Welcome to Iowa State, International Graduate Cyclones!

For all graduate international students that are starting classes on-campus for fall 2020, follow this packet of Next Steps to get started on your journey to Iowa State!
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ARRIVAL DATE & TRAVEL INFORMATION

Reporting Date for International Graduate Students

The mandatory reporting date is Thursday, August 13, 2020. If arriving in the U.S. after Thursday, August 13, 2020, contact the Office of Admissions (admissions@iastate.edu) for a late arrival letter. You are only permitted to enter the U.S. on or after the “Earliest Admission Date” in the section titled “program of study” on your I-20. Graduate students arriving late must contact issoasmt@iastate.edu for a late arrival check-in.

Anyone traveling from outside of the United States is required to self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to Ames, Iowa. Details about the self-quarantine are provided in the section below.

If you did not travel internationally prior to your arrival on-campus, you are not required to self-quarantine.

Arrival Date and Mandatory Quarantine for International Students Traveling into the United States

In accordance with current CDC guidance, all Iowa State University students, faculty, and staff who have traveled outside of the United States must self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to the United States. Please make travel arrangements that will allow you to complete the 14 day required quarantine period before your first in-person activity or start of classes on Monday, August 17th. Students should not attend in-person activities, including class, during their quarantine period.

If you are required to quarantine and are unable to complete your 14-day quarantine before your first in-person orientation activity for ISSO or your academic department, please contact ISSO and your department to discuss the possibility of other arrangements. Currently, all orientation activities for ISSO are being held virtually except for the English Placement Test and the Oral English Certification Test. If you not exempt from EPT or you must take OECT for your teaching assistantship, then you must arrive 14 days prior to your registered testing date so you can complete your quarantine. More information about these specific ISSO orientation activities are found on page 5.

If you are required to quarantine and are unable to complete your 14-day quarantine before the start of classes, you should not go to class, but instead, contact your instructors prior to the start of classes to discuss how to begin the semester remotely, or make other arrangements to complete required coursework.

More guidance on how to manage quarantine, such as online food delivery, will be sent to you around mid-July and made available on our website.

United States Travel Restrictions

Check all United States travel restrictions on reliable U.S. government website. If travel is prohibited from a country, you are not allowed to have been physically present in the country in the previous 14 days (regardless of citizenship).

Travel Documents

Students must have the following documents in hand when entering the United States:

- Passport
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Admission letter
- Financial support documentation

A Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will review all immigration documents (listed above) and any supporting materials when you arrive at the U.S. border. They may ask additional questions about your plans in the United States. If there are any questions regarding your record, you may be asked to go to secondary inspection for a more thorough review of your documents and record. You may find more travel information, including COVID-19 updates, on the CBP website.
Transportation

Iowa State University in Ames is located a 45-minute drive away from the Des Moines International Airport. ISSO has partnered with Executive Express to provide all new international students FREE shuttle service from the Des Moines International Airport to Ames. Please refer to the Executive Express website for details on booking and baggage pricing. Make sure to have a drop-off address for the shuttle driver.

On-Campus Housing

You may choose to live on or off campus during your time at Iowa State University. More information about on-campus housing can be found on the Department of Residence website.

International students who have contracted for university housing and have traveled into the United States can self-quarantine period in temporary university housing starting August 3rd and may move into their assigned residence hall room or apartment following completion of their quarantine. If you have questions about on-campus housing or self-quarantine in university housing, you can contact Leah Weeks at lbm@iastate.edu.

Off-Campus Temporary Housing

The Iowa housing website will provide you more information on off-campus housing in Ames and tips for living in Ames can be found here. In case your on-campus or off-campus housing is not ready by the time you plan to arrive in Ames, you may need to book Airbnb or hotel in Ames.

Best Western Hotel is offering reduced room rates from July 27 to August 17, 2020 and may accommodate earlier arrivals or longer stays past August 17, 2020. New international students may reserve rooms under ISSO’s name to receive the reduced rates of $79 per night for a king room and $89 per night for a double queen room. Please call 515-296-2500 or email dmalfero@bestwesternames.com to reserve your room with Deann Malfero, Assistant Manager at Best Western Hotel.

More guidance on how to manage quarantine in temporary housing situations, such as online food delivery, will be sent to you around mid-July and made available on our website.

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 airlines.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Prior to your arrival, you must complete all following steps

Immigration Procedures

Pay SEVIS I-901 Fee
If you are a first-time applicant for an F-1 or J-1 visa, you are required to pay the SEVIS fee before your visa interview. More information regarding the I-901 SEVIS fee can be found on the I-901 SEVIS Fee website.

Apply for F-1 or J-1 Visa
After accepting admission and paying the I-901 SEVIS fee, apply for a visa at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. More information can be found on the U.S. Department of State website. If currently studying in the US, complete the SEVIS Transfer Form.

Set Arrival Dates
You can arrive up to 30 days prior to the program start date. The program start date can be found in item #5 of your I-20 or item #3 of your DS-2019. ISSO recommends that you arrive 3–4 days before your program start date.

Communicate Arrival Date to ISSO
In order for ISSO to best prepare for your arrival, please fill out the form here and enter information regarding your arrival date when you are ready.
University Procedures

Create a Net-ID
Your Net-ID will be 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. Please take a moment to create your NetID by following these simple steps on the ISU Information Technology website.

Obtain your ISU Card
Your ISUCard is your permanent university identification card, which includes your picture and university identification number. The ISUCard website has more details about your card. Follow the instructions here to submit a good photo for your card. You may pick up your card in August.

Submit Immunization Records
Incoming students must have certain immunizations completed to attend Iowa State University. More information regarding your immunization record requirements can be found on International Students Health Requirements page on our website.

Log into AccessPlus
Use AccessPlus to upload immunization documents, register for classes, view on-campus housing and dining information, pay university bill (posts the first day of the month you begin classes), update address and emergency contact information, among others.

Register for Written and Oral English Tests and Teaching Symposium
You are required to have your 9-digit ISU ID number, Net-ID, and Net-ID password ready for your placement examinations.

- **English Placement Test (EPT)**
  All incoming students whose first language is not English and do not meet any of the exemption criteria are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT). The English Placement Test results aid academic advisers in determining the appropriate English course selection which best supports your studies at Iowa State University. The test consists of two parts: writing and oral communication. The EPT writing test takes place virtually, and has online testing dates until end of August. It is recommended that you register for the earliest available EPT writing online test date.
  The EPT oral communication test is taken in-person on campus on Friday, August 14th. Registration will become available on July 31st.
  For test dates, registration, exemption criteria, and all other information, please visit the English Placement Test website.

- **Oral English Certification Test (OECT)**
  For graduate students with teaching assistantships, you will be required to take the OCET prior to the start of the semester. More information on OCET can be found on the International Teaching Assistants Program website.

- **Teaching Symposium**
  The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) uses the Teaching Symposium program to support graduate students who will have a teaching role during the semester. More information on registration can be found on CELT website.
ISSO Graduate Student Orientation Activities

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) expects you to participate in orientation activities. The activities sign-up instructions will guide you to register for all the ISSO orientation activities. There are six main activities you will complete with ISSO, depending on your unique situation:

- **One Health Screening Appointment (Required)**
  All international students are required to register for a Health Screening appointment that takes place at Thielen Student Health Center. Your health screening orientation session is a brief meeting with a member of our nursing staff to review your requirements and to review any health concerns. When registration for health screening is open, you will receive an email to notify you. At that point, you can select a date and time that works best for you.

- **Immigration Presentation (Required)**
  Discusses compliance, rules, and benefits for students in F or J status

- **Immigration Document Processing (Required)**
  - Electronic Check-in: Provide an Ames address and emergency contact information
  - Workday on-boarding protocols: Complete on-boarding tasks, if employed by the university
  - I-9 employment verification forms: Only for students employed by the university

- **Virtual Welcome and Panel Session (Recommended)**
  Mingle virtually with other new and current international graduate students, and learn more about Iowa State by hearing from an ISSO Immigration Adviser, the Health Insurance Program, ISU Police Department, and other campus resources.

- **Sponsored Students Meeting (If Applicable)**
  For students whose tuition and fees are paid by a government, business, or organization.

- **Exchange Students Meeting hosted by the Study Abroad Center (If Applicable)**

**Academic Department Orientation and Course Registration**

Some academic departments will host their own orientation sessions. International graduate students are expected to participate in both international graduate student orientation (with ISSO) and academic department orientation. Please make sure your scheduled orientation activities do not clash.

Some specific graduate departments allow their students to register early. This is strictly at the discretion of your academic department. Contact your academic department for information about course registration.

**Managing Orientation during Self-Quarantine**

In accordance with current CDC guidance, all Iowa State University students, faculty, and staff who have traveled outside of the United States must self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to the United States. Please make travel arrangements that will allow you to complete the 14 day required quarantine period before your first in-person activity or start of classes on Monday, August 17th. Students should not attend in-person activities, including class, during their quarantine period.

Currently, all orientation activities for ISSO are being held virtually except for Health Screenings, the English Placement Test and the Oral English Certification Test. If you must complete health screening or placement examinations, you must arrive 14 days prior to your testing date.

If you are required to quarantine and are unable to complete your 14-day quarantine before your first in-person orientation activity for ISSO or your academic department, please contact ISSO and your department to discuss the possibility of other arrangements. If you are required to quarantine and are unable to complete your 14-day quarantine before the start of classes, you should not go to class, but instead, contact your instructors prior to the start of classes to discuss how to begin the semester remotely, or make other arrangements to complete required coursework.
Documents To Bring To Orientation

Have these documents ready for your mandatory immigration document processing that you will complete virtually with an international student adviser.

» I-20 or DS-2019 (from ISU and any previous schools)
» Passport
» Printed I-94 Arrival Record (get yours [here])
» Passports and I-20/DS-2019 forms for any F-2 or J-2 family members who will come with you
» Iowa State Offer of Admission Letter
» 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
» Letter of intent (for graduate students on assistantship)
» Financial guarantee (for sponsored students)

Important Sign Ons for Orientation:

Note that some of these sign ons have other purposes not listed here. All the university sign ons can be found here.

• **CyStart**
  Sign up for ISSO orientation activities and health screening

• **CyMail**
  Check all university emails

• **AccessPlus**
  Upload immunization documents, register for classes, among others

• **Workday**
  If employed by the university, complete onboarding protocols and sign up for payroll
WHAT IF MY PLANS CHANGE?

The outbreak of COVID-19 may delay or halt visa appointments and travel plans. If your plans have changed and you are unable to attend Iowa State in person for the Fall 2020 semester, you have two options to consider.

» Option 1: Course Options with Academic Department

If you will not be able to come to ISU this Fall, please discuss your course options with your academic department to perhaps arrive late, start classes online or defer to the Spring (see Option 2 below). The online option or deferral to Spring may not be available in all departments. Once you and your department decide what you will be doing, inform the Office of Admissions so that your record is updated. The office of Admissions will then inform ISSO to update your I-20 or DS-2019 accordingly. The ISSO will email your updated I-20 or DS-2019 to you as soon as it is ready. The updated document will contain the same SEVIS number and you will not need to pay the SEVIS fee again.

» Option 2: Defer your Admission to Spring 2021 semester

After clearing deferral with your academic department, contact Iowa State University Admissions at admissions@iastate.edu to request to have your admission deferred to Spring 2021. Deferral to Spring may not be available in all departments. A new I-20 will then be created and mailed to you. If you choose this option, you will arrive to campus in Ames, Iowa in January 2021 to begin the Spring 2021 semester.

WEBSITE & CONTACT INFORMATION

For help with your immigration status or immigration process:
Email your questions to isso@iastate.edu and it will be forwarded to your assigned international student adviser

For help with orientation:
Contact the International Graduate Student Orientation team at issoasmt@iastate.edu

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

We are here to help you!
FINAL CHECKLIST

Remember to complete these tasks prior to your arrival to Iowa State

☐ Apply for a student visa (if currently studying at another U.S. school, complete the SEVIS Transfer Form)

☐ Review CDC guidance about a 14 day quarantine if you are traveling into the United States

☐ Travel and Housing Arrangements
  » Make travel arrangements to arrive in Ames, Iowa by the mandatory reporting date of Thursday August 13th or earlier if you require a 14 day quarantine
  » Complete a housing contract with the Department of Residence in AccessPlus (if you choose to live on campus) or confirm off-campus housing arrangements
  » Book your free Executive Express shuttle from the Des Moines Airport to your housing arrangement
  » Inform the ISSO of your arrival dates here

☐ Create your Net-ID. The Net-ID is required for most sign ups, including your iowa state email.

☐ Upload immunization records in AccessPlus

☐ Register for Placement Tests
  » Bring your 9-digit ISU ID number, Net-ID, and Net-ID password to testing location
  » If not exempt, register for the earliest available online EPT writing test. Online test dates are available over the summer
  » If not exempt, register for the EPT oral communication test that takes place on campus. on Friday, August 14th. Registration opens up July 31st
  » Graduate teaching assistants must register for the International Teaching Assistants Program website (OECT) and TA Symposium

☐ Sign-up for ISSO graduate orientation activities. Activity sign-up instructions here
  » Health Screening appointment (Required)
  » Immigration Presentation (Required)
  » Immigration Document Processing (Required)
  » Virtual Welcome and Panel Session (Recommended)
  » Sponsored Student Meeting (if applicable)
  » Exchange Student Meeting (if application)

☐ Submit your photo for your ISU Card

☐ Check our New International Student Orientation page regularly to find more information and schedules for On-Campus International Graduate Student Orientation

☐ Check your program department orientation schedule and make sure your scheduled ISSO graduate orientation activities do not clash

☐ Check your email regularly for important updates from Iowa State University

We look forward to having you on our campus!