Quick Facts about ISU

- **Established**: 1857
- **Total Degrees Awarded**: 18,577
- **State**: Public
- **ISU History**: Founded in 1857 as the first public university in Illinois
- **Colors**: Red and White

Office of International Studies and Programs
Phone: (309) 438-5276
Email: InternationalStudies@IllinoisState.edu
InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu
Para información en Español: Preguntas@IllinoisState.edu
IllinoisState.edu
Quick Facts about ISU

1857
ISU was founded in 1857 as the first public university in Illinois.

12
ISU is one of 12 public universities in the state of Illinois.

Reggie
The Illinois State University mascot is Reggie Redbird.

Red
School colors: red and white.
Welcome to Illinois State University

This booklet 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. We hope you find this information useful and that it helps make your time at Illinois State University (ISU) a success. Welcome to ISU!
The basics

- The Bloomington-Normal community is comprised of the City of Bloomington (population 77,071) and the Town of Normal (population 52,772).
- Bloomington-Normal is 125 miles southwest of Chicago, 155 miles northeast of St. Louis, and 64 miles northeast of Springfield (the state capital).
- State Farm and COUNTRY Financial are all headquartered in Bloomington-Normal.
Transportation

**Central Illinois Regional Airport**, 3201 CIRA Drive, Bloomington, serves as a hub for connecting flights on Delta, American Airlines, and Allegiant Air. Parking is free and the airport is also accessible by Connect Transit. Fly out of CIRA to catch connections to your home country from most major cities in the United States.

**Amtrak** (station located in Uptown Normal) provides rail service to Chicago and St. Louis on the Illinois and Texas Eagle services. Please visit [Amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) for schedules and rates.

**Connect Transit** is the public transit system in Bloomington-Normal. Use one of the 11 different routes to access shopping, entertainment and dining in Bloomington-Normal. By using your Redbird ID card, you can ride Connect Transit for free. Visit [Connect-Transit.com](http://www.connect-transit.com).

Access Chicago, St. Louis, and other major cities by **Greyhound, Peoria Charter, Megabus, and Burlington Trailways**. Visit their websites or contact them for rates and schedules.
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.

The Office of International Studies and Programs recommends getting an Illinois driver’s license if you are planning to stay in the United States for more than a year.

- 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.

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

Buying a car

Car insurance is required in the state of Illinois. When purchasing a car, you must either have or show proof of insurance to the dealership.

As a part of the purchasing process, you will apply for Illinois license plates. These plates are unique to your car and cannot be interchanged with another vehicle.

Be prepared to pay at least $200 to register the car with the state of Illinois, receive the title to the vehicle, and apply for license plates.

Getting a cellular phone

AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile are service providers in the Bloomington-Normal area and can assist with setting up service.

Most contract plans will require you to have a social security number in order to set up the contract. If you do not have one, most providers will give you the option of paying a high security deposit ($400 to $600) to set up your contract.

Pre-paid plans, where you pay your monthly bill in advance, are available from most providers and do not require a social security number.

Straight Talk wireless, available at Walmart, offers month-to-month service for approximately $45 per month with no contract. Standard phone and smartphones, including the iPhone, are available with this plan.

You have three options to set up service:

- Purchase a sim card from a cellular provider
- Purchase a new phone and sim card from a provider and sign a contract for one to two years of service
- Purchase a “go phone” where you only need to purchase minutes and data as you need them from a retailer such as Target or Walmart (not recommended for those wishing to use a smartphone)

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 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

What to bring with you to set up service:

- Passport
- Student ID (to qualify for any possible student discounts)
- Social security number (needed for most contract plans)
- Payment for security deposit (if applicable)
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.

Setting up a bank account

**Chase Bank**
ATM on campus
413 E. Washington St., Bloomington, 2.1 miles from ISU (40-minute walk, 10-minute drive)

**Commerce Bank**
Multiple locations
104 Broadway St., Normal, 0.1 mile from ISU (5-minute walk)
1500 E. College Ave., Normal, 1.7 miles from ISU (30-minute walk, 10-minute drive)

**Heartland Bank and Trust**
Multiple locations
200 W. College Ave., Normal, 0.1 mile from ISU (5-minute walk)
205 N. Main St., Bloomington, 1.7 miles from ISU (35-minute walk, 10-minute drive)

**ISU Credit Union**
Multiple locations and ATM on campus
Bone Student Center, second floor
1309 S. Center St., Normal, 0.5 miles from ISU (5-minute drive, 10-minute walk)

**PNC Bank**
ATM in Bone Student Center
202 E. Washington St., Bloomington, 1.7 miles (35-minute walk, 10-minute drive)

**U.S. Bank**
1401 S. Main St., Normal, 0.6 miles from ISU (15-minute walk)

For information on local shopping and restaurants, visit BloomingtonNormalcvb.org.

**Places of worship**

**Campus Religious Center—Christian and Jewish services**
210 W. Mulberry St., Normal (309) 452-4471

**Islamic Center of Bloomington-Normal**
2911 Gill St., Suite #6, Bloomington BloomingtonMosque.com

**Masjid-Ibrahim**
2407 E. Washington St., Bloomington Masjid-Ibrahim.org

**St. John Paul II Catholic Newman Center**
501 S. Main St., Normal ISUCatholic.org

**Moses Montefiore Congregation**
102 Robinhood Lane, Bloomington MosesMontefioreTemple.org

**Hindu Temple of Bloomington-Normal**
1815 Tullamore Ave., Bloomington OurHinduTemple.org

There are several more places of worship in the Bloomington-Normal area. If you need assistance finding one that fits your needs, feel free to contact ISSS.
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. We can help if you have questions regarding your immigration status, employment, or travel on your student visa. If we cannot provide the answer, we will direct you to someone who can.

ISSS is located on the second floor of Fell Hall. Most international student issues can be handled during walk-in hours. If your case is more complicated, an ISSS advisor can assist you in scheduling an appointment. Please visit InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu/Students for more detailed information regarding office hours, availability, and contact information.

Fell Hall
304 S. University Street
Normal, IL 61761
Maps.IllinoisState.edu/locations/fell
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 new students and scholars
Campus Resources

**Human Resources**
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

**English Language Institute**
Hudelson Building
(309) 438-2072
Provides English language training to students who plan to continue to degree programs at ISU and those who simply want to feel more comfortable with the language

**Student Accounts**
Student Accounts Building
(309) 438-5643
Assists with billing and tuition/fee payments

**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

**University College**
340 Fell Hall
(309) 438-3217
Assists with course registration and degree planning for undeclared undergraduate students and provides tutoring services and study skills workshops

**Admissions**
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

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

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

**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

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

**Julia N. Visor Academic Center**
072 Vrooman Center
(309) 438-7100
Offers free tutoring services
## Immigration Basics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa type</th>
<th>Able to study?</th>
<th>Able to work?</th>
<th>Other things needed to maintain status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F-1</strong></td>
<td>Yes—must be full time</td>
<td>On campus—yes; off campus—need authorization from an international student advisor</td>
<td>Cannot engage in unauthorized employment; must update changes in personal information and academic program information to ISSS; must continue to make progress toward a degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F-2</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will be in status provided that the F-1 primary visa holder is maintaining status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J-1</strong></td>
<td>Yes—must be full time</td>
<td>Need prior authorization from ISSS</td>
<td>Must only engage in activities as outlined in the DS-2019; must have health insurance for the duration of their program; must not engage in unauthorized employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J-2</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Need prior authorization from USCIS</td>
<td>Will be in status as long as the J-1 primary visa holder is maintaining status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H-1B</strong></td>
<td>Yes, as long as study is incidental to the visa holder’s employment</td>
<td>Yes (this is the main purpose for this visa type)</td>
<td>Must work for the employer and in the position for which the H-1B status was granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H-4</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will be in status provided that the H-1B primary visa holder is maintaining status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Confused by the acronyms? Please see our glossary of terms on the inside of the back cover.

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

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

### Must report:

- Change to name
- Change to U.S. address
- Change of major program of study
- Change of degree level
- Intent to pursue a reduced course load
- Graduation date
- Change of employer (CPT, OPT, STEM)
- Confirmation of STEM employment (every 6 months)

Change of U.S. address can be reported to ISSS by updating the Mailing Address in your My.IllinoisState.edu account.

Most other changes can be reported by emailing InternationalStudents@ilstu.edu or visiting ISSS during walk-in hours. An ISSS advisor will instruct you in regards to any follow-up steps that must be taken.
Employment

F-1 students on-campus employment

F-1 students are eligible to work on campus from the first day of classes through the end of their program. In order to work on campus, students should:

2. Graduate assistantships are also on-campus employment and any openings may be found at www.Jobs.IllinoisState.edu.

Please note: A job is only considered on campus when you are being paid by Illinois State University. If you find a position that is listed as “off campus” or where you will not be paid through Illinois State University, you may not accept the employment. Tutoring or babysitting is considered off-campus employment. Federal work study positions are not available to international students.

APPLY FOR A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

After receiving an on-campus position, you will need to apply for a Social Security number (SSN) in order to be paid. You will need to complete the ISSS On-Campus Employment Verification Letter, which requires signatures from both ISSS and your hiring department. This letter must be taken in person to the Social Security Administration office where you will fill out a SSN application. You may also print and complete the SSN application form at www.SocialSecurity.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf.

To apply for your SSN, you will need to bring:
- Your completed ISSS On-Campus Employment Verification Letter (students with graduate assistantships do not need this letter, but should bring their GA offer letter)
- SSN Application (if printed from website and completed)
- I-20
- Passport, Visa, and I-94

You must be registered in SEVIS prior to visiting the Social Security Administration office. New students should wait two to three days after SEVIS registration before applying for a number. Generally, a new student will have his/her SEVIS record registered at the same time that the On-Campus Employment Verification Letter is submitted for signature. You will be turned down for a number if you are not registered in SEVIS by an international student advisor in ISSS. You should receive your social security card two to three weeks from the day you file your application with the Social Security Administration.
F-1 students-off-campus employment
All students are required to complete the appropriate online module before applying for off-campus work authorization. The two main types of employment authorization are:

1. **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**
   To be eligible, you must meet the following requirements:
   - Enrolled in full-time courses for at least two semesters
   - Receive an internship offer
   - Receive approval from your academic department and enroll in course for credit
   - Provide ISSS with required documentation

2. **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**
   OPT is most commonly done after a student has graduated from ISU. Students may apply as early as 90 days prior to their graduation date. Since this type of work authorization is granted through United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), we strongly suggest that students apply early. No job offer is needed prior to applying. Recommendations from both the student’s academic advisor and an international student advisor are required as a part of the application process.

   Please visit ISSS during walk-in hours if you have questions regarding work authorization or the application process. Detailed instructions are available on our website at InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu/Students/Employment/Off.

   An International Career Series is presented for students throughout the fall and spring semesters on topics such as resume writing, interviewing, and work visas.

**Special considerations for J and H visa holders:**
- J-1 visa holders are allowed to work on campus or participate in off-campus academic training. However, even for on-campus employment, approval must be given by an international student advisor prior to starting work.
- H-4 visa holders are not allowed to work in any capacity and are not eligible to apply for work authorization through USCIS.
Staying Safe

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 of opportunity” is to prevent someone from making you a target. Here are some tips for staying safe:

- **Know your surroundings:** Do not venture off 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 your iPod might make your walk more enjoyable, it can often be a distraction as it will block out noises that might indicate danger.
- **Keep your phone in your pocket:** More often than not, those targeted by “crimes of opportunity” are those who keep their valuables out in the open—especially cell phones or laptops. It is always best to keep your phone close in case of an emergency, but smartphones are often targeted in petty thefts.
- **Keep your wallet/purse secure:** Never leave your purse or wallet unattended in public. Be sure to keep these items with you to avoid being the target of theft. Also never count cash in public or give your ATM card/information to anyone.
- **Use the buddy system:** Especially at night, it is never a good idea to walk alone. Always make sure you are with friends when walking around campus or to/from Uptown Normal at night. If you are on campus and alone, you can contact Redbird Safe Walk, (309) 438-WALK (9255), 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and someone will escort you to your destination.

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

- Smoking in public buildings and on campus
- Providing alcohol to persons under the age of 21
- Providing tobacco products to persons under the age of 18
- Working without employment authorization
- Assault or battery of other persons
- Switching license plates to a vehicle and not changing the title or registration
- Shoplifting
- Not paying income taxes
- Drinking alcohol in public places

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

- Theft
- Drugs (opiates and marijuana)
- Drinking under the age of 21
- Driving with a blood alcohol content above .08

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 or bars from receiving a visa to enter the U.S. in the future.

**Emergency Numbers**

These numbers should be used only in the event of extreme emergency (e.g., broken limbs, car accident, fire, etc.):

- **911**—emergency response number
  Calling this number will direct you to an operator who will ask for your location, what type of emergency, and then will send the appropriate assistance (fire department, ambulance, police, etc.).

- **Illinois State University Police** (309) 438-8631
  If you encounter an emergency situation on campus and 911 is not needed, dial this number.

- **Normal Police** (309) 454-9535
  If you encounter an emergency situation in Normal and 911 is not needed, dial this number.

- **Bloomington Police** (309) 434-2700
  If you encounter an emergency situation in Bloomington and 911 is not needed, dial this number.

If you are in an emergency situation, you should always contact 911 first, but we would also like to know in the event that we can help.

**If you have been arrested and charged with a crime, contact a local immigration attorney:**

Dunn Law Firm, LLP
(309) 828-6241, DunnLaw.com

Rupiper Law Offices
(309) 883-0572, RupiperLaw.com

The Immigration Project
(309) 829-8703, ImmigrationProject.org
Housing

Most international students who stay on campus will be housed on the International House (I-House) Themed Living Learning Community (TLLC) floors. 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 the only on-campus residence hall open during University breaks. For more information on International House, visit: InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu/ihouse/Living.

To assist students with finding off-campus living or a roommate, the Office of Residential Life has created the Off-Campus Housing Database where students can search for an apartment or living situation that will work for them. For more information, visit: DeanofStudents.IllinoisState.edu/Services/Offcampus/Housing. Lease review services are also available through off-campus services. A lease is a legally-binding document, so it is very important that you understand what you are signing before you sign it. To schedule an appointment for your lease review call (309) 438-5951.

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 you, but it’s best to set up rules with your roommate(s) to avoid incidents. If you do not want your roommate(s) or visitor(s) to use your things, or if you want to put limitations on visitors, have a conversation with your roommate(s) and put together a “roommate contract” with established rules to follow for the semester or year.
Academics

Maintaining good academic standing

As a part of maintaining your visa status, you must make progress toward your degree or program objective at all times and you must maintain good academic standing. You must be enrolled full time, 12 credit hours for undergraduates and nine for graduates, each fall and spring semester. Your course schedule should consist of prerequisites or required courses for your program. Only one online course per semester can count toward the minimum 12 or nine credit hours.

To maintain good academic standing you must maintain the appropriate grade point average for your degree program. Undergraduate students must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA and graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA.

Academic probation and dismissal

Students falling below the required GPA for their program may be placed on academic probation. If you are notified by the University that you are on academic probation, you will have one semester to raise your GPA to the appropriate level. If you are not able to reach the required GPA, you will be dismissed 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 elect to appeal your dismissal, you must apply through the Office of the Registrar. If you are dismissed from your program, please contact an international student advisor to discuss how this will impact your visa status and to discuss your options for the future.

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 for courses for the following term. You should maintain close contact with your academic advisor to ensure that you are taking courses that count toward your degree and that you are on track to graduate in a timely fashion.

Graduate students

You will register for your courses online through the My.IllinoisState.edu portal. For advice on which classes to take, contact the academic advisor for your graduate program. Find your advisor here: Grad.IllinoisState.edu/Faculty/Handbook. Throughout your time here, you will contact your graduate advisor for questions regarding your schedule and the program.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense in the United States. It may be 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, or review the Purdue OWL website: owl.english.purdue.edu/owl and Milner Library “citing resources” link: Library.IllinoisState.edu/Library-Materials/Citation-Management. Any student caught plagiarizing may fail a course or be dismissed from the University.
Finances

Paying your bill
Once your course schedule is determined, you will be charged tuition and general fees based on the number of credit hours. 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, tutoring services, career advising, orientation, etc.

The easiest way to view your billing statement is to log into your My.IllinoisState.edu portal and review your bill. The Student Accounts office will post the due date for your first installment. You have multiple options:

• Pay in full by:
  Check
  Cash
  Credit card
  Wire transfer

• Enroll in the Installment Plan and pay small portions of your bill each month by:
  Check
  Cash
  Credit card

  If you would like to pay in person, the Student Accounts Building is at the corner of Dry Grove and Kingsley, across Main Street from the Student Fitness Center (see map on page 8).

Financial Assistance
All international students, prior to receiving their immigration paperwork, must show they have the funding for their first year at Illinois State University. However, we understand that after that first year, your financial situation may change. Here are some options:

• Office of International Studies and Programs partial tuition waivers:
  These tuition waivers are offered to F or J students who have been at Illinois State University for two full-time semesters. The Waiver Review Committee looks for students with a strong academic record who may have a strong financial need and are involved in the campus community, especially with international student organizations. These waivers are partial in nature and it is a competitive application process. Applications for the following fiscal year will be released in April.

• International House Scholarships: InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu
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. For a full listing of International Student Organizations, visit: InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu.

The United International Association (UIA) also hosts an annual International Gala Night each fall semester showcasing international food, music, and cultural entertainment. We encourage you to attend or participate so that you can share with ISU and Bloomington-Normal the wonderful things your culture has to offer.

In the spring, UIA will host the annual International Fair. Booths will be set up for students and community members to purchase international goods and sample international food. A variety of cultural performances will occur throughout the day.

If you are in need of a place to study or simply a place to socialize with your friends, I-House lounge is a convenient place to go. Located in Vrooman Center, I-House offers cable TV, comfy couches, video games, and table space to get work done.

Office of International Studies and Programs (OISP) also sponsors a weekly International Seminar Series dedicated to bringing scholars and presenters to ISU to discuss global issues and topics. A full calendar of dates and times can be found at InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu.
Travel

Within the United States

Students on non-immigrant visas are free to travel within the 50 states. However, it is important to have proof of your valid status even when traveling within the U.S. International students should carry with them the following documents: valid passport, visa, I-20/DS-2019, and I-94. Keep these documents in a safe place and report lost or stolen documents immediately.

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 student 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 you find errors on your I-94, contact ISSS. If currently on OPT, students should also carry their EAD card and employment letter with them. (Travel while an OPT application is pending is not recommended!).

You can retrieve your I-94 online at i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94

Study abroad opportunities

International students can study abroad. In addition to consulting with a study abroad advisor to find the right program for you, discuss your plans with an international student advisor to determine what documents you may need to enter another country with a non-U.S. passport and what documentation you will need to re-enter the U.S.

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 have a 30-day grace period following the end of their program.
- **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.
- **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. F-1 students looking to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) should visit our website at InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu/Students/Employment/Off/Optional.shtml for further details. J-1 students interested in Academic Training should consult with an ISSS Advisor.
- **Change of Status to another non-immigrant visa category (if applicable):** If you are eligible for a change to another non-immigrant status, please contact ISSS for information on filing a change of status application with USCIS.

Always bring these with you when you travel:

- Visa
- Passport
- I-20 or DS-2019
- EAD card (if on OPT or authorized for off-campus employment)
- I-94 card or printout

Whatever you choose, visit the Office of the Registrar to obtain copies of your official transcripts. You may request transcripts for a nominal fee through your My.IllinoisState.edu portal. Once final grades are posted and your degree is conferred, your transcripts will be sent via U.S. mail to the location of your choice.
Health insurance
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 will take this insurance, please visit HealthServices.IllinoisState.edu/Insurance. 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 the My.IllinoisState.edu portal. Otherwise, you will not have the opportunity to enroll until the next semester.

Health records and immunization compliance
Health Services must have your health records and you must be compliant with your immunizations by the 10th day of class to avoid a $50 non-compliance fee and having a medical hold placed on your student account. All international students are also required to have a Tuberculosis (TB) screening within the first 10 days to avoid this fee.

If it is deemed that you need additional immunizations, this can be done for a small fee through the Student Health Services office. Your ISU student insurance will cover the bulk of the cost of most immunizations. Visit HealthServices.IllinoisState.edu/Medical-Services for more information on the immunization requirements and to schedule an appointment.

Health Services
Our on-campus Student Health Center provides quality care in the event of illness while you are enrolled at the University. Should your illness be severe or you encounter a health situation requiring a specialist, referrals can be given by Health Services.

In the event of a medical emergency, it is always best to visit a hospital. The closest hospital is Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, 1304 Franklin Ave, 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 2). 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.
Technology Services

Redbird card
During your orientation, one of your tasks will be to visit the Redbird Card Office in the Bone Student Center to get your Redbird ID card. This is your student ID and should be with you at all times while on campus. You will use your Redbird ID to verify your student status, get access to computer labs and other rooms on campus, get meals in the dining commons, and check out books at the library. For a full list of on-campus locations that require your Redbird Card, visit: RedbirdCard.IllinoisState.edu.

For more information on where your card can be used in the community or to receive discounts, visit: RedbirdCard.IllinoisState.edu. Remember, your Redbird ID will allow you to ride Connect Transit for free!

ReggieNet
ReggieNet is a web-based system often utilized by ISU faculty who teach online courses. ISSS will utilize ReggieNet to communicate important information and content to you throughout your stay. You will be added as a student to the Go Global Redbirds ReggieNet site and be able to access it using your ULID and password.

Internet access/technology services
Students can find Wi-Fi in all residence halls and academic buildings on campus. Access the Wi-Fi Internet 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 our TechZone on the second floor of the Bone Student Center to purchase a computer or other device when you arrive. TechZone also sells computer products and software at discounted prices. Should your computer or device break or have an issue, TechZone can service your device for a small fee. Visit the TechZone website for further information: TechZone.IllinoisState.edu.

General university policies
The University has multiple policies in place to protect students’ rights and to outline the processes and procedures of the University. Please review the following policies:

Equity and inclusion:
EqualOpportunity.IllinoisState.edu

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):
Registrar.IllinoisState.edu/FERPA

(Note: If you want to waive your FERPA rights, you will need to complete a FERPA waiver, available at the above link.)

Disability resources:
DisabilityConcerns.IllinoisState.edu/Students

Code of Student Conduct:
DeanofStudents.IllinoisState.edu

Patient Rights and Responsibilities:
HealthServices.IllinoisState.edu/About/Rights-Responsibilities.shtml
Special information for graduate students

**Advising**
Graduate students have assigned academic advisors in their program of study. While students do have the autonomy to create their own schedule, students should meet with their graduate advisor 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 by neglecting to make progress toward your degree is a violation of your status.

**Course registration deadlines**
The final day to add or drop classes is the 10th day after school starts each semester. However, there are some dates for shorter eight-week courses that have deadlines in the middle of the semester. Visit [Events.IllinoisState.edu/AcademicCalendar](http://Events.IllinoisState.edu/AcademicCalendar) for more information.

Special information for exchange students
- Exchange students are assigned an academic advisor in University College. If you do not know who your advisor is, contact InternationalStudents@IllinoisState.edu.
- Exchange students sponsored by an outside entity, such as World Learning, or IIE, must keep in close contact with their advisor at that entity. ISSS is not able to make changes to your DS-2019 or approve academic training, as we do not sponsor your J-1 visa.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARO</td>
<td>Alternate Responsible Officer</td>
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<td>CBP</td>
<td>Customs and Border Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>Curricular Practical Training</td>
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<td>DHS</td>
<td>Department of Homeland Security</td>
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<td>DOS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
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<td>DSO</td>
<td>Designated School Official</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAD card</td>
<td>Employment Authorization Document given to students authorized to work off-campus on OPT</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>Exchange Visitor</td>
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<td>ISSS</td>
<td>International Student and Scholar Services</td>
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<td>ISU</td>
<td>Illinois State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>OISP</td>
<td>Office of International Studies and Programs</td>
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<td>OPT</td>
<td>Optional Practical Training</td>
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<td>PDSO</td>
<td>Primary Designated School Official</td>
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<td>RO</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEVIS</td>
<td>Student and Exchange Visitor Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEVP</td>
<td>Student and Exchange Visitor Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM Extension</td>
<td>a 17-month work authorization extension for students who have been issued OPT based on a degree in a STEM field</td>
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<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</td>
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