

# 2023-2024 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



# Welcome!

Welcome to Illinois Wesleyan University! We are pleased that you have chosen to join us here in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.

The purpose of this handbook is to help prepare you for your arrival and share information to assist your transition to IWU and Bloomington-Normal.

Whether you are joining us for a semester or year as an exchange student or planning to pursue a Bachelor's degree, we wish you well in your educational pursuits.

Sincerely,

*Mark Brodl*, Provost and Dean of the Faculty

*Sarah Van Alebeek*, Director of the International Office

*Jessica Mrase*, International Student & Scholar Advisor

*Tie Sun*, Assistant Director of International Admissions

*Kate Rybakova*, International Admissions Counselor

## CONTACT INFORMATION

International Office  
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205 Beecher Street  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
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Illinois Wesleyan University, an independent, residential, liberal arts university founded in 1850, strives to attain the ideal of a liberal education while providing unique opportunities with its distinctive curricula and programs.

A liberal education at Illinois Wesleyan fosters creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, strength of character and a spirit of inquiry; it deepens the specialized knowledge of a discipline with a comprehensive worldview. It affords the greatest possibilities for realizing individual potential while preparing students for democratic citizenship and life in a global society development.



**ILLINOIS  
WESLEYAN  
UNIVERSITY  
MISSION  
STATEMENT**



As the University pursues this ideal for all its students, it helps students to follow a wide range of career and life paths, offering diverse curricula in liberal arts, fine arts and professional programs as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary study and off-campus learning.

The University, through its policies, programs and practices, is committed to diversity, social justice, and environmental sustainability. A tightly knit, supportive university community, together with a variety of opportunities for close interaction with excellent faculty, both challenges and supports students in their personal and intellectual development.

# ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The International Office is the touchstone for international students at Illinois Wesleyan University. We support all international students prior to arrival, during the initial transition, throughout their time at IWU and beyond!

The International Office strives to serve our international community by offering professional support, advising on immigration issues, programming for international students and scholars, and advocacy.

We provide comprehensive and timely information regarding visa compliance and regulations, actively supporting student engagement in the campus and Bloomington-Normal community, promoting the educational, professional and personal development of our international students.

Regular office hours are available for students to stop by to ask questions related to employment, travel, campus and community services, culture, campus life, health care, or just to chat! Students may also request appointments.



Sarah Van Alebeek  
Director,  
IWU International Office



Jessica Mrase  
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# What's Inside

1. Travel Documents & Visa Application
2. What To Bring
3. Travel To Campus
4. Paying Tuition
5. Pre-Orientation!
6. Academic Information
7. Campus Safety
8. Campus Resources
9. Staying Healthy
10. Cultural Adjustment
11. American Life
12. Common Courtesies
13. Life at IWU
14. Roommates
15. Miscellaneous
16. Maintain Visa Status
17. Employment
18. Legal Issues
19. Traveling

**Appendix I: Applying for Your Visa**

**Appendix II: Academic Calendar 2023-2024**

# 1. TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

## PASSPORT

In order to enter the United States, you will need a passport issued by your home country. The passport enables you to leave and re-enter your home country. **Pay attention to the expiration date on your passport - it must be valid at all times when you are in the U.S.**

*Your passport must never expire while you are in the United States.*

## APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA

If you currently reside outside the United States, you will need to obtain a student (F-1) or exchange visitor (J-1) visa, in order to enter and leave the United States. Instructions on how to secure your visa are included below.

- You may not arrive in the United States more than 30 days prior to the program start date on your form I-20 (for F-1 students) or form DS-2019 (for J-1 students).
- The US Department of State provides online information on visa processing times. Please be aware that the information on this site may not be up to date.

**STEP 1:** Contact your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate to determine the exact procedures and timelines for obtaining an F-1 or J-1 visa. Visit [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) to find student visa application information and appointment wait time for the city in which you apply for your visa.

**STEP 2:** Complete the DS-160 electronic application. You can access this form at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>. To complete this form, you will need the following items:

- Your passport
- Your I-20 (for an F-1 visa) or DS-2019 (for a J-1 visa)
- Dates of your last five visits or trips to the United States, if you have previously traveled to the United States
- A digital photo for electronic upload: detailed photo requirements can be found at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
- You may be required to provide information about your current and previous education and work history

**STEP 3:** Once you have electronically submitted your DS-160, you will likely need to schedule an interview and the nearest Embassy or Consulate. Information on how to schedule an interview and submit additional documents can be found here:

<https://www.ustraveldocs.com/index.html>

*\*\* You can find detailed instructions on how to complete the DS-160 online at [ceac.state.gov](http://ceac.state.gov), and answers to frequently asked questions are available at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).*

**STEP 4:** Complete Form I-901 and pay the appropriate fee (sometimes called the SEVIS fee). For an F-1 Visa, the fee is \$350.00 USD, and for a J-1 visa, the fee is \$220.00 USD. In order to complete Form I-901, you will need your I-20 or DS-2019. There is a video tutorial on how to complete the Form I-901 available at [studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov).

You can access the Form I-901 and pay the fee online at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). If you choose to pay the fee by check, money order, or Western Union Quick Pay, you must print the Form I-901 payment coupon when you complete the form online. Applicants from Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Kenya must pay the SEVIS Fee by mail. Once you have paid your SEVIS fee, you will need to print confirmation of the payment (click the Check I-901 Status / Print Payment Confirmation link).



## 2. WHAT TO BRING

Your residence hall room will become your home away from home. Think about small items you can bring from home that are familiar and will make you feel comfortable, such as pictures of family and friends, things that represent your interests and your country. Pack light, bring just 2 suitcases. You can purchase much of what you will need either in advance of your arrival and have shipped to the US or when you arrive. Do bring small toiletries (shampoo, soap, deodorant) you'll need for the first few days you're on campus. Check out helpful videos on IWU website.

### CLOTHES

The weather in Illinois ranges from 32°C in August to -17°C or colder during January and February (see Climate information). Bring what clothes you have, knowing you can shop for warmer clothes once you're here. The residential halls are air conditioned, so although the temperature outside may be very warm, your room may be quite cool. Bring a sweater or sweatshirt to wear even though you arrive in summer.

### ITEMS FOR YOUR ROOM

The Office of Residential Life (ORL) has a list on their website of suggested items for your room.



### CELL PHONE

For safety and convenience, everyone will need to have a cell phone soon after arrival. You may either bring an unlocked smartphone that will work here and we will help you buy a SIM card or purchase a phone in the US with a month-by-month plan, such as AT&T or Cricket.

### BEDDING

We strongly encourage you to order bedding and towels in advance, you will need them the first day you're on campus! University beds are Extra Long (39 x 80 inches), so be sure to order the correct size. Feel free to use Amazon.com or [ordering options](#) provided by the Office of Residential Life (ORL). The Student Starter Pak available through ORL has everything you would need.



**THERE WILL BE NO SHEETS/PILLOW/BLANKET ON YOUR BED WHEN YOU ARRIVE. YOU SHOULD EITHER ORDER THEM IN ADVANCE OR BRING THEM WITH YOU. THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE HAS SOME BEDDING THAT OLDER STUDENTS HAVE LEFT FOR YOU THAT IS CLEAN AND AVAILABLE FOR FREE OR We will take you shopping 4-6 days after you arrive.**

***IMPORTANT: We can not accept shipped packages UNTIL August 1.***

## **Shipping Address**

[Your name]  
c/o The International Office  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
205 Beecher Street  
Bloomington, IL 61701 USA  
phone: +1 309 556-2770

# 3. TRAVEL TO CAMPUS

One reason to apply for your visa early is so you are able to make timely travel reservations. Please carefully read the Travel to Bloomington–Normal section of this handbook. Be aware that while we are located just 2.5 hours from Chicago, you are advised to fly to the Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington, IL for your first trip to IWU. It is easier to get to the Bloomington Airport (airport code: BMI) and to campus via Chicago ORD, Atlanta (Georgia: ATL), or Dallas (Texas: DFW).

If you are planning to return home over the Winter Break, all classes and exams will be complete by Friday, December 15, 2023. If you plan to travel on that date, book an afternoon or evening flight if you are leaving from Chicago. This will give you plenty of time to travel to Chicago. **Do not plan to leave campus before December 15**, as exams may go through Friday at 3:15pm, and special exams times are not possible.

Classes for the Spring 2024 resume on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. You must be on campus, rested and ready for class on that date. Professors do not allow late returns, so plan to arrive back at IWU the weekend before classes begin. As an international student you are allowed to return to the residence halls up to 5 days before the beginning of class.

You can check the University Calendar (Appendix 2) to choose the next time you may want to travel.

## OUR LOCATION

Illinois Wesleyan University is located in the city of Bloomington, which is in the center of the state of Illinois. Bloomington adjoins the town of Normal, Illinois, and the two are often referred to together as Bloomington–Normal. The combined population of Bloomington–Normal is approximately 125,000. Bloomington–Normal is about 140 miles (225 km) south of Chicago, Illinois, and is accessible by plane, train, and bus. The local airport is the Central Illinois Regional Airport (airport code BMI) is 15 minutes from campus.

## CLIMATE

There are four distinct seasonal weather changes here in Central Illinois. It can be 85 F (30C) and humid until mid-September. It will be pleasant and cool through mid-November, turning colder, with very cold weather in January, and February. Our rainy season is March and April. Weather will be pleasant and warm in May and June with hot, humid weather in July and August.



## FLYING TO BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

*The preferred and least stressful method of travel* to IWU for your first trip is to the Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington (airport code BMI), just 15 minutes from campus. Students who travel to BMI their first trip to campus consistently report it was easy and convenient to navigate!

Whether you fly directly to the Central Illinois Regional Airport (airport code BMI) or arrive in Bloomington–Normal by bus, someone from IWU will meet you personally in Bloomington–Normal. In order to make arrangements to meet you, you must tell us your full flight schedule as soon as possible.

Many new students who fly into the Chicago airport have missed the regional bus to Bloomington–Normal, creating a stressful situation after an exhausting day of international travel. You may prefer to fly an international airline to get into the US, then use a US airline to get to Bloomington–Normal.

IWU is located just 2.5 hours from Chicago. Below are some airlines that fly into Bloomington–Normal from these US airports:

- From Atlanta, Georgia (airport code ATL), there are daily flights via Delta.
- From Dallas, Texas (airport code DFS) and Chicago (ORD) there are daily flights via American Airlines.

## FLYING INTO CHICAGO

If you choose to end your flight travel in Chicago O'Hare airport, you will need to take the Peoria Charter Coach bus to Bloomington–Normal. The cost for a one way ticket is approximately \$36 USD and should be purchased online in advance and printed. This electronic ticket guarantees your seat on the bus at that specific time.

It may be possible to purchase a ticket from the bus driver when you board the coach if the bus is not full if you have the exact amount in cash to give to the bus driver. If you have purchased a ticket on-line and your flight is delayed, you can change your bus ticket to another bus with an available seat for \$10 USD paid to the driver. Be sure to bring small US bills.

If you arrive into Chicago O'Hare Terminal 5 (the international terminal), you can board the Peoria Charter bus directly outside. Once you have passed through Customs and Immigration, exit Terminal 5 via door 5E and wait for the Peoria Charter bus in the bus shelter on the central island. Their buses are red with white lettering.

If you will be flying into O'Hare from another US city, you will likely arrive in Terminal 1, 2, or 3 and will need to catch the Peoria Charter bus from the Bus Shuttle Center. Once you have claimed your luggage, follow the floor signs for the Bus Shuttle Center.

There are many buses at the Shuttle Center, so be careful to listen for the **Peoria Charter** announcement and check with the driver to make sure the bus is going to Bloomington-Normal. **Currently there is only one bus per day from O'Hare Airport to Uptown Station.** Be sure to double check this schedule in late July as it can change! <https://peoriacharter.com/>



## LOST LUGGAGE

With luggage tag, write your name in the appropriate space and attach the tags to the outside and inside of each suitcase. Bring the shipping address (below) for the IWU International Office with you so that, in the case of lost or delayed luggage, you can leave it with the airline. Remember to pack essential items—medications, travel and immigration documents, a small supply of toiletries—in your hand luggage.

## SHIPPING ADDRESS

[Your name]  
c/o The International Office  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
205 Beecher Street  
Bloomington, IL 61701 USA  
phone: +1 309 556-2770

## ARRIVAL

Are you bringing a credit card to campus? If so, you only need to bring to \$100–200 USD. If you do not have a credit card, bring \$700–\$1000 USD. You will need this money to purchase some food and supplies. We will help you set up a local bank account, however, a debit card will take approximately 1–2 weeks to arrive. Be sure to divide this money as you could lose your wallet or purse while you are traveling. This will cover:

- unexpected expenses such as hotel and food due to flight delays
- your meals prior to start of orientation August 17, 2023
- books, supplies, and items for your room.

The rest of your funds should be sent via wire transfer to the bank account you open when you get here. If you are traveling to campus with a friend or relative, and the International Office staff is NOT meeting you at the Uptown Normal bus station or the Central Illinois Regional Airport, we need to know when you will arrive on campus.

# 4. PAYING TUITION

## PAYING YOUR IWU BILL

First semester tuition and fees should be paid in full by July 30, prior to your arrival on campus. If that is not possible, please contact the Business Office (busnoff@iwu.edu). Students with an unpaid account will not be allowed to register for classes. Should an overpayment be made, the extra amount will be credited toward the fees for the spring term.

After your first semester, you have the option of paying your semester fees in up to five monthly installments. Spring term billing begins November 15, and you may pay in monthly installments for the Spring term. Your spring tuition must be paid in full by March 30 to be able to register for the next semester. You should have access to your IWU tuition bill via an electronic portal. You will be able to give others access to the portal.

## MAY TERM BILLING

If you register for a May Term course, you will be billed an additional tuition fee. May Term costs are billed at midnight of the first day of May Term classes. If you wish to drop a May Term class without paying tuition, you must drop the course before midnight and you will then be required to move out of the residence hall the next day.

## PAYING YOUR BILL

### *Payment Instructions*

Tuition payments, made by credit card, bank transfer, or international wire transfer, are made through Banner, accessible through your student account. **Log into your myiwu student account.**

1. Select **Banner Self Service**
2. Select **Student**
3. Select **Cashnet**
4. To enable your parents to make the payment you must set up your parent as an authorized user. Select **Add New**
5. Your parent will receive an email confirmation with a temporary password to use.

**IMPORTANT: Authorized users DO NOT have full access to your student account~only the ability to pay the tuition bill.**

6. Select **Pay My Bill**

7. **NOTE:** You can change the dollar amount of the amount you intend to pay.

There are 3 ways to pay:

A. Credit card

B. E-check (using PNC or local U.S. bank account)

C. Wire transfer. You will then be directed to FlyWire, a secure site through which you can make the payment. Select country from which payment originates.

***If you pay your IWU bill with a US check or money order (in USD), checks should be mailed to:***

Illinois Wesleyan University

Business Office

1312 Park Street

Bloomington, IL 61701

**YOU MUST WRITE YOUR NAME AND STUDENT ID NUMBER ON THE CHECK! OTHERWISE THE BUSINESS OFFICE WILL NOT KNOW THAT YOU PAID YOUR BILL.**

# 5. PRE-ORIENTATION!

*\*Pre-Orientation is mandatory for all new international students.\**

## PARENTS

If your parents plan to accompany you to campus, contact the International Office about this as soon as possible - we look forward to meeting them! It is important that your parents understand that the Pre-Orientation program is for students only. Beginning on Thursday, August 17, your schedule is full of activities, social, educational, and practical from morning until late into the evening. If your parents accompany you and would like a campus tour please let us know in advance, we would be happy to arrange that for them. Note that all family activities must be complete by August 17, 1:00 PM.

## PRE-ORIENTATION

Pre-Orientation begins on Thursday, August 17, 2023. During Pre-Orientation you will share some meals and activities with first year multi-cultural students (multi-racial, African, Latino, Asian & Native American).



**PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
PRE-ORIENTATION 2022**





***PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
PRE-ORIENTATION 2022***

**You will receive a full schedule when you arrive and can expect to:**

- ❖ Open a bank account
- ❖ Obtain a phone and/or phone service
- ❖ Obtain necessary vaccines
- ❖ Campus tour
- ❖ Travel around Bloomington and Normal
- ❖ Bowling/VR and other games
- ❖ Enjoy meals with other students and staff
- ❖ Learn about American life and cultural adjustment
- ❖ Learn from upper level international students
- ❖ HAVE FUN!

***Beginning Wednesday, August 23, all first year students participate in Turning Titan. This is an orientation program for all incoming first year students. The first day of classes is Monday, August 28, 2023.***

# 6. ACADEMIC INFORMATION

## IWU LOGIN

IWU has an electronic portal through which all IWU communication is managed. It is called My.IWU ([my.iwu.edu](http://my.iwu.edu)). Your My.IWU login name and password were sent to you in an email. You will use this to register for housing. All faculty and staff at IWU will only use your IWU email to communicate with you both before and after you arrive. **PLEASE CHECK EMAIL DAILY!**



Your login name will be the same as your email name, which you will use throughout your time here at IWU and beyond. Staff from IWU's Information Technology Services (ITS) Office will help familiarize you with the My.IWU system at the beginning of Pre-Orientation.

## STUDENT ID NUMBER

Your student ID number is a 9 digit number that begins with a 900. This number will appear on your IWU student ID card, will be used to identify you in various on-campus computer systems, and will be used only for IWU purposes and health insurance.

## REGISTRATION AND ACADEMIC COURSE LOAD

All first year students meet with their academic advisor and register for classes during virtual [Rising Titan](#). Students will register for 4 courses each semester, on average, in order to graduate in 4 years. **Further, your student visa requires that must be enrolled full-time at all times, which is a minimum of 3 units.** Some students request to take more courses in order to graduate early. Students who have a 3.25 grade point average are able to over-load beginning their sophomore year. There is much more that you need to learn about coursework, grading, and academic requirements, but we will cover those topics when you arrive.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE CREDIT

IWU requires each student to have proficiency in a foreign language. If you submitted an English language proficiency exam or report for admission, then it is assumed that English is your second language and you are exempt from foreign language requirements. You will need to discuss this matter with your academic advisor in detail.

## MAY TERM

May Term is an optional short academic period at the end of the spring session during which students can take one class for 3 hours a day, five days a week, for 3 weeks.

## **U.S. TEACHING STYLES AND ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

Some international students come from an academic culture that is lecture-based with students in attendance acting as sponges to soak in and accept whatever material is presented. There is often little discussion. The US educational system differs greatly from this, with professors often challenging students to take a perspective opposite from theirs for practice in critical thinking.

The US system encourages students to learn by questioning and arguing. Learning to develop and articulate your own position on an issue may be challenging and awkward at first, but the rewards and growth from such experiences will make you a better student.

Most classes at IWU are conducted in a traditional lecture format; however, you will see a number of different teaching styles. You will work in small groups, make individual presentations, and you may have class outside on nice days. Professors want you to ask questions about what is new and not clear to you.

## **PROFESSORS' EXPECTATIONS**

Faculty expect students to attend class and arrive promptly. Generally the use of phones during class is not allowed. While some material may require memorization, typically faculty want students to understand the material, and often, to have formed an opinion about it. Class discussion is common, and a portion of one's grade may even be dependent on it.

## **ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY**

First-year college students often have difficulty just getting organized. You may find you have difficulty keeping up with reading, writing, or taking exams, or simply with managing your time, especially since English may not be your first language. Translation fatigue is a common complaint first semester from international students. If you are having difficulty, you should contact your academic advisor and talk with staff in the International Office. There are a numbers of strategies and resources within our campus community to assist you.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Using someone else's words, ideas, or research without citing their work is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious act of dishonesty that will not be tolerated at IWU or any other US college. Plagiarism, even if it is unintentional, can result in expulsion from the University. We strongly advise that you use the Writing Center staff to assist you by reviewing the papers you write for class. The consequences for plagiarism (even if it was unintentional) are very serious. Thus, this will be discussed further during Pre-Orientation.

# 7. CAMPUS SAFETY

**WE LIVE IN A COMMUNITY THAT IS SAFE AND HAS A RELATIVELY LOW CRIME RATE. HOWEVER, IT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP SAFE HABITS.**

**FOLLOWING IS A LIST TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU IN YOUR NEW ENVIRONMENT:**

- *Always lock your door.*
- *Do not give your room key to others.*
- *Do not prop open locked doors leading into a residence hall.*
- *Report suspicious activity to your Residence Hall desk or to a campus authority.*
- *Memorize your bank PIN and social security numbers and keep these confidential.*
- *Do not keep items of great personal or monetary value in your residence hall room.*
- *Keep your credit cards secured.*
- *Report theft immediately.*
- *Utilize the Blue Security Lights on the quad if necessary.*
- *Do not carry large amounts of cash at any time.*
- *Do not walk alone at night.*



**PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
PRE-ORIENTATION 2022**

# 8. CAMPUS RESOURCES

## ARNOLD HEALTH SERVICES

IWU has an excellent health center, Arnold Health Services. The services of the health center are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including your parents, without your permission.

## COUNSELING AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

The counseling staff is friendly, warm, and is available to assist with a variety of needs, from managing stress or dealing with family problems to addressing eating disorders or substance abuse issues. United States Federal Law requires counselors keep their contact with students confidential. Counseling staff do not inform parents, faculty, staff or friends about a student's counseling. Americans view counseling as positive and supportive, not shameful.

## THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center in The Ames Library is available for those students who need or would like assistance with writing. Most international and many American students at IWU take advantage of the assistance offered by the Writing Center; indeed, some faculty members require that all of their students visit the center while working on an assignment. You may be a good writer, but you may not be familiar with US or college-level expectations. To help students for whom English was not the first language, IWU offers English as a Second Language assistance through the Writing Center.

## THE LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER

The Language Resource Center (LRC) in the Center for Liberal Arts offers tutoring and conversation partners for students studying a second language and for international students who want to practice their conversational skills. While these services are offered for an academic purpose, many students visit the LRC to spend time with others who are interested in languages and different cultures. It's a great place to connect with other students!

## COMPUTER LABS

There are a number of computer labs on campus. You may use any of these labs to check email, conduct research, write your papers, and do other work. The IWU Technology Trainer will meet with you during orientation so that you become completely comfortable with the computer technology available to you and ready to begin your classes with confidence.

# 9. STAYING HEALTHY

## IMMUNIZATIONS

You must complete the [Medical History Form](#) and email this to [healthservices@iwu.edu](mailto:healthservices@iwu.edu) by July 31.. **All students are required by law to have a tuberculosis (TB) Vaccine after their arrival in the United States.** Most of the cost will be covered by your student insurance.



**IF YOU DO NOT SEND PROOF OF IMMUNIZATIONS YOU HAVE HAD YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO GET ALL OF THEM UPON YOUR ARRIVAL.**

## HEALTH, ILLNESS

Nearly every college student is ill at some point in time during their college career. It is important to seek medical care before you spread anything infectious and/or before you miss too many classes and your grades start to suffer. The services of the Arnold Health Center are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including your parents, faculty or staff.

## U.S. HEALTHCARE

While many people in countries across the world go to a hospital when they are sick, health care is delivered differently in the U.S. People in American seek help for illnesses, rashes, disease, from a doctor in a doctor's office. Doctor's are licensed and their medical practices are safe and of excellent quality. Americans ONLY go to the hospital for serious, life-threatening illness. Some clinics have "walk-in" hours when an appointment isn't available.

If you are facing a life-threatening illness or injury, you should seek attention at a hospital Emergency Room. Carle BroMenn Hospital is located just 2 blocks north of IWU and is open 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Be aware that **emergency care is expensive**, so if you can wait until the Arnold Health Center staff is available, you may wish to wait to see them. As stated earlier, in the U.S. it is more common for people to go to the doctor when they become sick, not the hospital.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Healthcare in America is very expensive. In the United States, the government does not pay for health care, which means ***you must pay for health care each time you need it.*** To assist in covering this cost, international students are required to have health insurance. This insurance pays for much, but not all, of your bill for the use of a medical facility, a doctor's visit, any medical test, or any prescribed medicine you might need.

You will receive your insurance card soon after classes begin. You will need to show this insurance card whenever you go to the doctor. You will be covered by the insurance over the summer when school is not in session IF you are in the US. We will discuss insurance and seeking healthcare in greater detail upon your arrival. A complete explanation of what this insurance plan does and does not cover can be found on the IWU website [www.iwu.edu/healthinsurance](http://www.iwu.edu/healthinsurance).

## MENTAL HEALTH

Moving out on your own can be an exciting and unsettling time. Learning to deal both with American culture, living independently and adapting to college life can be confusing and stressful. It is very common for students to talk to a counselor from the IWU Counseling and Consultation Services to get support and to get help dealing with the stress. The counseling staff is warm and friendly. Students, American and international, find these confidential services to be very helpful. Americans view counseling as an excellent source of support and assistance when they're stressed.



# 10. CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Adjusting to a new culture, a new educational level, people, food, and routines can be very difficult, and at times overwhelming. This is the case for nearly all international students, and many American students too. There are many people on campus available to assist you with any difficulties you might experience in adjusting to American routines.

It is helpful to keep in mind at all times that a period of adjustment happens for everyone, not just people entering the United States, not just college students, and not just students who leave their home country. In fact, many people find cultural adjustment difficult when moving to a different region within their home country. Much has been written about the symptoms of, stages in, and reactions to culture shock and adjustment. Here is a synopsis compiled from many sources. We hope you will find it helpful.

## THE STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK

**The First Stage—Euphoria, Often Called “The Honeymoon Stage”.** Characterized by feelings of excitement and anticipation, people in this stage are generally happy with the newness of their new surroundings and are fascinated with the people and activities around them, much like tourists are when they encounter a new place.

**The Second Stage—Often called a “Hostility Stage”.** At this stage, people in this stage may experience difficulty in dealing with what would seem to be a simple task if at home, such as operating laundry equipment. By now, a person may have experienced difficulties with local language or may have a sense of being uprooted or feeling overwhelmed. This stage is sometimes marked by mistrust of Americans, lack of appetite, staying in one’s room, being over-critical of the new culture, and an overvaluing of one’s own culture.

**The Third Stage—A Recovery Stage.**

In this stage, one is now adjusting and starting to feel comfortable. This state is characterized by having made friends, knowing the language better, and having the ability to laugh at one’s own struggles with cultural dilemmas.

**The Autonomy Stage—Biculturalism.**

People in this stage report that they feel at home in the United States, yet are able to retain their allegiance to their home culture. One may have an understanding of what is important to Americans, though may not hold the same values. At this point, a person may be better able to assess one’s own home country’s culture more objectively and be ready to assist others who are new to American culture.



## STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

There are many things a person can do to help get through the difficulties associated with changing cultures. Here are some suggestions:

- Find someone who speaks your native language.
- Get extra sleep.
- Exercise (it really helps, even taking walks!).
- View adapting to American culture as a learning experience and take on one aspect of culture at a time—food, music, local language, TV, body language, etc. The more you know, the less threatening it will seem.
- Talk to older students who have been through this experience.
- Call your family now and then for a little encouragement.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Try to focus on those activities that you like about your new culture.
- Find a club, social group, or church that you may have something in common with.

### ***EXPERIENCING AND WORKING THROUGH CULTURE SHOCK CAN ACTUALLY BE VERY BENEFICIAL!***



***PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
MOVE-IN DAY 2022***

# 11. AMERICAN LIFE

It's best to avoid broad generalizations about a country or culture; but in an effort to help you understand Americans better, we offer this guide to the common behaviors, values, and communication styles that some of the international students find to be very different and, as they say, "very American."

## **Pace of Life/Sense of Time**

From the outset, you will notice that Americans seem to be always in a hurry. To Americans, time is precious, should be well-managed, and is not to be wasted. With this in mind, you are expected to manage your time wisely, be on-time for appointments, and to "get down to business" quickly. In many cultures, there is a warm-up period for business—a time in which both parties find trust in one another before proceeding cautiously into business negotiations. In some cultures, this process often takes several meetings before business matters are discussed. This is not the case in the United States.

## **"Doing" vs. "Being"**

Americans are task-centered and place great value in being active. When Americans gather in their spare time, it is generally for a defined purpose. They rarely gather just to be together. We see, though, that International students and some of their American friends on the IWU campus are able to get past this. They can separate the American "purpose-driven" lifestyle of a college campus from idle time spent just being together. You may find that Americans get bored easily if they are not actively engaging in something they deem purposeful.

## **Individualism**

In many cultures, who one is as a person is not nearly as important as what group they are a part of. Not so in America. Americans believe in individualism—in one's right to freedom of thought and action, and this autonomy is seen as a positive thing. However, individualism is balanced by the responsibility required to manage the consequences and to be individually accountable.

## **Privacy and Space**

Most Americans are interested in having at least a small space that is theirs alone. It would be best not to use items that belong to someone else without asking.



### **Development of Friendships**

In general, many Americans are friendly and may engage in conversation while waiting in a line at the grocery, in a class, at a party, etc. This does not necessarily indicate the beginning of a friendship. Many students are open to the idea of developing a large circle of casual friends. As time goes on, they develop a smaller group of intimate friends, but will still maintain friendships with the large group. These friendships change and evolve over time, some remaining and deepening, while others may fade.

### **Local Language/Slang**

Every language has its own slang. American local language takes time to understand especially casual phrases, lingo, and idioms. Some of the terms you will hear are common mostly to the college student population and others are more of a nickname for places, ideas, and local culture. It is okay to ask a new friend to explain the meaning of something that was said.



## **Direct Communication**

Perhaps in tandem with the idea of individualism is the practice of direct communication. In many cultures, ideas are more implied than expressed and more suggested than directly stated. Direct communication is viewed by many Americans as more truthful and positive than implied, indirect communication.

## **Problem Solving and Self-Determination**

Many cultures accept some problems as unsolvable and are willing to accept things as they are, as the result of fate. Many Americans, however, refuse to believe that a problem does not have a solution; they believe in self-determination, that one has control over one's own life. This takes some getting used to. You will find that rather than accept what comes their way, many Americans will try to take control of the situation. In many cultures, tradition serves as the guide for the future; for many Americans, it is personal preference or desired outcomes that guide them.

## **Pragmatism**

Americans tend to value those things and ideas that connect theory with practice. You will often hear frustrated students ask, "How is this going to help me in the real world?" In contrast, many new international students sit ready to accept everything a professor says as fact, believing that there is only one logical answer to a question and that answer is what the professor is presenting.



## **Materialism/Consumerism**

People new to the United States are often shocked and overwhelmed by the amount of stuff Americans have. In America, the acquisition of goods is seen to be the natural reward for hard work, and so possessions are often seen as a marker of success. Understanding this set of values may take some getting used to.

## **Shopping**

It is easy to get carried away by the materialism of American culture, but you should be very careful about your expenses, especially in your first months on campus. One important difference about shopping in the United States compared with shopping in many other countries is that prices in US stores are fixed. A shopper does not bargain for a lower price with the store employee. Also, a tax is added on to the cost of items at the register: this means that though the price tag may indicate that something costs \$1.00, the actual price you will pay will be higher. Sales tax differs depending on the city in which you are buying an item. For example, the sales tax in Chicago is higher than it is in Bloomington-Normal. Also, food is taxed at a different rate than non-food items. Finally, most stores operate on a self-serve basis, which means you are responsible for collecting the items yourself. When you buy something, it is advisable to keep the receipt you get when you pay for the item. You will need the receipt if the item is defective or if you want to return it for some reason.



# 12. COMMON COURTESIES IN THE UNITED STATES

**Most international students try to find a way to adjust to general courtesies expected in the United States.**

**Following is a list that will help you get started.**

## **Appointments/Timeliness**

You are expected to arrive to class a few minute before class begins. Do not be late. Given America's high regard for "time is money," appointments, work schedules, meetings, classes, performances, programs, etc. begin at the time indicated. Arriving late is considered disrespectful to the person with whom you are meeting. Further, many times your appointment is one of many, so arriving late may mean you won't get the attention you were expecting. In regard to keeping appointments with the nurse, your professor, or anyone else, it is appropriate to arrive 5 minutes early. If you are going to be more than 5 minutes late, you should call the individual you are planning to meet and explain your lateness. Chronic lateness is not tolerated at work, class, or anywhere else.

## **Holding the Elevator**

Similar to holding a door, it is polite to look for others as you enter an elevator to see if others are going up or down. If you are near the panel, you might ask what floor they are seeking and press their floor button.

## **Greetings and Conversation**

Americans greet each other with a smile, nod, or "Hi, how are you?" This is merely a long way to say "hello" not a genuine question of one's well-being. The typical response is "Fine, how are you?" Typically questions and conversations about one's specific grades, personal income, faith, politics, sexual orientation, gender identity are considered personal and generally only occur between close friends.

## **Eating Culture and Etiquette**

In general, Americans eat quietly with their mouths closed. Burping is seen as rude, not as a compliment to the cook. Americans like sweets and their food portions are very large by comparison to portions in other countries. Generally, Americans have a more casual form of hospitality.

While Americans socialize around food, the focus is on eating the meal. It is unlikely to find people taking more than 20 minutes to finish a meal. Most Americans eat three times a day. Cold cereal with milk is common. However, toast, fruit, bagels, yogurt, and eggs are common breakfast options too. People in U.S. usually eat a light lunch and typically eat it “on-the-go”. Lunch possibilities include soup, sandwiches, or a salad. This is normally eaten between 12 and 2pm. The evening meal is the largest of the three meals and is typically eaten between 5:30 pm and 7:00pm. This meal is called “supper” or “dinner”. Common meals include meat or fish and vegetables, pasta, or pizza.

When eating in restaurants people order individually and often pay for their own meal. Customers at restaurants are expected to leave 20% of the cost of the meal as a tip to the server. Restaurant servers get paid very little, and expect to be tipped for their service to the customer.



**PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
PRE-ORIENTATION, SUMMER 2018**

# 13. LIFE AT IWU

## **Life in the Residence Halls**

Students are required to live in a residence hall through their third (junior) year, unless they choose to move to a fraternity or sorority house during the second year. Our halls vary greatly in size and operation. You will make friends anywhere you are placed. All residence halls have the same basic services. Our halls are co-ed, with men and women living in the same building, though live on different floors. You will get to know the other people on your floor quite well. Each floor has a Resident Assistant (or "RA"). RAs are very helpful and look forward to assisting the residents. Our halls are secured with locked doors 24 hours per day. Use your ID card to swipe into your building. You will have a key to your specific room.

## **Hall Bathrooms**

Each floor of each residence hall has 1 or 2 bathrooms that are shared by the residents of that floor. There are several private toilet stalls and several private shower stalls. There are no communal bathing facilities. You are expected to wear shower shoes (flip-flops) in the bathroom and in the shower to reduce the spread of foot-borne bacteria. It's important to sit on the toilet, not squat. Squatting on a sitting-type toilet will damage it. People who are accustomed to squatting on a toilet are well-advised to learn to sit on the toilets used in the United States.

Two points about toilet etiquette:

(1) Flush the toilet after each use; (2) Men should raise the toilet seat before urinating into the toilet so they do not splash urine on the seat then put the seat down when finished.





### **Laundry Facilities**

You will be responsible for doing your own laundry. Each residence hall has washing machines and dryers that are free of charge.

### **IWU Code of Conduct**

The residence halls have a very structured set of rules that are explained by the residence hall staff and are also available in the [IWU Student Handbook](#) students receive during Turning Titan Orientation. In the U.S. only people 21 years of age or older may possess and/or consume alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is not permitted in any first year residence hall. There are kitchens on each floor of a residence hall available for students use.

# 14. GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR ROOMMATE

## **Get to know your roommate.**

Before school starts, spend time together to learn about each other's hometown, friends and family. Knowing a bit of your roommate's background will help you understand them and hopefully get your living situation started off on the right foot. You don't have to be best friends, but showing mutual respect will make for better living conditions.

## **Establish boundaries.**

Topics such as quiet/study time, having guests in your room, cleanliness, borrowing clothes, and bed time are all subjects that should be clearly communicated to one another.

Differences in living habits and preferences are natural. It's important to discuss and compromise on how to handle those differences. Remember, your roommate isn't used to living in shared space either!

## **Learn to communicate.**

Be clear with your message and be a good listener. Talking directly with your roommate is always best! Approach your roommate in private, when you have time to hold a meaningful conversation, and be clear about what is bothering you.

## **Consider alternate ways to solve conflict.**

While texting or e-mailing your roommate is not ideal, it will allow you to write down your concerns and edit the message before sending it. For those who get stressed out over conflict, this may be a good solution. If you and your roommate cannot find a compromise to your issues, RA's can be very helpful! They are trained to deal with such situations and can usually help find reasonable solutions.

## **Make other friends.**

Forming other friendships is essential in having a good college experience. To expand your circle of friends, consider joining a fraternity/sorority, get a job on campus, join clubs/organizations, and attend college functions. Don't stress, stay flexible, accept your roommate for who they are, and learn to let the small things go. Consider all of the positives that come with having a roommate. Although you may be opposites, your strengths and weaknesses may complement each other. Who knows, in the meantime, you may have just found your best friend for life!



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# 15. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

## **Greek Life**

“Greek life” refers to fraternities (for men) or sororities (for women) on campus. About 1/5 of the IWU students join fraternities and sororities, organized social groups. There is a fee, and students live in a sorority or fraternity house during part of their time at IWU.

## **Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Relationships**

IWU’s campus, faculty and staff welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students. One residence hall has a "Rainbow" floor specifically for LGBTQ+ students and allies who want to live in a community. In many countries gay or bi-sexual people are still viewed negatively, so seeing male and female couples may be very new for you. The U.S. provides many legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community. IWU recognizes, welcomes, and supports students of all sexual orientations. There are many helpful resources on campus for students and we can assist in getting whatever support and advice is requested.

## **Dress Code**

People on campus dress quite casually. In warm weather, young men generally wear baggy denim or khaki shorts with t-shirts or polo shirts, and young women wear shorts or skirts with short-sleeved shirts. In cooler weather, most students wear long pants, leggings or jeans with t-shirts and dress in layers, both because it is the current fashion and because the temperature varies. You may wear whatever you are comfortable in, and if you choose you may wear your traditional clothing from home. Most students choose not to do this on a regular basis, but you should feel free to do so—especially if you wish to celebrate a holiday from your home country. People may ask you about your traditional clothing, but it’s a great way to start a conversation and teach others about your culture.



## **Staying Healthy and Strong**

IWU students have access to the Shirk Center, IWU's athletic facility. We suggest going to the Shirk Center at the beginning of the year when all of the students are exploring the campus and feel free to invite others to go with you!

## **Spend time elsewhere on campus**

Find the place best suited to your study habits. This will probably not be in your room. Spend some quiet time in the Office of Multifaith Engagement. It is open to people of all faiths and offers a nice place to think and reflect. Roommate difficulties, which are not uncommon, are best handled as they happen. Start with a habit of open communication—this is the best policy.

## **Cleanliness**

Most Americans value personal cleanliness. They shower at least once daily—generally in the morning—and oftentimes more if they perspire in sports or if it is a hot day. You will be expected to have clean, shampooed hair, to wear clean clothes, and to brush your teeth daily. Empty your trash regularly; wash your clothes after you have worn them, don't wear dirty or sweaty clothing most Americans wash clothes after having worn them for a day; if you have a refrigerator, keep it clean.



**PHOTO: ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY RSO FAIR, FALL 2019**

## **International Student Organization (ISO)**

ISO is a cultural organization that aims to celebrate and promote diversity within the international student community. ISO organizes social and informative events that highlight the different cultures the International community brings to campus. ISO meets every other week and everyone is welcomed. Follow ISO on Instagram!

## **Intramural Sports**

The University sponsors sports in which you play other IWU students only. These are called intramural sports. Generally, a group of people who know each other from their residence hall floor will make a team and play other teams on campus. There are a number of opportunities including:

**Softball \* Floor hockey \* Basketball \* Badminton \* Volleyball \* Soccer**

## **Intervarsity Sports**

Intervarsity (or intercollegiate) sports are a much more regulated activity as they involve playing against other colleges. Anyone interested in trying out for an intervarsity sport can talk to the Athletic Office or the coach to learn more about it!



# 16. KEYS TO MAINTAINING YOUR NON-IMMIGRATION STATUS

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW CERTAIN RULES PERTAINING TO YOUR F-1 OR J-1 NON-IMMIGRANT STATUS. HERE IS A LIST OF THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP MAINTAIN YOUR STATUS:**

- Do not let your passport or I-20/DS-2019 expire. Look for the expiration date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019. If you cannot complete your studies by that date, you must request an extension of your document through the International Office. Contact your home country consulate or embassy for information on extending the validity of your passport.
- Register for a full course of study. You should register for 4 units in the fall and spring semesters.
- Do not work without authorization. Off-campus employment is a violation of your visa except under certain circumstances and with prior approval by the International Office.
- Work no more than a total of 20 hours/week during the fall and spring semesters. You may, however, work up to 40 hours/week on-campus during breaks and when school is not in session.
  - Student on J-1 visas must first receive authorization from the International Office before starting any employment.
- Notify the International Office if you move. Do this within 10 days of your move, as it must be reported to the US Department of Homeland Security. Notify the International Office each time you move.

# 17. EMPLOYMENT

## **Social Security Number**

To work in the US you must obtain a social security number. You are eligible to apply for a social security number after you have been in the US for 10 days and when you have an offer of employment to apply for a number. The International Office will assist you in this process. *You must keep your social security number confidential.*

This is your identity number in the US. There are fraud schemes designed to obtain people's social security numbers for profit (called identity theft), so it is important to keep this information safe. Your social security number will stay the same for the rest of your life: do not ever apply for second number.

Both F-1 students and J-1 students may be employed in the United States with certain restrictions. Students on an F-1 visa may be employed on campus for up to, but no more than, 20 hours/week. You may have been offered a campus job (called "work-study") as part of your financial aid package, which are for 8 hours per week. It is recommended that new students only work 8 hours/week to give them time to adjust to the academic demands, college life, and culture.

During winter, spring, and summer breaks students are allowed to work on-campus up to, but no more than, 40 hours/week.

## **FINDING ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT**

- Check your myiwu homepage and [Financial Aid Office](#) to find out where jobs are available.
- Follow the application instructions listed for each job.
- You may be offered a job, or the office may call or email you. When applying, ask when you can check back about the job. Be sure to leave your email so they can contact you.

If you are offered a job, you can ONLY begin working AFTER you apply for a social security card. The International Office will help you with this.

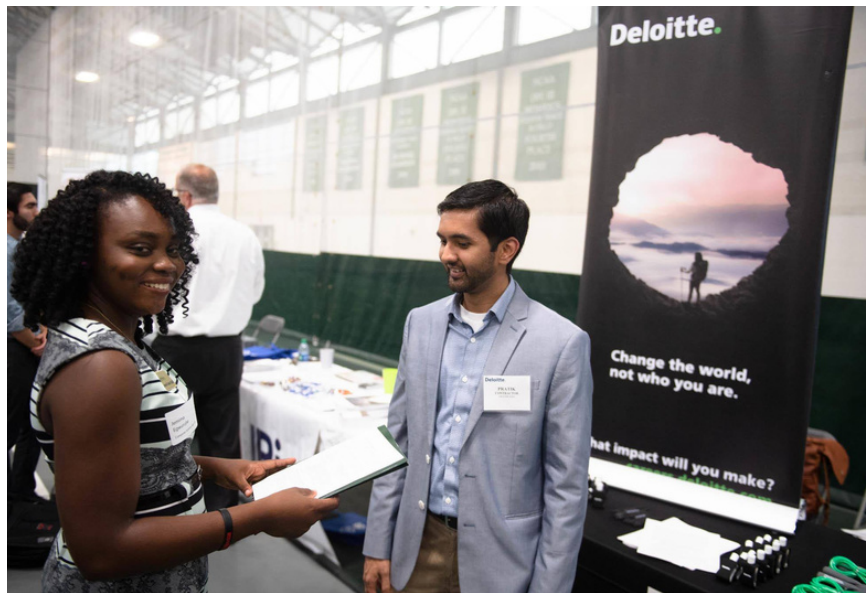
## **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Curricular practical training (CPT) is a paid or unpaid off-campus employment that is directly related to your field of study and is an integral part of your degree program. You must have been enrolled for one full academic year to be eligible for CPT employment. Participating in CPT requires approval of the International Office.



## **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Optional practical training (OPT) is a paid or unpaid off-campus employment that is directly related to your major, that occurs during or after the completion of studies, and that is appropriate for the level of study you are completing. OPT can be for up to 20 hours/week while classes are in session or full- or part-time during semester vacations and after you have completed all coursework for a degree. The total period of employment on OPT may not exceed 12 months. International students at IWU apply for post-completion OPT to be authorized to work in the U.S. after graduation. OPT is available to students who have been enrolled at this school in the same degree program for one academic year or more. Participation in OPT requires approval of the International Office and the US Government. Obtaining approval from the US Government can take 3 months or more, so you should see the International Office at the beginning of your last semester. See the International Office for more information.



**WORKING OFF CAMPUS, PAID OR UNPAID, WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORIZATION IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF YOUR STUDENT VISA!**

### **Income Tax**

- Income on wages earned in the United States is taxed. Some taxes will be taken out of your wages before you are given a paycheck; however, all students who earn money must file income tax statements on or before April 15 of each year. The International Office partners with Sprintax, an online tax filing service specifically designed for nonresidents.

# 18. LEGAL ISSUES

## **US, State, and Local Laws**

All students must follow the laws of the United States, the State of Illinois, and the Bloomington-Normal community. Police in our community are not to be feared: their motto is “to serve and protect.” While they are here to enforce the laws, their general role is to guarantee public safety.

When dealing with our community police, do not lie to them. Lying to a police officer is a felony offence called obstruction of justice. It may happen that you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, but you will be in bigger trouble if you lie about your name, your age, or some other matter.

Any involvement with the police must be reported to the International Office immediately. We can help you find legal resources

## **Illegal Drugs**

It is impractical to list all of the drugs and substances that are illegal in the United States, but you must know that the possession of illegal drugs is a serious crime in the United States. If you are arrested and convicted, you will face jail time and possibly immediate deportation.

## **Driving**

Generally, you must be 16 years of age or older to drive in the United States as long as you have a valid US driver's license. Many international students are interested in obtaining a US driver's license. The International Office has information on that process.

# 19. TRAVELING

As you travel throughout our community, the United States, and the world, it is necessary that you keep identification on you in the event that you are asked by our government officials to show identification.

## State ID Card

We recommend that every student obtain a State of Illinois identification card. If you have a state ID, you will not have to carry your original passport with you very often: the card is a recognized form of identification that can be used for shopping, getting train tickets, etc.

## Local and International Travel

Within the Bloomington–Normal community, you should not need to carry anything other than your IWU student ID card and your state ID. Keep your other original documents together in a secure place in your room.

## TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF ILLINOIS OR THE U.S.

**You must always carry your original documents with you when you travel outside of Illinois or if you travel internationally. Keep your copies of your passport, visa, I-20/DS-2019 and I-94 card in your room or in some other safe place in case the originals are lost or stolen. KEEP ALL I-20/DS-2019s, even if you're given a new one. You will need every I-20/DS-2019 in the future.**



## **Campus Options During Winter Break**

We suggest that you make plans to be somewhere other than the IWU campus over the Winter Break. While the residence halls are open, there is no food service. We suggest visiting friends and family in other parts of the United States at this time. You should start thinking now about what plans you will make for the Winter Break.



***PHOTO: ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, PRESSER HALL***

# APPENDIX I:

## APPLYING FOR A NON-IMMIGRANT (F-1 OR J-1) VISA

### **1. Ties to Your Home Country**

Under US law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. Ties to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: examples include job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, and investments. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in your home country.

Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter which can guarantee visa issuance. If you have applied for the US Green Card Lottery, you may be asked if you are intending to immigrate. A simple answer would be that you applied for the lottery since it was available but not with a specific intent to immigrate. If you overstayed your authorized stay in the United States previously, be prepared to explain what happened clearly and concisely, with documentation, if available.

### **2. English**

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do not prepare speeches.

### **3. Speak for Yourself**

Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview: the consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor and need your parents there is case there are questions, for example about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.

### **4. Know the Academic Program and How It Fits Your Career Plans**

If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career when you return home.

## **5. Additional Documentation**

It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you are lucky.

## **6. Not All Countries Are Equal**

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States or asked for more verification that they have enough money to pay for college in the US.

## **7. Studying comes first, not Employment**

Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies you must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program.

## **8. Dependents Remaining at Home**

If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

## **9. Maintain a Positive Attitude**

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

# APPENDIX II:

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2023-2024

### FALL SEMESTER 2023

#### **Transfer Rising Titan**

June 8, Thursday (in person)

#### **Rising Titan Orientation & Registration (for first-year students & parents)**

June 12, Monday (in person)

June 15, Thursday (virtual)\*

June 19, Monday (in person)

June 22, Thursday (in person)

#### **Rising Titan Orientation & Registration (for first-year students & parents)**

July 27, Thursday (in person)

#### **Transfer Rising Titan Student Orientation**

Thursday, August 3 (virtual)

#### **International Student Move-In Day\***

August 15, Tuesday

#### **International Student Pre-Orientation\***

August 17, Thursday thru August 21, Monday

#### **IMPACT Student Orientation**

August 20, Sunday thru August 22, Tuesday

#### **Turning Titan (New Student Orientation)\***

August 23, Wednesday thru August 27, Sunday

#### **Returning Students Arrive**

August 26, Saturday and August 27, Sunday

#### **First day of classes\***

August 28, Monday

#### **Last day to add or drop a full semester and 1st 7 week class**

September 1, Friday

#### **Labor Day (NO CLASSES)**

September 4, Monday

#### **President's Convocation**

September 6, Wednesday

#### **Last day to withdraw from a 1st 7 week class**

September 18, Monday

#### **Family Weekend/Homecoming**

October 6, Friday thru October 8, Sunday

#### **Mid-semester grades due**

October 13, Friday

#### **Fall Break Day**

October 20, Friday

#### **Last day to add or drop a 2nd 7 week class**

October 23, Monday

#### **Academic Advising for Spring and May Term**

October 25, Wednesday thru November 3, Friday

\*All incoming International Students are required to attend noted dates.

## **FALL SEMESTER 2023 (Continued)**

### **Last day to withdraw from a full semester class**

November 3, Friday

### **Last day to withdraw from a 2nd 7 week class**

November 6, Monday

### **Class Registration for Spring**

November 6, Monday thru November 15, Wednesday

### **Class Registration for May Term**

November 20, Monday

### **Thanksgiving Recess**

November 21, Tuesday (6:00 p.m.) thru November 27, Monday (8:00 a.m.)

### **Last day of classes**

December 8, Friday

### **Reading Day (NO CLASSES)**

December 11, Monday

### **Final Examinations**

December 12, Tuesday (8:00 a.m.) thru December 15, Friday (3:15 p.m.)

### **Final grades due**

December 21, Thursday (12:00 p.m.)

## **SPRING SEMESTER 2024**

### **Orientation and registration of new students**

January 8, Monday

### **First day of class**

January 10, Wednesday

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (NO CLASSES – University Open)**

January 15, Monday

### **Last day to add or drop a full semester or 1st 7 week class**

January 17, Wednesday

### **Founders' Day Convocation (11:00 a.m.)**

January 17, Wednesday

### **Mid-semester grades due**

February 23, Friday

### **Last day to add or drop a 2nd 7 week class**

March 1, Friday

### **Spring Recess**

March 8, Friday (5:00 p.m.) thru March 18, Monday (8:00 a.m.)

### **Last day to withdraw from a full semester class or 2nd 7 week class**

March 22, Friday



## SPRING SEMESTER 2024 (Continued)

### **Academic Advising for Fall**

March 20, Wednesday thru March 29, Friday

### **Class Registration for Fall**

April 3, Wednesday thru April 10, Wednesday

### **Student Research Conference**

April 13, Saturday

### **Kemp Foundation's Teaching Excellence Award Ceremony**

April 17, Wednesday

### **Last day of classes**

April 24, Wednesday

### **Reading Day (NO CLASSES)**

April 25, Thursday

### **Final examinations**

April 26, Friday (8:00 a.m.) thru April 30, Tuesday (5:30 p.m.)

### **Final grades due for seniors, graduate candidates**

May 1, Wednesday (12:00 p.m.)

### **COMMENCEMENT 2024**

May 5, Sunday (1:00 p.m.)

### **All other final grades due**

May 7, Tuesday (12:00 p.m.)

## MAY TERM 2024

### **First day of classes, Last day to add or drop a class**

May 8, Wednesday

### **Last day to withdraw from a class**

May 10, Friday

### **Final Examinations**

May 31, Friday

### **Final May Term grades due**

June 4, Tuesday (12:00 p.m.)

## JUNE SUMMER SESSION 2024

### **First day of classes, Last day to add or drop a class**

June 3, Monday

### **Last day to withdraw from a class**

June 5, Wednesday

### **Final Examinations**

June 27, Thursday

### **Final June Summer Session grades due**

July 1, Monday (12:00 p.m.)

## JULY SUMMER SESSION 2024

### **First day of classes, Last day to add or drop a class**

July 1, Monday

### **Last day to withdraw from a class**

July 3, Wednesday

### **Final Examinations**

July 30, Tuesday

### **Final July Summer Session grades due**

August 1, Thursday (12:00 p.m.)

## JUNE & JULY SUMMER SESSION 2024

(7 weeks)

### **First day of classes**

June 3, Monday

### **Last day to add or drop a class**

June 6, Thursday

### **Last day to withdraw from a class**

July 3, Wednesday

### **Final Examinations**

July 22, Monday thru July 23, Tuesday

### **Final July Summer Session grades due**

July 29, Monday (12:00 p.m.)

## SUMMER INTERNSHIP SESSION 2024

### **First day of classes**

June 3, Monday

### **Last day to add or drop a class**

June 7, Friday

### **Last day to withdraw from a class**

July 15, Monday

### **Summer Internship Session Ends**

August 23, Friday

### **Final Summer Internship grades due**

August 30, Friday (12:00 p.m.)



### **International Office**

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**IWU International Students Group**



**iwuinternationaloffice**