Welcome to UW-Madison

Guide for International Students

As a new student, we are sure you have many questions. We strongly encourage new students to watch our Guide for International Students iss.wisc.edu/tutorial/index.htm which includes valuable information on UW-Madison and life in the United States. The Guide for International Students will also better prepare you for the visa interview and help you plan for your arrival in the United States. The International Student Services website www.iss.wisc.edu is also a great place to find answers to all your questions about UW-Madison. Visit the Students link and check out all the information under Orientation/Spring Orientation and New Students/Pre-Arrival.

Congratulations on your admission to the prestigious UW-Madison! You will be studying at the same institution as famous alumni: cultural critic and author Bell Hooks, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, award winning author Joyce Carol Oates, and founding father of psychology Abraham Maslow, who devised the “hierarchy of needs” theory. You are joining an honorable institution and the ranks of many notable alumni who have studied here before you.

Our graduates become outstanding leaders who are engaged locally, nationally and globally. Grounded in the 100-year old Wisconsin Idea and our progressive history, our historical mission has evolved to create an expectation for students to apply in and out of classroom learning in ways that have significant and positive impacts on the world.

You will be a part of our culturally rich and diverse student body of almost 6,000 international students representing more than 100 different countries.

ISS offers a wide variety of services to international students. Beginning with ISS Orientations and International SOAR (Student Orientation Advising Registration) our staff provides visa information and programs for international students to foster international understanding on campus and in our community. We look forward to meeting you at orientation!

Friend, like, or follow ISS even before you get here!

Instagrammers: Take a selfie and introduce yourself to other new international Badgers! #GlobalBadger

Don’t be fooled. Wisconsin winters can be very cold! But as long as you are wearing lots of warm clothes, Wisconsin winters can be fun!
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ISS ORIENTATION...

As a new student, take advantage of all the orientation events that are planned for you. They are designed to help you learn more about your new school and the surrounding community, introduce you to important people, and highlight the abundance of resources available to you throughout your studies.

We suggest that you arrive in Madison, Wisconsin a minimum of 2-3 days prior to your orientation to be well rested for all the orientation activities.

STEP 1: SIGN-UP FOR ISS ORIENTATION

Sign-up to attend your ISS orientation and welcome events. Please sign-up by filling out this Google Form prior to your arrival. This form can also be found by visiting iss.wisc.edu.

STEP 2: CHECK IN WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES (ISS)

Students who have completed one degree at UW-Madison and are continuing their studies, or beginning a new degree program at UW-Madison on the same SEVIS record do not need to check-in or attend ISS orientation again.

All newly admitted students must check in with ISS between January 11 and January 15. Check-in will be open from 10am-4pm. (Red Gym, 716 Langdon St., Mezzanine A/B located on the second floor.)

Please bring:
1. Passport
2. I-20 or DS-2019
3. Local address
4. Emergency Contact

When you stop by, staff can scan your documents and go over the check-in procedures. Volunteers can tell you more about ISS, the upcoming orientation, welcome events, and answer your questions about Madison and campus life. Light refreshments will also be served in the ISS office. We look forward to meeting you!

STEP 3: ATTEND THE ISS ORIENTATION DESIGNED FOR YOU

INTENSIVE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) STUDENTS

Intensive ESL (English as a Second Language) students here only for language training will receive an ISS Orientation during class on Thursday, January 21, at 2:30pm in Helen C. White, Room 6191. However, your first step is to sign-up and check in with ISS. Precede with steps 1 & 2 above.

Please plan to attend this orientation if your I-20 states that you have been admitted for “Language Training.”

STAY CONNECTED TO FAMILY & FRIENDS

Call home often through CellularLD. CellularLD is a prepaid long distance provider that allows you to call home internationally through a cellular phone or landline anywhere in the US at very low prices. For more information visit http://www.iss.wisc.edu/resources/calling-card.
EXCHANGE & VISITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (VISP) ORIENTATION

New exchange and visiting international students enrolled for a short-term program will need to attend the Exchange & Visiting International Students Orientation. An ISS staff will present on your visa regulations.

Exchange & Visiting International Students Orientation is Thursday, January 14th, from 9am-4pm in Grainger Hall.
Please contact your exchange coordinator or VISP for details.

ALL UNDERGRADUATES, GRADUATE STUDENTS, & PROFESSIONALS

If you are a new graduate, professional, or undergraduate (freshmen & transfers) student beginning your degree program, you must attend the ISS Orientation on Friday, January 15th 10:30 am—12 pm in the Red Gym, Media Room. Please be sure to check in with ISS in prior to this orientation and get your original documents scanned. (See Step 1 above.)
Be sure to arrive early.

In addition to ISS Orientation, all new undergraduate students (freshmen & transfers) will need to attend SOAR. SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) is a one-day program with three dates to choose from: January 12 - January 14. For more information and to sign-up, see: www.newstudent.wisc.edu/soar/futureSOAR.php

STEP 4: ATTEND WELCOME EVENTS

New International Student Welcome Lunch
Friday, January 15th
Red Gym, On Wisconsin Room
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Join ISS as we celebrate the spring semester and welcome new students to campus. Come socialize and meet with other new and current students and International Student Services staff. Don’t miss out on this fun-filled opportunity to make new friends and start making connections, all while enjoying lunch before heading out on the ISS shopping trip! Remember to sign-up for ISS orientation and welcome events by filling out this Google Form.

ISS Shopping Trip
Friday, January 15th
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM
Bed Bath & Beyond and AT&T

Immediately following the ISS Welcome Lunch, there will be a free shuttle bus to Bed Bath & Beyond and AT&T near East Towne Mall. Bed Bath & Beyond is also next to Target. Exclusive discounts will be offered only during this event. The buses will leave and return to the Chazen Art Museum every 30-45 minutes.

Residence Hall Linens can be purchased in advance and shipped to your residence hall even before you arrive. For more information visit http://www.rhl.org/9md9-store.

Beautiful state capitol during winter. Photo by Prakhar Panwaria
The BRIDGE International Friendship Program pairs new exchange students, undergraduates, and visiting international students with U.S. students based on similar interests, personalities, and needs. BRIDGE provides new international students with a friend, a resource person and a cultural navigator to help throughout your semester in BRIDGE.

This high impact program requires commitment and participation throughout the semester. Therefore only selected individuals can participate. Applications are due Wednesday, January 20th by 11:59 p.m. Apply online and learn more about BRIDGE at iss.wisc.edu/bridge/.

JOIN BRIDGE: A FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

NEW STUDENTS CAN ONLY ENTER THE U.S. WITHIN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SEMESTER, JANUARY 19, 2016. PLEASE PLAN YOUR TRAVEL ACCORDINGLY.

Please review the information in the International Student Guide to help you plan your travel. The Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) government office under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has also provided a very informative step-by-step website http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/# to assist in your planning.

Visit the ISS website under New Students/Pre-Arrival for tips on Applying for Your Visa, Arriving in Madison, and to find out about Housing options. If you are unable to move in to your residence hall or rental unit, you may need to look for temporary accommodations during orientation. There are several hotels located near campus. You may visit the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau’s website www.visitmadison.com/hotels/ or do an internet search to find local accommodations.

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JOIN REACH: A CROSS-CULTURAL SPEAKERS PROGRAM

International Reach is volunteer program that places international speakers in schools, campus venues and community organizations for presentations, discussions and/or conversations. Learn more about the benefits of International Reach and consider coming to a Reach orientation.

THE MADISON FRIENDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (MFIS)

MFIS a non-profit volunteer group created to help international students adjust to life in Madison. The mission of MFIS is to connect Madison-area international university and college students, scholars, and any accompanying family with local residents to provide support and assistance as well as to foster cultural exchange, global goodwill, and friendships around the world.

Services include English Classes, Holiday Hospitality, and Furniture Loans. Please visit www.iss.wisc.edu/mfis/ for more information.

MCBURNEY DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

McBurney serves students with visual impairments, mobility impairments, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities, and more. Common services may include extended time on tests, note-taking, books in audio, braille, and large print format, and referrals for transportation assistance. Students with disabilities should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to request disability-related services and provide disability documentation. For more information, please visit McBurney’s website at www.mcburney.wisc.edu/howto.

Thanks for reading the first issue of the ISS Welcome Newsletter! We look forward to your arrival. Stay tuned, one more newsletter will be emailed to you in about two weeks. If you have questions in the meantime, email us at: iss@studentlife.wisc.edu