Welcome to Iowa State, International Cyclones!

For all international graduate students that are starting classes on campus in Ames, Iowa for Spring 2022, follow this packet of Next Steps to get started on your journey to Iowa State.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PRE-ARRIVAL DATE & TRAVEL INFORMATION** .............................................................3
- Reporting Date
- Traveling During COVID-19
- Initial Expenses
- Iowa State COVID-19 Information
- Transportation from Des Moines Airport to Ames
- Housing & Dining Accommodations

**BASIC UNIVERSITY INFORMATION** ...........................................................................5
- Student Sign Ons
- Tuition Payments
- ISU Card
- Health Insurance

**YOUR NEXT STEPS** ........................................................................................................7
- Health & Safety
- Placement Examinations & Teaching Symposium
- International Student Immigration Check In
- International Student Orientation Activities
- Employment Procedures

**FINAL CHECKLIST** ........................................................................................................12

**WEBSITE & CONTACT INFORMATION** .................................................................13
PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING

Reporting Date

You need to arrive in Ames, Iowa by your mandatory reporting date of Thursday, August 18th, 2022. However, ISSO recommends you arrive at least 1 week early in order to complete all orientation activities, placement examinations, and any requirements set by your academic department.

If you have an emergency and are unable to arrive in Ames by August 18th, you must receive approval from your academic department and contact the Office of Admissions at admissions@iastate.edu to receive a late arrival later.

Traveling During COVID-19

- United States Travel Restrictions
  Check all United States travel restrictions on a reliable U.S. government website or on ISSO’s COVID-19 Updates webpage frequently. Email isso@iastate.edu if you have any questions or concerns regarding travel restrictions.

- International Travel Guidelines
  We recommend that you review Iowa State University’s international travel guidelines frequently before traveling. As new information comes out, our policies may change.

Initial Expenses

We recommend bringing sufficient funds to cover your initial expenses for the first three months through traveler’s checks, ATM, or debit/credit cards until you establish a bank account in the U.S. Never carry large amounts of cash with you or in luggage checked in with the airline.

Iowa State COVID-19 Information

Iowa State offers both COVID-19 tests and vaccinations to students who want them. As policies change frequently, we ask that you view Iowa State’s COVID-19: Moving Forward webpage for the most up-to-date information on COVID-19.

Transportation from Des Moines 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 have two pieces of luggage and one lap item when traveling with Executive Express. Students will be charged an additional $15 per bag. This free ride from Executive Express is only available to new ISU international students, not their family members or returning ISU students.

To register for a free shuttle through ISSO & Executive Express, please fill out the registration form here.

To alter an existing reservation OR to book less than 72 hours out, please call 320-253-2226 between 8am and 5pm CST, Monday through Friday. If you are unable to call, please email charters@executiveexpress.biz.

Additional transportation services such as Uber and Lyft are available at your own personal expense.
Housing & Dining Accommodations

- **On-Campus Housing**
  If you have a Housing Contract with the Iowa State Department of Residence (DOR), details about Fall 2022 Move-In can be found on the [DOR Spring Move In webpage](#). If you would like to learn more about on-campus housing contracts and assignments, please visit the [DOR Contracts and Assignments webpage](#).

- **Housing**
  If you do NOT have a housing contract with the Iowa State Department of Residence, you will need to find your own living space. The [City of Ames Rental website](#) will provide you more information on off-campus housing in Ames and tips for living in Ames can be found on the [City of Ames website](#).

- **Temporary Housing in Ames**
  You may need temporary housing accommodations if you arrive prior to your housing move-in date. ISSO recommends several options. You may choose the one that works best for you.
    - Apply for interim housing through the ISU Department of Residence. The Department of Residence will offer interim housing from July 25th though August 10th, at which point students can move into their assigned fall housing. This option costs $25 per night. You may request interim housing through the [housing portal website](#).
    - Make reservations at the Gateway Hotel with the reduced ISSO rate of $85 + taxes per night. To make a reservation contact the Gateway Hotel at 515-292-8600 and use the code “International Students and Scholars Office” to get the reduced rate.

  *Reservations are dependent upon 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](#).

- **Dining**
  ISU Dining offers a variety of meal plans for purchase for the Fall 2022 semester. Meal plans are open to those who live on or off-campus. To learn more about options, pricing, and locations on campus, check out the [ISU Dining Meal Plans and Rates webpage](#).

  → ISU Dining has dining locations open and available for service prior to the start of the Spring 2022 semester. Locations which are typically open during the academic break include:
    - **Clyde’s**, located in Union Drive Community Center: A gastro dining, combined with a “We Proudly Serve” Starbucks concept, with both dine-in and take-out service. Clyde’s features made-to-order breakfast sandwiches, beef burgers, salads, specialty grilled cheese sandwiches and hand-dipped milk shakes.
    - **MU Market & Café**, located in the Memorial Union: A one-stop location for your “We Proudly Brew” Caribou Coffee, Whirlybird smoothies, convenience snack, beverage, and personal care items, along with grab and go sandwiches, salads and sides.
    - **Lance and Ellie’s**, located in the Memorial Union: Features high quality meats and cheeses, sub buns, along with a variety of sandwich toppings and spreads to customize any sandwich.

  All ISU Dining locations accept cash and credit/debit payment options. Please note, ISU Dining will have minimal service offerings December 23, 2022–January 3, 2023. All operations will be closed during the following University Holidays: December 24th, December 27th, and January 1st. For complete hours of operations of all the locations open and available for service upon your arrival, please visit the [ISU Dining Hours of Operation webpage](#).

  You do not need to purchase an ISU dining meal plan nor eat only at ISU dining locations, however, please make sure to have arrangements for meals when you arrive into the United States. You can also check nearby [grocery stores](#), [restaurants](#), or order through online food delivery services, like [Door Dash](#) or [GrubHub](#).
Student Sign Ons

**NET-ID**
Your Net-ID is your main form of university communication and the key to access several resources at Iowa State University. Your Net-ID is the first part of your @iastate.edu email address and you will use it daily. Create your NetID by following these simple steps on the [Information Technology website](#).

**Microsoft Outlook**
All Iowa State university communication will be sent to your @iastate.edu email address on Microsoft Outlook. New students can access their Outlook email accounts through the Outlook web application or by downloading the Outlook desktop application. There are benefits to both, and students are encouraged to choose the option that works best for them.
- If using the Outlook web application, students can log into their Okta application dashboard and simply click on the Outlook application tile. The tile will automatically appear on new student dashboards.
- To access and install the Outlook desktop application, follow these instructions ([available in the IT Portal](#)) for downloading Microsoft Office 365 applications.
- Students can download the outlook mobile app to their phone. Feel free to turn notifications on so you do not miss important information from your instructors and the University.

**Canvas**
Canvas is an online platform where instructors keep important class information. Students will interact with Canvas regularly to access course resources, complete assignments and take tests. Prior to your arrival to campus, take time to log in to Canvas. You will see your course information for your registered classes after they are posted by your instructor closer to the first day of class.

**AccessPlus**
Prior to your arrival to campus to log in AccessPlus to view your class schedule, view housing and dining information, view your university bill (posts the first day of the month you begin classes), and update your personal and emergency information—including your in session address and cell phone number.

**Tuition Payments**

**U-Bill**
Within AccessPlus, you can view your U-Bill (your electronic university bill) under the students tab. The U-bill is the main source for communicating university charges to you. The U-Bill is available on AccessPlus on the 1st of each month and is due on the 20th of each month. Notifications will be sent to your @iastate.edu email.

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.
ISU Card

Your ISUCard is your permanent university identification card, which includes your picture and university identification number. You will use your card for most campus services, including the library testing centers, recreation center, riding CyRide, door access, meals on campus, and many more.

Once you arrive to campus, you can stop by at the ISUCard Office in 0530 Beardshear Hall to get your photo taken and obtain your ISUCard. The process will take about a half hour. Be sure to bring your University ID number and a valid state or federal issued photo ID, such as a passport or driver’s license. You will also have time during ISSO New International Student Orientation to pick up your card.

Check the ISUCard website for open office hours. The ISUCard Office is not open on weekends.

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.

If you have questions about your ISU Student and Scholar Health Insurance, please visit the Student and Scholar Health Insurance webpage or e-mail isusship@iastate.edu.
YOUR NEXT STEPS

As new international graduate students, you must complete all the steps below.

Health & Safety

Submit Proof of Health Immunization Records
To ensure a safe and healthy campus community, all incoming international students must submit immunization records to Access Plus by July 30th. This will allow Thielen Student Health Centertime to review your documents and know what they need to assist you with upon arrival. You do not need to email any documents directly to the health center. All AccessPlus submissions go directly to the nurses at the health center for review.

Have you already received a COVID-19 vaccine? A COVID-19 vaccination is NOT required to be a student at ISU, however, if you have received a COVID-19 vaccination prior to your arrival to Iowa State, please include it along with your other immunization records.

If you have any questions, please email nurse Kelly Frizzell at kmfrizz@iastate.edu. Response times may be 5-7 days for non-emergency inquiries.

Schedule Health Screening Appointment
All new international students are required to complete a health screening appointment that takes place in-person at Thielen Student Health Center. Your health screening appointment is a brief meeting with a member of our nursing staff to review your requirements and any health concerns. Health screening appointments will be held at various times from August 1st–August 19th. You can view times and register for a health screening appointment on CyStart by following this step-by-step guide. Please submit your immunization records prior to an appointment.

If you have any questions about immunization records or health screenings, please email nurse Kelly Frizzell at kmfrizz@iastate.edu. Response times may be 5-7 days for non-emergency inquiries.
Placement Examinations & Teaching Symposium

- **Complete the English Placement Test**
  The English Placement Test (EPT) for non-native speakers of English is required for all incoming international students who do not meet the English language exemption criteria. The test is provided once free of charge to give students an opportunity to demonstrate sufficient English proficiency, to be exempt from English coursework, or provide placement into appropriate English language support courses.

  Exemption from the EPT requires a passing score on the EPT or completion of the appropriate English support courses, which is a graduation requirement.

  To check whether or not you are exempt from taking the EPT, please review the exemption criteria listed on the [English Placement Test webpage](#). If you are NOT exempt, please take note of the testing schedule below. EPT consists of TWO tests: writing and oral communication:

    - The EPT writing test and oral communication test will be offered in-person on August 11th and 12th. Registration for the written test is open. Registration for the oral test will open on July 28th. At that time, please visit the [English Placement Test Registration webpage](#) to register.

  It is required that you complete both components of the English Placement Test. For questions regarding the test, please email [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.

- **Teaching Assistant (TA) Cohort Program  Optional**
  The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) will conduct the virtual Teaching Assistant (TA) Cohort Program on **August 16th 10 – 12pm Central Standard Time via Zoom**. All TAs who are new to the ISU classroom, or who have received a teaching assignment different from what they have done before, are strongly encouraged to attend this seminar. In this online workshop, teams of TAs will work together in breakout rooms to solve potential classroom scenarios on various topics such as academic dishonesty, classroom management, and inclusivity. A panel of experts will help TAs discuss appropriate steps to take when these situations occur in their classrooms. This is not required, but we encourage you to attend.

  More information on registration can be found on the [CELT website](#).
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.
International Student Orientation Activities

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) expects you to participate in new graduate student orientation activities upon arrival into the United States.

- **New International Graduate Student Welcome  Virtual; Friday, August 19th from 10AM–12PM**
  ISSO will host a half-day International Graduate Student Welcome Program on Friday, August 12th, 2022. where you will get the opportunity to mingle virtually with other international graduate students and learn more about Iowa State. If you unable to make it to this due to a schedule conflict with your academic department, please ask for a recording of this program so you can watch it on your own time later. To join the welcome event use this Zoom link: [Graduate Student Welcome Link](#).

- **Sponsored Students Meeting (If Applicable)  Virtual; Thursday, August 18th from 2–3PM**
  Students whose tuition and fees are paid by a government, business, or organization should attend this meeting. To join the sponsored student session use this Zoom link: [Sponsored Student Session Link](#).
Employment Procedures

I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification

If you have been hired for an on-campus employment position, ISSO recommends completing the New Student Immigration Check-in once you have entered the United States. Before you complete the Form I-9 and begin your on-campus employment, please complete the following sequence of steps:

1. Complete New Student Immigration Check-In with ISSO (page 10) on CyStart located under the International Student Orientation section. This will consist 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)

2. Complete on-boarding tasks and Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) in Workday.

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

4. Apply for Social Security Number, if needed. More information about applying for a Social Security Number will be provided in your I-9 appointment.
Here is a check-list that will help you remember all the steps you need to complete as new international graduate students at Iowa State University! Print off this check-list so you can keep track of your progress.

**Pre-Arrival Travel Planning**
- Arrive to the United States by your reporting day of **Thursday, August 18th**
- Check all United States travel restrictions on a [reliable U.S. government website](#)
- Review the [international travel guidelines](#) frequently
- Book your FREE shuttle service to Ames through ISSO/Executive Express
- Finalize your temporary housing accommodations at the Gateway Hotel, or any other alternative arrangement

**Check your Student Sign Ons**
- [NET-ID](#) for university log-in credentials
- [Microsoft Outlook](#) for your Iowa State student email
- [Canvas](#) for course information from your instructors
- [AccessPlus](#) for housing and dining information, university bill, and more

**Placement Examinations**
- Register for the in-person EPT Oral Communication and EPT Writing test that will take place on August 12th and 13th. Registration is open for the EPT writing test, and will open on July 28th for the Oral Communication test
- Graduate teaching assistants must register for the in-person [OECT](#). Graduate teaching assistants are encouraged to register for the virtual [TA Symposium](#) on August 16th

**Health & Safety**
- Submit your [Immunization Records](#), including any COVID-19 vaccine records, on Access Plus to Thielen Health Center as soon as possible
- Register for your in-person Health Screening appointment at Thielen Health Center by following this [step-by-step guide](#)
- Visit Iowa State's COVID-19: [Moving Forward webpage](#) for up to date information on vaccines and testing

**Immigration Check In and Orientation Activities**
- Complete the Orientation Checklist in CyStart (found under International Student Orientation) after arriving in the U.S
  - Failure to complete will result in academic and immigration issues
  - Attend the Welcome Program – [Virtual; Friday, August 19th from 10AM-12PM](#)
  - Sponsored Student Meeting (if applicable) – [Virtual; Thursday, August 18th 2PM-3PM](#)
- Check our [New International Student Orientation page](#) regularly to received updated information

**Employment Procedures**
- If you have on-campus employment, like a graduate assistantship, you must complete the I-9 employment eligibility verification process
We Are Here To Help You!

Have questions?
Email isorient@iastate.edu and your question will be forwarded to the right person.

For timely updates and more information:
Check our New International Student Orientation website.