INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS'

PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
International Students and Scholars Office

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WHEN TO ARRIVE?

You will need to arrive in Ames, Iowa by the program start date listed on your I-20.

If you have an emergency and are unable to arrive in Ames by the program start date liwsted on your I-20 or you would like to defer your admission to a future semester, you must contact the Office of Admissions at 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

To get a snap shot of your first semester at Iowa State and view important dates such as the term start date and university holidays, check out the Iowa State Academic Calendar.

LOOKING FORWARD

ISSO New Student Orientation

For information specific to your entry term, please use the link above to visit our website and learn more.

Destination Iowa State

Destination Iowa State (DIS) is an in-person welcome program designed to ease the transition to college for all new Iowa State students, both international and domestic. During the program, you will build new friendships, learn how to navigate campus, and kick-off the start of the semester in a fun way.

IMPORTANT PRE-ARRIVAL TASKS

STEP 1

Have you accepted your Offer of Admission?

To gain access to important online orientation materials, including course registration, you need to accept your offer of admission.

If you haven't yet accepted your offer, please visit the Office of Admission website to do so.

STEP 2

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 3

Have you received your form I-20?

As a new student, you should have received your initial I-20/DS-2019 either digitally along with the pre-Arrival Guide, or by email separately prior to receiving the guide.

If you are viewing this guide as a perspective student, you will receive your I-20/DS-2019 after completing your Admissions process. Please refer to your My Admissions Portal for more information on your application status.

STEP 4

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.

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 5.

STEP 5

Applying for your Student Visa*

After completing the above steps, you are ready to begin the visa see page 5 for more specific information on the visa application process.

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

STEP 6

Register for Orientation

To track important pre-arrival tasks, as well as register for orientation, please log into Cystart the New and Former Students portal. You will need to request a Limited Services Pin in order to log in. Once in Cystart, and 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 and we will assist you.

APPLYING FOR YOUR STUDENT VISA

STEP 1

Receive your I-20.

Please see Page 4, Step 3 for more information if you have not received your intial I-20.

STEP 2

Pay the I-901 SEVIS fee.

Please see Page 4, Step 4 for more information regarding paying the SEVIS fee.

STEP 3

Complete the DS-160 Application Form.

Complete a DS-160 visa application form on the U.S. Department of State website https://ceac.state.gov You will need information from your I-20 to complete this form. If you do not have your own contact person in the U.S., you can use the following information to complete the section of U.S. Point of Contact Information.

Name: Becca Duncan

Address: 2229 Lincoln Way, STE 4530, Ames, IA 50014

Phone: 515-294-1120

Email: brduncan@iastate.edu

STEP 4

Schedule your Visa Appointment.

After completing the DS-160, you can schedule your visa appointment at your nearby U.S. Embassy or Consulate. A list of US Embassy locations can be found at https://ustraveldocs.com Please note, each Embassy manages the process of scheduling an interview differently, so please read the information on your specific Embassy location's website carefully.

STEP 5

Prepare for your Visa Appointment

You will want to gather the required documents listed on your specific Embassy's website before your visa appointment. Your interview usually lasts about 3 minutes, and the consular officer will ask you questions about your goals in the US and plans after your graduation. The following documents should be carried to your visa appointment, in addition to any other documents listed on your Embassy's website:

- I-20
- DS-160 visa application fee receipt
- I-901 SEVIS fee receipt
- Valid passport
- Passport photograph
- Transcripts from schools/universities attended and relevant test results such as TOEFL/IELTS, GRE or SAT, etc.
- Financial documents proving available funds for at least one year of expenses
- Admission letter to Iowa State University
- Check your U.S. embassy's webpage for additional requirements.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

GETTING FROM THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO AMES

ISSO collaborates with University Transportation Services to provide all new international undergraduate students with a complimentary shuttle from the Des Moines International Airport to Ames, Iowa.

ISSO will work with University Transportation Services to arrange your shuttle, so please follow the instructions below to submit the required information.

REQUEST YOUR SHUTTLE

- Log into Cystart using your NetID and Password
- Select Orientation and Pre-Arrival Checklist from the bottom of your home screen.
- In the Arrival Tasks part of the checklist, locate the Book Your Shuttle to Campus
- Completely fill and submit this form, at least 3 business days prior to your arrival.

If for any reason you are unable to submit this form, please email isorient@iastate.edu and we will assist you.

ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

For students not wishing to use the Iowa State shuttle service, other options may be available. Please contact shuttleservices@iastate.edu for assistance with additional options.

GUESTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

If you are bringing guests or family members with you to attend orientation, passengers above the age of 18 can travel with their student. Please include an accurate guest and baggage count with your reservation so we can assure all passengers are accommodated. Please note: guests are responsible for their own return transportation.

For those traveling with small children, we recommend booking through Executive Express, as University Transportation Services is unable to assist passengers under the age of 18 due to liability concerns.

EARLY ARRIVAL HOUSING

Different options are available for early arrival housing depending on which semester you are starting at Iowa State.

INTERIM HOUSING (FALL ONLY)

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

International students who will arrive early to participate in International Student Orientation can request Interim Housing through the Department of Residence. Students utilizing Interim Housing will be charged per night from the date they check in to Interim Housing until their official move in date.

- Cost: $25 per night
- Location: Maple Hall, 204 Beach Road, Ames, IA 50013-0025
  - All rooms are single gender, double occupancy, with two single beds in each room, both of which will be lofted with furniture under each bed. Only the provided furniture is allowed in the rooms.
  - The Maple-Willow-Larch (MWL) Hall Desk is located in the commons building between the three towers and will be open for check-in and check-out.
- For dates please check:
  - The Department of Residence's Early Arrivals Page

  or
  - The Fall International Orientation Page

TEMPORARY HOUSING (SPRING AND SUMMER)

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 is $109 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.

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

Students can make alternative and independent arrangements through Airbnb or hotels in Ames.

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. There's no reason to wait!

You can make adjustments to your contract later, for example, adding a roommate or learning community. 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!

Remember, on campus housing fills up quickly, especially as enrollment continues to rise. Make sure to submit your contract as soon as possible to secure on campus housing.

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.

What to Bring?

Amenities vary based on which on or off campus housing you choose. Make sure to look over what is included in your space on the Department of Residence's website or the website of your rental of choice, if living off campus.

The Department of Residence has a handy guide on their website with recommendations on what to bring with you or purchase once you are in Ames. You can find it here.

COURSE REGISTRATION

COMPLETE ONLINE ORIENTATION

In this online course, you will learn about Iowa State's campus, essential resources, and gain access to course registration for your first semester of classes. You must complete the course by passing the quiz at the end with at least 70%. You will not be able to meet with your academic advisor and register for courses until you have passed this course.

Before you begin:

- Have your NetID and password ready! For password assistance, please contact the Solution Center at 515-294-4000.
- If you need to change your major, please update your student information before you begin the course.
- The course can be accessed on any computer or mobile device with access to the internet.
- The course takes about 2 hours to complete. You can pause and resume where you left off at any time.
- You can retake the final quiz multiple times, until you get at least 70% correct.
- A link to the course will be sent to you by email.

WORKDAY: NEW STUDENT ONBOARDING TASKS

Before you can register for classes, your next step is to complete your new student onboarding tasks using Workday, Iowa State's student information system.

- **Login to workday.iastate.edu using your Net-ID and password.**
- Select My Tasks in the top right corner near your profile icon. You can also view them in the Awaiting Your Action section of your Workday homepage.
- **Tasks to Complete are:**
  - ☐ Welcome Message.
  - ☐ Review and Agree to Iowa State University Registration, Billing, and Payment Terms and Conditions.
  - ☐ Review My Personal Information.
  - ☐ Manage My Privacy Settings.
  - ☐ Review My Friends and Family Contact Information.
  - ☐ Review Your Personal Safety and Security Contact Information.
  - ☐ Additional tasks in your inbox will need to be completed later.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED CANVAS COURSES

Free Speech Training

All students are required to complete the Iowa Board of Regents Free Speech Training program each academic year; as a new student, you should complete the training before arriving on campus for your first semester.

Sexual Assault Prevention

We all have a role in creating a safe campus community. Iowa State does not tolerate sexual violence, and we strive to create a culture where everyone engages in violence prevention. Through prevention skills training, outreach, programming, and more, our campus community engages in ongoing efforts to reduce sexual violence and create a safer community for all.

COURSE REGISTRATION

ACADEMIC ADVISING

After you have completed the Steps on page 9, your college will contact you to help you register for classes. Each college is different, so make sure to pay attention to the instructions as provided in the course.

Please Note: You must complete the ALEKS Math Placement as provided in the course.

INTERNATIONAL FIRST YEAR SEMINAR: UST 1100

When you connect with your academic advisor, remember to register for the International First Year Seminar (IFYS) course for your first semester. This course is required for you to graduate from Iowa State. IFYS focuses on helping new international students transition to life on campus by connecting you with campus resources, discussing important topics like how to process culture shock, and making new friends through fun social experiences.

You may be exempt from IFYS if you are a transfer student, or if you graduated from a U.S. high school. To review IFYS exemption criteria, check the IFYS webpage. If you are exempt, do not register for U ST 1100. Fill out the IFYS Waiver form on CyStart and attach proof of your exemption (ex. high school diploma or transcript from the college/university you are transferring from.)

PLACEMENT TESTS

ALEKS MATH PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT

The ALEKS Math Placement Test is **a required online test** you can take from any computer with reliable internet. You can take it more than once if you want to improve your score.

You must complete the ALEKS Math Placement prior to your academic advising session. Your academic advisor needs your ALEKS math placement score to place you into the right courses. Allow at minimum three business days for Iowa State to receive your scores.

To log into ALEKS, go to your Admissions MyAccount or Iowa State sign-on dashboard.

What if you already completed ALEKS?

Scores from other Iowa Regents Universities and Community Colleges are also accepted for one year. You should be prepared to provide your advisor a screenshot of your previous score during your academic advising appointment, as Iowa State University does not have access to records taken through a different institution. Be sure your name is visible in the screen shot.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

REQUIRED ONLINE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Mental Health Education Online Training Module

This interactive, virtual, role-play training module will help students identify, approach, and refer students who may be in distress. The training module will show up in your Canvas dashboard.
All incoming students are required to take the program between July 1 and July 31, 2023.

Alcohol Risk Reduction Program

All first-year students entering Iowa State and new transfer students are required to complete an online alcohol risk reduction program (AlcoholEdu). Students should log on to Canvas from their **Okta Dashboard** for detailed information and to complete the requirement within the given time frame (July 1 and July 31, 2023).

For assistance with these courses, contact Student Wellness at studentwellness@iastate.edu or

515-294-1099

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 the 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 AT 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 a parent or guardian.

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. A member of their nursing staff will reply to your questions. The 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.

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

ORIENTATION

ISSO NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

ISSO NEW International Student Orientation takes place prior to the start of your first semester and is **MANDATORY** for all incoming international students. Incoming students are expected to attend and participate in **ALL** required ISSO New International Student Orientation sessions.

ISSO New International Student Orientation is designed to help you make a smooth transition to Iowa State with sessions designed specifically for international students. During orientation, you will:

- Complete your required immigration processing with an ISSO International Advisor (mandatory)
- Meet with your academic advisor to finalize your registration for your first-semester classes
- Learn about campus resources and important information about Iowa State
- Make new friends through ISSO social events, and Destination Iowa State

Please note that the failure to attend orientation could result in academic, immigration and employment issues.

More information about ISSO New International Student Orientation, such as the complete schedule of events, will be sent to your email in the months leading up to your entry term and made available on the New student orientation page of the International Students and Scholars (ISSO)website.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR ORIENTATION

- Hard-copy of your final academic transcript
- Student ID Number
- I-20 or DS-2019 (from ISU and any previous schools)
- Passport
- I-94 (retrieve electronic I-94 at the CBP website)
- Dependent immigration documents: passports, I-20/DS-2019 forms, and I-94 forms
- 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
- Financial guarantee (for sponsored students)