This guide is designed to help you adjust to your first week of Redbird life and can be used as a reference throughout your time here. We have compiled a variety of resources to help you adjust to life in the United States as well as on campus. Please be sure to read all sections that apply to you. In addition to this guide, you should read through our website for more details. We hope you find this information useful and that it helps make your time at Illinois State University (ISU) a success. Welcome to the Global Redbird family!

Sincerely,
International Student and Scholar Services
International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

What does ISSS do?

International Student and Scholar Services is a unit within the Office of International Studies and Programs. Our primary purpose is to ensure that international students feel welcome and can find all the resources they need to succeed at Illinois State University. Your international advisor can help if you have questions regarding your immigration status, employment, travel, or other concerns. If your advisor cannot provide the answer, they will direct you to someone who can.

ISSS is located on the second floor of Fell Hall. Please visit the ISSS website to view your advisor’s walk-in hours and contact information. Walk-in hours allow you to meet in person with your advisor. You can also contact ISSS by phone or email.

236 Fell Hall
304 S. University Street
Normal, IL 61761
(309) 438-5276
InternationalStudents@IllinoisState.edu
ISSS Mission statement
To provide programs and advising services to assist international students and scholars in achieving their academic, professional, and personal goals while contributing to the achievement of the global dimension of Illinois State University’s mission.

Services and programs provided include:
• Advising students and scholars on navigating complex U.S. immigration law
• Providing cultural programming to facilitate the integration of students and scholars into the academic and campus life of the University
• Connecting students and scholars to other campus resources
• Educating the campus community on intercultural issues and U.S. immigration policy
• Fostering and cultivating partnerships worldwide to promote intercultural exchange and assist in recruitment and retention of students and scholars
The basics

- Bloomington-Normal is a mid-sized community located in the central part of the U.S.
- It is 125 miles southwest of Chicago, 155 miles northeast of St. Louis, and 64 miles northeast of Springfield (the state capital).
- The area population is approximately 135,000.
- State Farm and COUNTRY Financial are headquartered here.
- Go to visitbn.org to find out more!
Transportation

Central Illinois Regional Airport, 3201 CIRA Drive, Bloomington, serves as a hub for connecting flights to and from some major U.S. cities. Parking is free and there are transportation services available to get you to campus.

Amtrak (station located in Uptown Normal) provides rail service to Chicago and St. Louis on the Illinois and Texas Eagle trains.

Connect Transit is the public bus system in Bloomington-Normal. Routes give passengers access to shopping, entertainment, and dining in Bloomington-Normal. By using your Redbird card, you can ride Connect Transit for free.

There are three charter bus companies that allow you to have access to Chicago, St. Louis, and other major cities: Greyhound, Peoria Charter, and Burlington Trailways.
Driving

In order to drive in the United States and the state of Illinois, you will need a valid driver’s license. If you have been issued a driver’s license from your home country, you may drive on that for up to 90 days after your arrival.

More information about how to apply for a driver’s license and what is covered in the tests can be found at CyberDriveIllinois.com.

Keep these things in mind when applying for your driver’s license:
• Students here for less than 12 months are not eligible to apply for a driver’s license.
• In order to take the driving test, you must have a car and provide proof of insurance for the vehicle.
• A social security number (SSN) is required. If you are not eligible for a SSN, you may be able to apply for a Temporary Visitor Driver’s License.
• Expect to sit for a written test and a driving test.

 Buying a car

In the U.S., you can purchase a vehicle from a dealership or an individual. One benefit of buying from a dealership is that they will handle all of the necessary paperwork. Before you purchase a car, we recommend you research extensively online. There are websites that allow you to compare the overall value of vehicles, check for any accident history, and view dealership ratings.

As part of the purchasing process, you will need to apply for and pay fees to obtain Illinois license plates, and register your vehicle with the state of Illinois. License plates are unique to your car and cannot be interchanged with another vehicle.

WATCH OUT FOR LEMONS!

A lemon is what you would call a car that looks nice from the outside but has major mechanical issues or defects. When purchasing a vehicle, it is important to test drive and examine the car, and be aware of any warranties and what they cover.

Weather

Bloomington-Normal experiences four seasons: fall, winter, spring and summer.

Weather can be quite extreme; average summer temperatures can reach 95 degrees Fahrenheit/35 degrees Celsius, and average winter temperatures can be as low as -20 degrees Fahrenheit/-29 degrees Celsius.

Be sure to pack a variety of clothes, including clothing for snow and rain, so you are prepared for any situation.
Getting a cell phone

There are several service providers in the Bloomington-Normal area that can assist you with setting up service. Cell phone providers will be at International Orientation to answer your questions and set up service.

You have multiple options to set up service:

• Purchase a sim card to convert your current phone to a U.S. service provider
• Purchase a new phone
• Purchase a “go phone” that allows you to pay for minutes and data as you need them

Before signing a contract, be sure to talk to the provider and ask about:

• Available talk minutes per month
• Available data per month
• How much roaming charges are if you go outside of your coverage area
• How much international calls will be if they are not included in your calling plan

Setting up a bank account

There are several benefits to opening a U.S. bank account.

• Gives you a safe place for money storage
• Lets you set up automatic bill payments
• Provides options to set up direct deposit of paychecks
• Allows for a debit card rather than carrying large amounts of cash

Banks also provide financial and investment advice, foreign currency exchange, wire transfers, safety deposit boxes for storage of valuables, and credit cards.

Some banks require a Social Security Number in order to open an account. You should call ahead or research online to find out what documents you will need. Several banks will be at International Orientation to answer any other questions you have about banking in the U.S.

Places of worship

To find a place of worship that fits your needs, view the complete listing at visitbn.org.
### Campus Resources

**Human Resources**
101 Nelson Smith Building  
(309) 438-8311  
Assists with new hire and payroll paperwork for student employees and graduate assistants

**Career Center**  
110 Student Services Building  
(309) 438-2200  
Assists with resume and cover letter revision as well as preparation for professional interviews

**Health Insurance**  
303 Student Services Building  
(309) 438-2515  
Provides information regarding the ISU Student Health Insurance Plan

**Student Accounts**  
Student Accounts Building  
(309) 438-5643  
Assists students with questions about their student bill and accepts in person payments

**Student Counseling Services**  
(309) 438-3655  
320 Student Services Building  
Offers individual and group counseling sessions to assist students with mental health issues, anxiety, stress, and homesickness; also has workshops and relaxation services

**Registrar**  
107 Moulton Hall  
(309) 438-2188  
Assists with getting copies of transcripts or enrollment verification and adding/dropping courses

**University Housing Services**  
Office of Residence Life Building  
(309) 438-8611  
Assists students with on-campus housing (outside of International House) and housing in university apartments

**Office of International Studies and Programs**  
236 Fell Hall  
(309) 438-5276  
Includes ISSS, Study Abroad, the English Language Institute, and Management Development International

**University College**  
540 Fell Hall  
(309) 438-3217  
Assists with course registration and degree planning for undeclared undergraduate students

**Health Services**  
Student Services Building, Second Floor  
(309) 438-8655  
To schedule an appointment call (309) 438-2778 or go online  
Provides health care to students on campus; also works with students on health records and immunization compliance

**Admissions**  
201 Hovey Hall  
(309) 438-2181  
Admissions@IllinoisState.edu  
Assists with admission to new degree programs

**The Graduate School**  
309 Hovey Hall  
(309) 438-2583  
Assists with admission and advising for graduate students  
Questions about graduate admissions call (309) 438-2196

**International House Lounge**  
105 Vrooman Center  
(309) 438-1436  
Provides housing and cultural programming to international students

**Julia N. Visor Academic Center**  
012 Vrooman Center  
(309) 438-7100  
Offers free tutoring services, writing assistance, study groups, and academic workshops

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**Milner Library**  
(309) 438-3451  
Houses a large collection of print and electronic materials. Provides research assistance, study areas, equipment checkout, and citation guides

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**Immigration Basics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa type</th>
<th>Able to study?</th>
<th>Able to work?</th>
<th>Basic status maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-1</td>
<td>Issued to individuals who are engaged in full-time study with the intent of completing a degree or educational objective in the United States</td>
<td>Yes—this is a student visa and requires full-time enrollment</td>
<td>Must report changes to a Designated School Official (DSO)—see graphic below for details. Individuals interested in changing to F-1 status can visit the <a href="#">Change Your Status</a> page on our website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-2</td>
<td>Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of an F-1 visa holder</td>
<td>Yes—College/University part-time study only</td>
<td>Status is dependent upon the F-1 primary visa holder maintaining status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 (Student Category)</td>
<td>Issued to individuals studying in the United States as a part of an exchange agreement or receiving funding from an outside source</td>
<td>Yes—this is a student visa and requires full-time enrollment</td>
<td>Must report changes to an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)—see graphic below for details; must have health insurance for the duration of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-2</td>
<td>Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of a J-1 visa holder</td>
<td>Yes—part-time or full-time</td>
<td>Status is dependent upon the J-1 primary visa holder maintaining status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-1B</td>
<td>Temporary worker in a specialty occupation</td>
<td>Yes—as long as study is incidental to the visa holder’s employment</td>
<td>Must work for the employer and in the position for which the H-1B status is approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-4</td>
<td>Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of an H-1B visa holder</td>
<td>Yes—part-time or full-time</td>
<td>Status is dependent upon the H-1B primary visa holder maintaining status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**F-1 and J-1 students must report changes to a DSO/ARO**

- F-1 and J-1 students must report changes within 10 days.
- To Designated School Official (DSO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO).
- Information goes from DSO/ARO to SEVIS/DHS.

**Visa type**

- **F-1**: Issued to individuals who are engaged in full-time study with the intent of completing a degree or educational objective in the United States.
- **F-2**: Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of an F-1 visa holder.
- **J-1 (Student Category)**: Issued to individuals studying in the United States as a part of an exchange agreement or receiving funding from an outside source.
- **J-2**: Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of a J-1 visa holder.
- **H-1B**: Temporary worker in a specialty occupation.
- **H-4**: Dependent (spouse or child under the age of 21) of an H-1B visa holder.

**Able to study?**

- **Yes**—this is a student visa and requires full-time enrollment.
- **Yes**—College/University part-time study only.
- **Yes**—this is a student visa and requires full-time enrollment.
- **Yes**—as long as study is incidental to the visa holder’s employment.
- **Yes**—part-time or full-time.
- **Yes**—part-time or full-time.

**Able to work?**

- **Yes**—on campus; Need prior authorization from ISSS or USCIS (EAD card) for off campus work.
- **No**.
- **Need prior authorization from ISSS**.
- **Need prior authorization from USCIS (EAD card)**.
- **Yes (this is the main purpose for this visa type)**.
- **Specific eligibility requirements—Need prior authorization from USCIS (EAD card)**.

**Basic status maintenance**

- Must report changes to a Designated School Official (DSO)—see graphic below for details. Individuals interested in changing to F-1 status can visit the [Change Your Status](#) page on our website.
- Status is dependent upon the F-1 primary visa holder maintaining status.
- Must report changes to an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)—see graphic below for details; must have health insurance for the duration of the program.
- Status is dependent upon the J-1 primary visa holder maintaining status.
- Must work for the employer and in the position for which the H-1B status is approved.
- Status is dependent upon the H-1B primary visa holder maintaining status.

**Must report these changes:**

- **Personal Information**
  - Name
  - Email address
  - Home address
  - Phone number
- **Academic Program**
  - Major/minor
  - Level of study
  - Extension
  - Leave of absence
  - Degree completion
  - New degree program
  - Transfer to new institution

**For more information on status maintenance and reporting requirements, visit the Maintaining Status page of our website.**
Employment

On-campus employment

F-1 and J-1 students are eligible to work on campus through the end of their program. However, there are specific limits to the number of hours you can work each week. J-1 students must receive written authorization from their ARO before beginning any employment. For more information about working on campus, visit the On-Campus Employment page of the ISSS website.

You can view all current postings for student employment and graduate assistantships on the Human Resources job portal at www.Jobs.IllinoisState.edu. Once you accept a job you must complete your I-9 hiring paperwork with Human Resources.

Please note: A job is only considered on campus when you are being paid by Illinois State University and physically working on campus. If you find a position that is listed as “off campus” or where you will not be paid through Illinois State University, this is not considered on-campus employment (see below for information regarding off campus work).

International students are not eligible for Federal Work Study positions.

Off-campus employment

The two main types of employment authorization for F-1 students are:

Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is training which provides you with the opportunity for practical application of the knowledge gained in your program of study and is considered part of your curriculum. Usually, CPT is used for internships or other job opportunities prior to graduation for which you will earn course credit. In most instances, an F-1 student is not eligible for CPT until after they have completed two full-time semesters of study.

Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is training that provides you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from the degree you have earned at ISU. Your international advisor recommends OPT by issuing an I-20, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approves OPT by issuing an EAD card. If approved, you will be authorized to work within your field of study in the U.S. for up to 12 months.

STEM Extension is a 24 month extension of OPT for students who have earned STEM designated degrees.
After accepting a job, you will need a Social Security Number (SSN). This number allows the U.S. government to track employees for taxation and other purposes.

You must be registered in SEVIS prior to visiting the Social Security Administration (SSA) office to apply for your SSN card. The SSA will not allow you to apply for an SSN if you are not registered in SEVIS. New students should wait two to three days after SEVIS registration before applying. You must also have written permission from your international advisor. For details on how to apply for an SSN and what documents you will need, visit the Social Security page of the ISSS website. You should request a receipt from the SSA office for your records. The receipt will indicate the estimated processing time for your card. Show this receipt to your employer’s Human Resources office. Once you receive your SSN card, you must also show the original document to Human Resources.

Your SSN is yours for life and should be protected the same way you protect your passwords. If you ever lose your SSN card or if it is stolen, you should report it to the police. You can apply for a replacement card, but the number will not change. Unless it is required by a legitimate source, never give out your SSN.

Any student receiving U.S. income must pay taxes. You must file your tax forms every year in April for the previous year’s employment. ISSS purchases Glacier Tax Prep software to assist you in preparing your federal tax return. In addition, there will be an international tax session held every February to help answer your questions. For more information, visit the Taxes page of the ISSS website.

The main type of employment authorization for J-1 students is:

**Academic Training**

*Academic Training* (AT) is a type of off-campus work authorization for J-1 students. As the name implies, this is training that provides you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in your academic program at ISU. AT can be approved during or after your program of study. You are limited to 18 months of AT or the length of your academic program (whichever is shorter). Ph.D. students may be eligible for an additional 18 months.

Please visit ISSS during walk-in hours if you have questions regarding work authorization or the application process. Detailed instructions are available at the links above.

You can also visit the Career Center for advice on resume writing, interviewing, and job hunting. ISSS and the Career Center host the International Student Career Series each semester to assist international students seeking employment in the U.S.
Bloomington-Normal is a safe community, and Illinois State University is located in a safe area of town. However, we still ask that students be cautious. The best way to prevent being impacted by a crime is to prevent someone from making you a target. Here are some tips for staying safe:

- **Know your surroundings:** Do not walk with people you do not know in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Keep your attention on what is happening around you.

- **Walk without earbuds in:** While listening to music might make your walk more enjoyable, it can often be a distraction as it will block out noises that might indicate danger.

- **Keep your information secure:** Do not give out your passwords, pins, SSN, credit card information, or driver’s license number unless it is required by a legitimate source. This information could be used to make unauthorized purchases or steal your identity.

- **Keep your valuables secure:** Never leave anything unattended in public. Be sure to keep valuable items with you or in a secure location.

- **Use the buddy system:** It is never a good idea to walk alone. Always make sure you are with a “buddy” (friend) when walking around at night. If you are on campus and don’t feel safe, you can contact Redbird Safe Walk, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a police officer will escort you to your destination.

**What is considered illegal in the United States?**

- Theft/stealing
- Drugs (opiates and marijuana)
- Drinking under the age of 21
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol

In order to maintain your immigration status, you must not violate state or federal law. Doing so may lead to termination of your status, deportation from the United States, and difficulty receiving a visa to enter the U.S. in the future.

**Other Activity Considered Illegal in the U.S.**

- Smoking or drinking alcohol on campus
- Smoking in public buildings
- Drinking alcohol outside on public property
- Providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21
- Providing tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18
- Working without employment authorization
- Assault, sexual assault, or physical abuse
- Switching license plates to a vehicle and not changing the title or registration
- Theft/stealing
- Not paying your taxes

If you have been arrested and charged with a crime, contact an immigration lawyer:

**Immigration Lawyers**

A directory of [McLean County immigration lawyers](#) by city.

A directory of [Illinois immigration lawyers](#) by city.
All students at Illinois State University are mandated to have health insurance coverage. Full-time students will be automatically enrolled in ISU’s Student Health Insurance Plan through Aetna insurance. For specifics on coverage, insurance premiums, and health care providers that accept this insurance, please visit the student insurance site. This health insurance plan exceeds the minimum requirements set by the Department of State for J-1 students.

We strongly recommend that all students use the ISU health insurance if they are eligible. However, you do have the option to use health insurance from your home country. This coverage must be comparable to the coverage offered by ISU and you must provide a copy of the policy (in English) to the Student Insurance coordinator for approval. If your coverage is not approved, you must either take the ISU insurance or find other comparable coverage.

Part-time students must manually enroll in the ISU student health insurance plan. Students have until the 10th day of classes to indicate their interest to enroll, which can be done online through My Illinois State. Otherwise, you will not have the opportunity to enroll until the next semester.

Health records and immunization compliance
You must submit your health records and be compliant with the immunizations requirements by the 10th day of class. If you are not, a non-compliance fee and a medical hold will be placed on your student account. All international students are also required to have a Tuberculosis (TB) screening administered on campus within the first 10 days of classes.

If you need additional immunizations, Student Health Services (SHS) can assist you with this process. Your ISU student insurance will cover most of the cost of immunizations. Visit SHS for more information on the immunization requirements and to schedule a TB screening.

Health Services
SHS provides routine acute medical care Monday-Friday 8:00-4:30 during spring and fall semester. See the SHS website for holiday and administrative closure dates. If you have a chronic medical condition or take medications for a chronic condition, it is important that you make arrangements for continuation of care with your current provider and while you are at ISU. You should always visit SHS first for your healthcare needs. Medical emergencies and after hours care options are available on the SHS website.

In the event of a medical emergency, it is always best to visit a hospital. The closest hospital to campus is Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, 1304 Franklin Avenue, Normal, (309) 454-1400. Another hospital in Bloomington-Normal is OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, 2200 E. Washington St., Bloomington, (309) 662-3311 (see map on page 4). If you are in a serious medical situation and cannot get to a hospital, dial 911 to request an ambulance to transport you to the hospital.
Housing

Most international students who stay on campus will be housed on the International House (I-House) Themed Living Learning Community (TLLC) floors of Manchester Hall. These floors are designed for international students to interact with each other and American students while experiencing life in a traditional residence hall setting. Manchester Hall is open during University breaks. For more information on International House, visit the Housing section of the ISSS Website.

To assist students with finding off-campus living or a roommate, the Dean of Students Office has created the Off-Campus Housing Database where students can search for an apartment or living arrangement that will work for them.

Lease review services are available through ISU’s Students’ Attorney. A lease is a legally binding document, so it is very important that you understand what you are agreeing to before signing.

RESIDENCE HALL TIPS

• **Always lock your room when leaving**, even if you are just walking to the bathroom or heading to the shower.

• **Set up rules with your roommate(s) regarding visitors.** It’s great to have friends from out of town visit, but it’s best to set up rules with your roommates to avoid conflict. If you do not want your roommates or visitors to use your things, or if you want to put limitations on visitors, have a conversation with your roommates and put together a “roommate contract” with established rules to follow.
Academics

Maintaining academic standing
As a part of maintaining your visa status, you must make normal progress toward your degree or program objective at all times, and you must maintain good academic standing. You must be enrolled full time each fall and spring semester. Your course schedule should consist of prerequisites or required courses for your program.

Immigration regulations give specific online course limits for F-1 and J-1 students. See the graphic on this page and visit the Course Load Requirements page of our website for more information.

Academic probation and dismissal
If you fall out of good academic standing, you will be placed on academic probation and may be ultimately dismissed or suspended from the University.

Academic dismissal from a program or the University may result in termination of your SEVIS record, and ultimately, your visa status. Once dismissed from the University, you may either appeal the decision or you must leave the United States and reapply for admission to the University. If you are dismissed from your program, please contact your international advisor immediately to discuss how this will impact your visa status and your options for the future.

Academic Advising
Students have assigned academic advisors/graduate coordinators in their program of study. Students can create their own course schedule but should meet with their advisor/coordinator regularly to ensure they are maintaining full-time status and meeting department requirements for graduation.

It is very important that you attempt to complete your degree in the time allotted on your I-20 or DS-2019, if applicable. Any attempt to extend your stay because of failure to make progress toward your degree is a violation of F-1/J-1 status.

Remember, your academic advisor is an expert in the requirements of your degree program but is not an expert on your visa status. You are responsible for knowing whether your course schedule meets the immigration regulations of your status. If you are unsure, consult with your international advisor.

Registration for classes
Undergraduate students
You have been placed in general education courses by an academic advisor in University College for your first semester. Mid-semester, you will be able to register through My Illinois State for courses for the following term. If you are a transfer student, you might work with an advisor from University College or your academic department.

Graduate students
Before enrolling in courses, you should contact your graduate coordinator to discuss your plan of study. Once you have done so, you can register for courses online through your My Illinois State account.
Paying your bill
Once your course schedule is determined, you will be charged tuition and general fees based on the number of credit hours in which you are enrolled. Tuition fees cover the cost of your courses and general fees cover other costs for benefits that you receive as an ISU student, including access to the Student Fitness Center, Milner Library tutoring services, career advising, etc.

The easiest way to view your billing statement is to log into your My Illinois State account and view the Student Accounts Service Center. For more information about how to pay your bill and when it is due, visit the Billing Information page on the Student Accounts website.

International scholarship opportunities
Illinois State University offers several scholarships specifically for international students.

- Global Outreach Scholarship
- Partial Tuition Waiver
- I-House Merit Award
- Lucy Jen Huang Hickrod Award
- Betty Plummer International Studies Outstanding Senior Scholarships
- Marilyn M. Boyd Memorial Scholarship

For more information about eligibility and application requirements, visit the Financial Assistance page of our website.

Dropping/Withdrawing from courses
The add/drop deadline is the 10th day of classes each semester. After this deadline has passed, international students will need ISSS approval in order to withdraw from a course. A course may still show on your transcript depending on when you remove it from your schedule. A withdrawn course will appear as a “WX”. After the withdrawal deadline, all courses will receive a grade and be calculated into your grade point average (GPA). For more information about transcripts and academic deadlines, visit the Office of the University Registrar.

Authorized reduced course load (RCL)
If you are struggling in a course due to a medical condition or academic difficulties, you may be eligible for an RCL. You must be approved for an RCL by your international advisor before dropping below full-time enrollment. There are several campus resources available to assist students facing difficulties. These resources include tutoring, writing assistance, health care advice, counseling, stress reduction workshops, and accommodation services. For more information on eligibility and the RCL approval process, see the Course Load Requirements page of our website.

Finances
Getting Involved

As an international student, it can be intimidating coming to a new country with no familiar faces. One of the best ways to make friends is to become involved in the campus community.

ISSS offers several leadership and involvement opportunities. You could serve as an ambassador for your home country by assisting new students and representing your country at events or in classroom presentations. As a member of the International Student Advisory Board, you could serve as a voice for the international population on campus and work to promote positive change.

United International Association (UIA) also offers leadership and involvement opportunities. As an international student, you are automatically a member of UIA. In the fall, UIA hosts an annual International Gala Night showcasing international food, music, and cultural entertainment. We encourage you to participate so that you can share the unique aspects of your culture with the campus and community. In the spring, UIA hosts the annual International Fair. Booths are set up for students and community members to purchase international goods and sample international food. A variety of cultural performances occur throughout the day.

The Office of International Studies and Programs (OISP) sponsors a weekly International Seminar Series dedicated to bringing scholars and presenters to ISU to discuss global issues and topics. The series is open to the public and includes a free lunch. A full calendar of dates and times can be found on the International Seminar Series webpage.

As an international student, you are part of the International House (I-House) community. I-House offers trips to places like Chicago and St. Louis, internationally themed programming, and access to the I-House Lounge. The lounge is a perfect place to socialize or study with friends. Located in Vroooman Center (see map on page 8), I-House offers cable TV, comfortable couches, video games and consoles, and table space.

For more information, visit the Get Involved page of our website.
Within the United States

Students on non-immigrant visas are free to travel within the U.S. However, it is important to have proof of your valid status even when traveling domestically. We recommend that at a minimum you carry copies (physical or digital) of all your immigration documents and your Redbird Card. In general when traveling, it is also important to carry an official form of identification, such as your passport or U.S. driver’s license.

International travel

When a student needs to return home or is planning to travel outside the U.S., including Canada and Mexico, the student should always consult with an international advisor prior to their travel. Students will need a valid passport, valid non-immigrant visa, I-94, and a valid travel signature on their I-20 or DS-2019. If currently on OPT, students should also carry their EAD card and employment letter with them.

F-1 and J-1 students must have a valid travel signature from their international advisor on their I-20/DS-2019 in order to re-enter the U.S. For information on how to request a travel signature, visit the Travel section of our website. Visiting ISSS prior to any international travel will help reduce the risk of issues arising with CBP at the port of entry.

Study abroad opportunities

International students can study abroad and should consult with a study abroad advisor to find the right program. Also discuss your plans with your international advisor to determine how to maintain your F-1/J-1 status and what documentation you will need to re-enter the U.S. after your study abroad program has ended.

Always carry these with you when you travel internationally:

- unexpired Visa
- valid Passport
- I-20 or DS-2019 with valid travel signature
- I-94
- EAD card and letter of employment (if applicable)

Every time you re-enter the U.S. you should retrieve your I-94 online. Always review your I-94 for accuracy. F and J visa holders should have an Admit Until Date of “D/S.” If you find errors on your I-94, contact your international advisor.
Technology Services

Redbird card
During orientation week, you should visit the Redbird Card Office in the Bone Student Center to get your Redbird card. This is your student ID and should be with you at all times while on campus. Your Redbird card gives you access to University events, campus resources, and student discounts. It can also be used to make purchases with Redbird dollars, flex dollars, and meal plans.

Remember, your Redbird card will allow you to ride Connect Transit for free! For more information on using your card, visit the Redbird Card Office website.

ReggieNet
ReggieNet is the official web-based learning management system for ISU. Many faculty use ReggieNet to post course syllabi and readings, host discussions, message students, administer tests, and post grades. For more information on how to login and navigate in the system, visit the ReggieNet page of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology website.

Internet access/technology services
Wi-Fi is available in all residence halls and academic buildings on campus. You can access Wi-Fi by logging into the ISU network with your ULID and password. Ethernet connections are also available in residence halls.

While computer labs are available on campus, stations are limited. It is recommended that you bring a computer or device with you to ISU, or you can visit TechZone on the second floor of the Bone Student Center to purchase a computer or other device after you arrive. TechZone can help you if you cannot access the wireless network or email from your mobile device and help you troubleshoot problems with your computer or laptop. You can also purchase computers and accessories at a discounted rate through TechZone.

Visit the Tech QuickStart page for an overview of student technology at ISU as well as answers to commonly asked questions.
Illinois State University's core values are pursuit of learning and scholarship, individualized attention, diversity, integrity, and civic engagement. As a member of the campus community, you are expected to uphold these values.

**Code of Student Conduct**
The Illinois State University Code of Student Conduct is a set of rules that you are expected to follow. By accepting your admission to the University, you have agreed to follow the code. You should get to “Know the Code” and make responsible choices.

Once you have arrived on campus, you will be expected to follow the code both on and off campus and during University breaks. Students who violate the code will go through a conduct process that could lead to educational sanctions up to and including expulsion. Some violations of the code are also criminal acts and should be reported to the police (see page 12).

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is a serious offense in the United States and is generally defined as taking someone else's ideas and presenting them as your own without giving the original source credit. When drafting a paper, PowerPoint presentation, or project, be sure to cite all sources. If you are unsure how to cite sources, ask your professor, visit the Visor Center, attend a Graduate School workshop, or review the Milner Library Citation Guides. Any student caught plagiarizing may be punished up to or including dismissal from the University.

**Alcohol and Drugs**
Alcohol and drug abuse are common occurrences on U.S. college campuses. Remember that the legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21. Even if you are old enough to drink legally, it is illegal for you to purchase or provide alcohol to anyone underage. The consumption of alcohol and drugs is often a contributing factor to other crimes or violations of the code. Please drink responsibly.

**Sexual Harassment**
Sexual harassment is any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature (physical or verbal) and is strictly prohibited by University Policy and U.S. law. If you feel you have been sexually harassed, you should report the incident to a staff member of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access and seek assistance through Sexual Assault Survivor Services.

**University policies**

**Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination**
Illinois State University strives to create an environment free of discrimination. If you feel you have been discriminated against based upon your race, religion, national origin, gender, or for any other reason, you should report the incident to a staff member of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.

**Student rights**

**FERPA**
*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) is a U.S. law that gives students the right to keep their student record information private. University staff cannot release non-directory information without your written consent/permission.

**HIPAA**
*Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* (HIPAA) is a U.S. law that gives you rights over your health record information and who can view it. To learn more about your rights under HIPAA, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

**Student Access and Accommodations**
If you are an individual with a disability or medical condition that would benefit from an accommodation, you should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services. Some examples of possible accommodations include private exam rooms, extended time to complete tests, note takers, accessible classroom seating or residence hall rooms, and special parking permits.
What do I do when my degree is complete at ISU?

Preparing for graduation can be a very stressful time. To maintain your status it is important that you plan in advance for your next steps. The options available to students are:

- **Return home after graduation:**
  F-1 visa holders and their dependents have 60 days after graduation to leave the U.S. The 60 days can be used to travel the states or to make plans to return home. J-1 visa holders and their dependents have 30 days after their program end date to leave the U.S.

- **Apply for a new program at Illinois State University:** Students are always welcome to continue their education at ISU. If you have another degree in mind, contact the Office of Admissions to discuss deadlines and requirements. Once admitted, contact your international advisor to have your I-20/DS-2019 updated.

- **Transfer to another SEVIS-approved university:** If you have found a degree program at another university, once you have been admitted, visit the ISSS website for information on how to transfer your SEVIS record to your new school.

- **Apply for Optional Practical Training or Academic Training:** Students seeking to gain experience working in the U.S. may apply for practical training (see page 11).

- **Change Visa status:** You may be eligible to change to another visa status from within the U.S. We recommend that you research your options online and consult with an immigration lawyer (see page 12).