completed the registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions to select a preferred test slot. However, it is strongly recommended that you login periodically to check for available test slots since it is a busy test period. If there are no more slots, continue to login since new slots may be added if there is enough demand and if there are sufficient raters.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS



## IOWA STATE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Thielen Student Health Center (TSHC) looks forward to being your on campus medical provider during your time at Iowa State. As a requirement of your orientation, you will be asked to attend a confidential, in-person health orientation visit at TSHC. During this visit, you will be provided with resources to support your well-being as you work to achieve your academic goals.

[Iowa State Student Health and Wellness](#) includes:

- Thielen Student Health Center
- Student Wellness
- Student Counseling
- Recreation Services

During your health orientation visit, you will meet with a member of the TSHC clinical staff to complete the following:

- Review resources available to Iowa State Students within the Student Health and Wellness unit.
- Review of immunization records and assistance with completion of ISU immunization requirements.
- Review any health concerns and receive assistance with transfer of care needed by incoming students based on their individual needs.
- Receive information regarding the Student and Scholar Health Insurance Program (SSHIP).
- Assistance with connecting to other resources, as requested.

## IMPORTANT STEPS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL:

**On acceptance to Iowa State – begin as soon as possible.**

- Complete the Immunization Requirement Form to bring with you to campus (link coming soon)
  - This form must be signed by a medical provider. We also ask you to bring supporting copies of original immunization documents labeled with your full name and date of birth.
  - If you've had previous testing for tuberculosis, please bring copies of these medical records including any lab reports or chest radiology reports.

**Within One Month of Arrival to Iowa State.**

- Schedule your required in-person health orientation at TSHC. (link coming soon)
  - Before your visit, review the information on this website. (we/TSHC will need to update this website)
- Download, sign, and print the TSHC Consent for Services and Communication form and bring a copy to your health orientation visit.
  - If you will be under the age of 18 when arriving on campus, it is mandatory that this form contain the signature of parent or guardian.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance provides financial protection from any high, unexpected health care costs in the United States. When you register for classes at Iowa State University, you are automatically enrolled in health insurance coverage under the Iowa State University Student and Scholar Health Insurance Program (SSHIP). More information about health insurance will be covered in detail during an information session at ISSO New International Student Orientation.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about immunization records, ISU health requirements, or your health orientation session, please email the Thielen Student Health Center (TSHC) at

[immrequirements@iastate.edu](mailto:immrequirements@iastate.edu).

A member of their nursing staff will reply to your questions. Expected response time will be 5–7 days.

Questions specific to health insurance should be directed to the Student and Scholars Insurance Program (SSHIP) at [isusship@iastate.edu](mailto:isusship@iastate.edu).

# YOUR UNIVERSITY ID CARD



## ISU CARD

Your ISUCard is your permanent university identification card, which includes your picture and university identification number. You will use your ISUCard for most campus services including:

- door access to the residence hall
- meals on campus
- testing centers
- recreation center
- riding CyRide
- the library

## SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO

[Visit the photo submission webpage](#) and follow the guidelines listed to submit a photo for your ISUCard. It is very important that you only submit a photo that meets our requirements. Your photo will be rejected if it doesn't meet the requirements.

Photos must be submitted online at least two full business days prior to picking up your card, or you will need to have your photo taken when you stop in the ISUCard Office instead.

Be sure to stop at the ISUCard Office in 0530 Beardshear Hall when you arrive on campus to pick up your ISUCard. Check the [ISUCard website](#) for hours of operation. The ISUCard Office, like most business offices on campus, is not open on weekends.

## HAVE YOUR PHOTO TAKEN ON CAMPUS

You also have the option to stop into the ISUCard Office after you arrive on campus to have your photo taken and walk out with your ISUCard. Check the [ISU Card website](#) for office hours and further information.

The process generally takes about 30 minutes but could be longer if there is a line. Be sure to bring:

- your University ID number
- your passport

# IMMIGRATION CHECK IN



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IMMIGRATION CHECK IN

After arriving in the United States, you must complete the Orientation Checklist found in CyStart under the International Student Orientation section. In the checklist, you will complete various modules:

- Immigration Regulations
- Electronic Check-In

This can be completed only **AFTER** you arrive in the U.S. and is required for all new international students at Iowa State University. You can complete these forms at your own pace.

Through this process, you will hear from the ISSO International Student Advising team about regulations you must follow to maintain your immigration status and the benefits your status provides along with uploading important immigration documentation to register your immigration record in SEVIS.

Please have the following documentation for the Electronic Check-In form. Documentation needs to be clearly scanned in a digital JPEG or PDF format I-20 or DS-2019 (from ISU and any previous schools)

- Passport photo page
- I-94 arrival record (get yours [here](#))
- Dependents' immigration documents (passport, I-20/DS-2019, and visas)
- Letter of intent (for graduate students on assistantship)
- Financial guarantee (for sponsored students)

### **You will also need to know the following:**

- Address in Ames (this can be a temporary address, such as a hotel or the home of a friend or acquaintance with whom you are staying)
- Name, phone number, and mailing address for a person we can contact if you have a personal emergency

***Failure to complete could result in academic and immigration issues.***

Once you have arrived in the United States, you can begin this process by following this [step-by-step](#) guide.



# EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

## EARLIEST DATE TO START WORK

The earliest students can start working on-campus at ISU is 30 days before the start of classes of their first semester.

## I-9 EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

Students must complete Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) with ISSO on or before the first day of on-campus employment. To complete a Form I-9 with ISSO, please follow the steps below after receiving a job offer for an on-campus position.

### STEP 1 (Before start of employment)

Complete New Student Immigration Check-In with ISSO (page 11) on CyStart located under the International Student Orientation section. This will consist of completing the following items:

- Immigration Regulations presentation
- Electronic Check-In form
- On-Campus Employment form (this form will become available to you once you select that you have on-campus employment in the Electronic Check-In form)

### STEP 2 (Before first day of employment)

Start this step only after step 1 is completed and approved by ISSO. Complete on-boarding tasks and Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) in Workday.

Note: you will only be assigned this task in Workday after your hiring department has completed the hiring process and the hire has been approved through the Workday process.

### STEP 3 (Before third day of employment)

Once you receive your On-Campus Employment form approval email, bring your original, unexpired documents to ISSO during walk-in I-9 hours. More information is provided about walk-in hours when completing the On-Campus Employment form mentioned in Step 1.

Bring the following original printed documents to your Form I-9 appointment:

- Letter of Intent or job offer letter with wet signature (only required if you need to apply for the U.S. Social Security Number)
- Unexpired passport with a current U.S. visa stamp
- Expired passport(s) with other U.S. visa stamps, if any (e.g., F-1/F-2, J-1/J-2, B-1/B-2, etc.).
- Signed I-20 from Iowa State University or unexpired DS-2019
- Previous I-20s/DS-2019s from other schools or J-1 sponsors.
- Most recent [I-94 Record](#)
- Dependents' (F-2/J-2) documents (passport, I-20/DS-2019, I-94.
- Additional U.S. immigration documents, if any (e.g., I-797 USCIS Approval Notice/Receipt Notice, Change of Status documents, proof of other status).
- You will receive information and required documents to apply for U.S. Social Security Number, if needed, during the Form I-9 appointment.

### STEP 4

Apply for a Social Security Number, if needed. More information about applying for a Social Security Number will be provided in your I-9 appointment.



ISSO New Graduate Student Orientation will take place on Friday, January 12th and is strongly recommended for all new international graduate students.

## NEW INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE WELCOME LUNCH

- **Friday, January 12th 12–1PM**
- **Location: Campanile Room**

Socialize with your fellow new international graduate students and ISSO staff while enjoying a complementary lunch.

Registration information will be sent to you via email in December.

## NEW INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE WELCOME PROGRAM

- **Friday, January 12th 1-3pm**
- **Location: Campanile Room**

Learn more about Iowa State and specific resources for graduate students on campus.

## OTHER EVENTS:

- **Sponsored Students Presentation (If Applicable)**  
**-Thursday, January 11th, 2–3PM**
- **Location: Gold Room**

Students whose tuition and fees are paid by a government, business, or organization should attend this meeting.