

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

PRE-ARRIVAL HANDBOOK



This document serves as a resource for incoming international students to the University of Iowa and was developed by the International Student Advisory Board.

This is a guide for students, by students.

✉ isab-ui@uiowa.edu → international.uiowa.edu/about/outreach/opportunities-ui-students/ISAB

f @isabiowa 📷 @isab_uiowa

IOWA

International Student
Advisory Board

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CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

It is with great delight that we welcome you to the University of Iowa. We are glad that despite the option(s) you had, you chose us. Your presence here will surely add to the richness of our international student community, and we look forward to welcoming you in person. We also want to recognize the efforts you put into the entire application process that got you to this point. You are here because you are one of the few that qualified for success into your choice program. Please take a moment to applaud yourself for this worthy feat as you prepare to commence the awesome journey as a Hawkeye.

As you prepare to make your way here, we thought that putting this document together will help ease your transition to Iowa. The entire team of students who collaborated to put this document together are open to providing additional support as you transition from your home country to the University of Iowa. In some of the sections of this document, you will find contact details and links to virtual (Zoom) appointments where you can seek specialized support in the form of questions, requests, or guidance, unique to you. We are hopeful that this document will not only add to the collection of support systems you have in place, but also stand out as a helpful resource that aids your transition to Iowa.

Again, we look forward to having you with us soon!

Best,

International Student Advisory Board (ISAB)



ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

In spring 2023, first-year master student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program, Stephen Ogunnubi, used his practicum hours in ISSS to work with a group of international students within and outside of the International Student Advisory Board to create the draft of this handbook.

The goal of this handbook is to provide a pool of helpful resources that will help international students make a smooth transition between their home country and Iowa City (the University of Iowa). While this handbook will still include some links to the general information on the university website as a starting point, the main focus of this handbook is on the experiences of international students using or accessing these resources. We thought the student experiences that are shared can provide more nuances on what transitioning to a new country/culture/institution looks like for international students. This information is solely a recommendation by a group of international graduate students and there is no intention to endorse or promote any business/services.

Last but not least, we would like to thank everyone who has put their time and energy in creating this handbook initially (all of them are international students): Stephen Ogunnubi, Ariadna Orbe Vivero, Fay Lin, Mengqi Chen, Nanle Gusen, Minchae Kim, and Manisha Skaria. In addition, we would also like to thank the International Student Advisory Board for agreeing to finish this pre-arrival handbook as well as maintaining the handbook. Members from 2022 – 2024 academic year contributing to this project include: Sylvia Tumusiime, Fascha Aryasa, Divija Sharma, Raaman Nair, Jeff Lai, Khyathi Gadag Venkataramana, Jay Patel, Ariadna Orbe Vivero, Lisa Nakahara, Minchae Kim, Fatou Ndow, Akash Choudhuri, Koushani Biswas, Kahyun “Gabby” Kang, Ayushi Sood, Srividya Grama Bhagavan, Monserrath Borja Bustamante, Nanle J Gusen, Ugochukwu Madu, Maria Eduarda Rodrigues Leite, Mubarak O Mojoyinola, Anqi Yu, Akalanka Ekanayake, Shijia “Katherine” Lyu, and Raghav Sharma. Thanks to the additional contributors outside of ISAB: Shri Vishalini Rajaram and Arinze Okoye.

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TERMINOLOGY & ACRONYMS

Some terminology and acronyms used in this document are unique to the University of Iowa and might be strange to new members of the community. Please refer to this list for clarification of terms and acronyms that do not sound familiar to you:

TERMS FOR PRE-ARRIVAL

- ISSS – International Student and Scholar Services
- CLAS – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- UHD – University Housing & Dining
- UCS – University Counseling Service
- ITS – Information Technology Services
- HawkID – University of Iowa students' unique username for access to online services
- UID – University ID, e.g., 0151xxxx
- UBill – University Bill
- ICON – Iowa Course Online (online portal for all course content – materials, assignments, grades, etc.)
- CAMBUS – University of Iowa public bus service (free for students)
- Iowa One Card - Official University of Iowa photo ID
- IMU – Iowa Memorial Union
- UCC – University Capitol Centre
- Office365 – The primary email and calendar service for students and faculty/staff. Also contains Microsoft applications like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.

GENERAL UI TERMS

- Hawkeyes – The athletic nickname of University of Iowa
- Ulowa or UI – University of Iowa
- SSN – Social Security Number
- SH – Semester Hour, or Schaeffer Hall
- Handshake – Online portal for student jobs, internships, etc.

SHARED GOVERNANCE GROUPS

- ISAB – International Student Advocacy Board (even though ISAB is not an official shared governance group, still including ISAB here because ISAB has been active in representing international students on campus)
- USG – Undergraduate Student Government
- GPSG – Graduate and Professional Student Government
- GSS – Graduate Student Senate
- UIPDA – University of Iowa Postdoctoral Association



ISSS ADVISING HOURS FOR PRE-ARRIVAL SUPPORT

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is happy to announce that we can now conduct virtual advising for international students prior to arrival on campus! Advising will be conducted, and this change will make it even easier for students and scholars to connect with an ISSS advisor to get quick answers to immigration and other questions.

<https://international.uiowa.edu/ISSS/contact-iss>

ISSS Advising Hours

- 9:30-11:30 a.m. (U.S. Central Time) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
- 1:30-3:30 p.m. (U.S. Central Time) Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

To sign in for Advising, visit <https://apps.its.uiowa.edu/swipe2/site/iss/signin/virtual/walkin> (you should bookmark that link!) and click on the button with the arrow. After entering your HawkID and password, select the reason for the appointment. If you do not have a HawkID, please contact ISSS at 319-335-0335 or email iss@uiowa.edu.

After you sign in, just wait! Once an advisor has been assigned to you, Swipe will show a green button so that you can launch Zoom and ask your questions. Please remember not to close your browser tab until Zoom launches. If there are changes to advising hours, you will be notified via email and the updated hours will be posted on the website.

HOUSING & ACCOMMODATION

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATIONS

Whether you live on or off campus, if you plan to arrive in Iowa City before your move-in date, it is necessary to arrange temporary accommodations. Please check out the “Travel to Iowa City” page for more information: <https://international.uiowa.edu/ISSS/new-students/pre-arrival/travel-iowa-city>

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING (UNDERGRAD ONLY)

Most undergrads at the University of Iowa choose to live on campus during their first year. You can check out 11 dorms that the university offers at the following page: <https://housing.uiowa.edu>

We advise you to apply as soon as possible, to obtain your preferred option. More information about housing applications can be found at: <https://housing.uiowa.edu/apply>

For international scholars, the UI has limited housing reserved.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Most graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa live in off-campus housing since on-campus dormitories are for undergraduate students. There are many off-campus accommodations that better meet your personal preferences and other subjective aspects (e.g., space for dependents, schools for kids, grocery stores, healthcare centers, etc.).

The Tenants’ Rights Guide developed by Student Legal Services (SLS) provides a lot of helpful information, including finding the right unit, before you move in, moving in, living in your rental unit, lease termination and eviction, moving out and security deposits. This guide is also available in Arabic, Hindi, Korean, and Simplified Chinese. <https://studentlegal.uiowa.edu/know-the-law/tenants-rights>.

While preparing to secure an apartment in Iowa City, it will be important to note a few important facts:

- Housing agreements in the U.S. are always referred to as leases. When you agree to secure an apartment, building, or space in the U.S. for a stipulated period, the act of completing this agreement through an official document signature and payment is referred to as ‘signing a lease’. As an incoming student, you can utilize the services Student Legal Services provides to get your lease reviewed: <https://studentlegal.uiowa.edu/contact-us>.
- Lease periods are often bound for a duration of 12 calendar months. That is, once you sign a lease, you are legally bound to stay committed to the housing agreement for the entire year, unless you choose to sub-lease it to a new person, a process that also has its guidelines.
- Sub-leasing is a process of letting out your apartment for a short period while you may be away. It could also entail transferring an existing lease to another tenant who will continue living and paying the rent of an apartment originally secured by you. The modalities that surround subleasing of apartments differ from house to house. While some apartments allow sub-leasing, others do not, so it is important to take note of this when signing a lease.
- Find more information about housing at a personal level, make connections with cultural student organizations or with current students through the iPeer network and through your program of study. The information may include in which areas you should live, whether to sublease or if shared housing is available.

- Check out Iowa City and Coralville transportation and their operating hours, so you know how to commute to the campus. Cambuses (which are free) are also available, but for selected routes.
 - Cambus routes, schedules, and maps: <https://transportation.uiowa.edu/cambus/routes>.
 - Iowa City transit: <https://www.icgov.org/government/departments-and-divisions/transportation/transit>.
 - Coralville transit: <https://www.coralville.org/80/Transit-Parking>
- Check out the general map of Iowa City (we recommend searching on a browser that works for you). You might need to consider the locations of grocery shopping and restaurants.
- For graduate students, be prepared to pay the first-month's rent and security deposit, before receiving your first-month's stipend.

Here are a few sites where you can find housing options:

- Off-Campus Housing Services: <https://offcampushousing.uiowa.edu/>
The Off-Campus Housing Services webpage provides listings and general information about housing, including lease, roommate, and living guides.
- Off-Campus Living: <https://offcampus.uiowa.edu/>
- [University of Iowa Scholar Housing Option](#)
- How to research the unit and landlord (from Student Legal Services website): <https://studentlegal.uiowa.edu/know-the-law/tenants-rights/finding-right-unit>
- Aspire <https://www.aspireatwestcampus.com>
- Zillow <https://www.zillow.com>

TRANSPORTATION

GETTING TO IOWA CITY

There are different options available to travel to and from Iowa City.

360 EXPRESS (IOWA CITY, CORALVILLE, AND CEDAR RAPIDS)

- 360 express bus service operates between Iowa City, Coralville, and Cedar Rapids.
<https://www.380express.com/schedule.php>
- See videos made by an international student, Arinze Okoye:
 - Iowa City to Cedar Rapids for \$4.50:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7NbHDkD5bs&t=24s>
 - Cedar Rapids Airport to Iowa City for \$4.50:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY2PH1jeZew&t=15s>

AIRPORT SHUTTLE

- USG shuttle: Undergraduate Student Government (USG) provides airport shuttle services to the Cedar Rapids airport during fall, winter, summer, and spring breaks. Additionally, there are

services during first week of august for international students.

<https://usq.uiowa.edu/services/airport-shuttle>

- Please see this page on travel to Iowa City: <https://international.uiowa.edu/ISSS/new-students/pre-arrival/travel-iowa-city>. Additional ground transportation from CID can be found here: <https://flycid.com/ground-transportation/>.

It is recommended that you fly directly into Eastern Iowa Airport (CID) at Cedar Rapids. if you are a first-time traveler. However, if you are flying to any of those airports, here are some additional ways to come to Iowa (mostly from Chicago):

- Megabus: <https://us.megabus.com/route-guides/iowa-city-coralville-to-chicago-bus>
- Trailways: <https://trailways.com/schedules/bus-from-chicago-il-to-iowa-city-ia/>
- Greyhound: <https://www.greyhound.com/en-us/bus-from-chicago-to-iowa-city>

TRANSIT IN IOWA CITY

Cambus and city buses are usually the best ways to get around Iowa City. While some people find it more convenient to use private vehicles, some international students utilize the services of the CAMBUS and the Iowa City/Coralville Transit buses. More information about transportation (public and private – for those who have personal vehicles and need parking) can be found on the transportation webpage: <https://transportation.uiowa.edu/>

You can find the service map of public transportation here. <https://icareatransit.org/map/>

INSURANCE

All international students in the University of Iowa are required to have health insurance. See the “Medical Care and Expenses” section in Guide to Living in Iowa City.

<https://international.uiowa.edu/ISSS/resources/guide-living-iowa-city#medical-care-and-expenses>

- International students must have health insurance to attend the University of Iowa (dental insurance is NOT required).
- You must have insurance beginning the first day of classes and, therefore, be billed for Aug. and Jan.
- If you do not provide proof of coverage, you will be billed for a student-only policy under SHIP for each semester you are registered. Coverage and premium charges will begin the first of the month when the student is registered, and class begins.
- Coverage will extend over the summer unless the student graduates, submits an exemption, or is not enrolled for the fall semester.
- If you plan to be out of the U.S. over the summer, you must submit a temporary cancellation form online in [MyUI](#).
- Your insurance status in your home country will not cover you when you arrive in the United States.

- More information about how to enroll in an insurance plan will be provided at the international student orientation. To find out more about this, visit the webpage on international student insurance.

<https://hr.uiowa.edu/benefits/ui-student-insurance>

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS FOR ALL STUDENTS:

- Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) rate: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/benefits/ui-student-insurance/student-insurance-overview/student-insurance-premium-rates>.
Provider: Blue Cross and Blue Shield <https://www.bcbs.com>
- Student Dental Plan \$25/Month.
Provider: Delta Dental of Iowa Learn more <https://www.deltadentalia.com>

You can also opt for health insurance options that are provided by third-party insurance companies. However, do make sure that they are approved by the university and would be helpful for you to use at the university hospital or health care clinics/hospitals around Iowa City.

- All international and health science students must submit a proof of coverage form if they are already covered under another health insurance policy and do not want to enroll in UI student insurance on [MyUI](#).

GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS WITH ASSISTANTSHIP:

There are two different health insurance plans offered by the university which includes UI GRAD Care or the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

- To be eligible for these plans, you must be a graduate assistant with an appointment of one semester or at least a 25% appointment. Please check with your specific department for your graduate assistant appointment details.
- It is crucial to check with your specific department about when your department starts covering your specific health insurance plan as it is possible that you might be responsible for the first month's full payment for health insurance. The typical timeframe for health insurance coverage is September to the following May.
- To decide which plan suits your needs best, read this comparison between the two plans provided by the university human resources office.
<https://hr.uiowa.edu/benefits/ui-student-insurance/ship-vs-gradcare>
- All the information about what each plan covers, and information about dependent coverage under these plans are provided at the graduate college website.
<https://grad.uiowa.edu/funding/graduate-student-employment-standards/health-insurance-and-other-benefits>
- The University also provides dental insurance coverage of 85% of the premium cost for graduate assistants who opt for single coverage and 70% of the premium cost per month for dependent dental coverage for graduate assistants with an appointment of one semester or at least a 25% appointment.



BANKING AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

Banking in the United States might be quite different from what you are familiar with in your home country, and it is important for you to know some terms and their meanings.

- See the Banking and Banking Services section in ISSS's Guide to Living in Iowa City to learn about checking accounts and saving accounts:
<https://international.uiowa.edu/ISSS/resources/guide-living-iowa-city#banking-and-banking-services>

You can find out more about this using whatever preferred search engine you like. Banks will provide more details and guidance when you arrive and are ready to open an account.

There are certain documents that banks will require you to possess before being considered eligible to open an account.

- Form I-20
- Proof of Address in the United States
- School Identity Card (ID)
- Passport
- Phone Number

- Social Security Number (SSN) or Tax Identification Number (of home country if you do not have SSN yet)
- Form I-94

As of today, the following banks available in Iowa City area are:

- Hills Bank
- MidWestOne Bank
- Wells Fargo
- U.S. Bank
- Chase Bank
- West Bank
- GreenState Credit Union

When planning to open an account upon arrival in the U.S., you should consider the following:

- Verify FDIC Insurance: Open an account in a bank that is FDIC insured to protect your deposit.
- Budget and needs: Assess your financial budget and needs to select the right type of account i.e. checking, savings
- Ask questions: Do not hesitate to ask the bank staff any questions you may have along the way.

GROCERY/SHOPPING

Grocery:

- Day-to-day grocery: Target, Walmart, Hy-Vee, Trader Joe's, ALDI, Costco, Fareway
 - Downtown area grocery stores: Bread Garden Market, New Pioneer Food Co-op, Thoma's Meat Market (Butcher Shop)
- Pharmacy: CVS, Walgreens
- Ethnic-based grocery stores:
 - Asian grocery stores: Asia+, Asian Market, Starlight Market 3, Chong's Supermarket
 - Indian grocery stores: Indian and Asian Grocery Taj International Foods, K Brothers
 - Other: Iowa City African & Oriental Market, Iowa City Halal Food And Grocery

Other:

- Kohl's
- Goodwill
- Best Buy
- Von Maur (Department Store)
- Coral Ridge Mall

IMMUNIZATION

All students entering the University are required to show proof of **two MMR-Measles, Mumps, Rubella, TB- Tuberculosis (international students exclusive) vaccinations**. You can find more information here:

<https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/student-requirements/immunization-requirements>

Students may request medical or religious exemptions from receiving immunization(s) by submitting a signed form from the state health department. Links to these forms can be found here.

<https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/student-requirements>

The list of recommended, but not required immunizations and vaccinations can be found

<https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/immunizations>

Depending on your country and program of study, there are certain immunizations you must receive before arriving at the University of Iowa. Health Science and international students have special requirements when it comes to getting immunized.

"I knew it from my iHawk, pre-arrival check list, and also from the online orientation course on ICON" — Alison Liu, UI 2027, when asked how she knew which vaccinations to get.

COMMUNICATION

MOBILE SERVICES

When you arrive in the U.S., you will need to connect to a U.S. mobile communications network.

U.S. Mobile networks service providers lists:

- AT&T
- Verizon
- T-Mobile
- US Cellular

INTERNET SERVICES

- Wifi is available across campus.
You can log into **eduroam** by using your **hawkID** and password.
- Services in the Iowa City area
- AT&T Internet
- Verizon Fios
- T-Mobile Home Internet
- CenturyLink
- ImOn Communications
- Mediacom

ENGLISH PLACEMENT EVALUATION (EPE)

EPE is the English Placement Evaluation. Incoming international students, whose primary language is not English, are required to undergo an on-campus English Placement Evaluation upon their arrival, unless they satisfy any of the specified exceptions:

- a score of 100 or higher on the internet-based version of the test (iBT), or
- a score of 600 or higher on the paper based (PBT) version of the test.

All international students who present TOEFL scores below 100 on the iBT or below 600 on the PBT will be required to complete an English Proficiency Evaluation on campus before their first registration for classes. Some graduate departments may require the students to take the evaluation regardless of their TOEFL scores, please check with your department in order to successfully register for classes. This prerequisite ensures that incoming students possess a sufficient command of the English language to engage effectively in their studies, comprehend lectures, and actively participate in classroom discussions without encountering language-related impediments.

The evaluation consists of 5 tasks mentioned below:

Task	Duration	Description
1 and 2	60 minutes	Students get two texts: one showing a problem and the other offering a solution. They should find five main idea sentences in each text, answer five multiple-choice questions, and write a summary for both texts.
3	30 minutes	Students will listen to an 8–10-minute lecture that provides another solution to the problem presented in Task 1. Afterward, they should answer five multiple-choice questions and write a summary of the lecture.
4	30 minutes	In one or two paragraphs write your opinion about which solution you believe is the most effective solution to the problem in source 1
5	10 minutes	In this conversational session, students will engage in discussions with two ESL instructors covering personal communication topics and academic topics related to students major and/or general education academic topics.

Fees for the exam: The University will charge students' accounts \$120 for the EPE within the first month of classes.

Detailed information: <https://esl.uiowa.edu/programs/esl-credit-program/english-placement-evaluation>

GRADUATE TEACHING & RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS: EXPECTATIONS, CHALLENGES, HELPFUL RESOURCES

Teaching Assistantship (TA) and Research Assistantship (RA) are the most common form of funding that cover your tuition, health insurance, and other student fees while you teach (TA) or assist a professor or group of professors on a project (RA) and earn stipends on a monthly basis. For Teaching Assistant (TA), there will be a test to assess communication in English in a classroom context:

<https://esl.uiowa.edu/programs/teaching-assistant-preparation-english>.

- Expectations: While the lead instructor, who is usually a professor, teaches the main classes, usually once or twice a week, the TAs are expected to teach, grade (assignments, quizzes, exams etc.), respond to student emails, and address student concerns. On the other hand, RAs work with a professor or a group of professors on a research project in a laboratory. The expectations for RAs are determined by their Principal Investigator (PI). Nevertheless, both TAs and RAs are expected to be in good academic standing with required GPA (grade point averages) varying across departments.
- Challenges: New TAs and RAs usually face the challenge of balancing their assistantship responsibilities with their studies and personal lives. However, there are several resources on campus put in place to support TAs and RAs, which are provided below.

TEACHING RESOURCES:

- <https://grad.uiowa.edu/teaching-assistant-resources>
- <https://grad.uiowa.edu/cirtl>
- <https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching>

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

- <https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/research/>
- <https://research.uiowa.edu/>

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

- <https://grad.uiowa.edu/funding>

GRADING SYSTEM

The University of Iowa, like most universities in the U.S., follows a continuous grading system in courses with focus on continuous development instead of measuring knowledge through one (or more) examinations. This means that most courses will have a sizable portion of the final grade dependent on homework assignments and quizzes, which will happen throughout the course. Courses can have mid-term and final exams and/or a final project or a research presentation (in the case of seminar-style

courses). Please refer to the individual course policies to get more information. However, note the following points:

- To excel in your courses, it is crucial to maintain consistent attendance and ensure that you meet assignment deadlines. Failing to do so could result in point deductions.
- In case you have difficulties submitting assignments due to a personal issue (religious holiday, sickness, etc.), please tell the instructor your issue. The instructor may provide accommodation to address your issue.
<https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/statement-of-religious-diversity-and-the-university-calendar>
<https://registrar.uiowa.edu/absence-class>
- Utilize office hours to seek clarification or ask questions about uncertainties during class. Office hours serve as a valuable resource for international students, offering individualized support and a more relaxed, one-on-one setting where you can address your academic concerns without the pressure of a larger class audience.
- The university maintains stringent policies to uphold academic honesty and ethics. Any form of academic misconduct is unequivocally prohibited by the University, and each college has its specific policies in place to address such issues.
- Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. If you are utilizing external resources to complete your assignments, it is imperative to include proper citations at the conclusion of your submission document. Zotero is one tool that can assist you in ensuring accurate and thorough citations. Librarians can also serve as good resources to help you understand questions about citations.
<https://www.zotero.org>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES

BASIC NEEDS

<https://basicneeds.uiowa.edu/>

- Food Pantry at Iowa: The Food Pantry is a FREE service available for ANY student, staff, or faculty member at the University of Iowa. Anyone with a University ID card is allowed in the Food Pantry once a week to collect items. Items available at the pantry may include: fresh produce, protein, pasta, canned fruits/vegetables, soup, breakfast items, snacks, and toiletries. The Food Pantry is located in room G200 of the Iowa Memorial Union (IMU). Learn more on the website: <https://imu.uiowa.edu/imu-services/food-pantry-iowa>
- Clothing Closet: The Clothing Closet is a FREE service available for ANY student, staff, or faculty member at the University of Iowa. Each semester, anyone with a University ID card is allowed up to five professional attire items to be used for interviews, jobs, class presentations, and more. These five items are yours to keep forever. The Clothing Closet is located in room G200 of the IMU. Learn more on the website: <https://imu.uiowa.edu/imu-services/clothing-closet>

- Hawkeye Meal Share: Students experiencing food insecurities can request free meals. Learn more: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/hawkeye-meal-share>

HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES:

- Student Care & Assistance: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance>
- University Counseling Service: <https://counseling.uiowa.edu/>
- Mental Health at Iowa: <https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/>
- Mindful & Engaged Hawkeyes: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/initiatives/mindful-engaged-hawkeyes>
- Student Wellness: <https://studentwellness.uiowa.edu/>
- Safety and Support: <https://uiowa.edu/student-life/safety-and-support>
- Student Health Care: <https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/appointments/hours-and-locations>
- Kognito training: <https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/kognito>
- Student Wellness: <https://studentwellness.uiowa.edu>
- Recreational Services: <https://recserv.uiowa.edu/>.
- Women's Resource and Action Center: <https://wrac.uiowa.edu/programs-and-services/counseling>.
- College of Dentistry, College of Law, Tippie College of Business, and University Housing and Dining also have embedded counselors.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

The following student bodies and community support groups exist to support international students in various capacities.

PROGRAMS

IPEER

The iPeer Mentorship Program is a University of Iowa initiative that pairs new international students (mentees) with returning international students (mentor). The main goals of the iPeer Mentorship Program are to provide support to new international students for their transition and personal development, as well as to empower them to become leaders on campus. Mentors and mentees will connect prior to the mentees' arrival in Iowa, assisting the mentees' pre-arrival preparation and transition to Iowa. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to attend events and have conversations to explore topics around academics, campus resources, cultural adjustment, career and other important topics together.

ISAB

Associated with the University of Iowa Student Government (USG) and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) is made up of both

undergraduate and graduate student leaders on campus. ISAB seeks to advocate for international student needs, to voice international student concerns, to improve international student experience, to advocate for a more inclusive campus environment, and improve the international student experience. ISAB is made up of students, run by the students and for the students.

- Website: <https://international.uiowa.edu/about/outreach/opportunities-ui-students/ISAB>
- Email: isab-ui@uiowa.edu
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/isabiowa/>
- Instagram: @isab_ui



STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- African Student Association:
Instagram: @uiowaasa
- Association of Latinos Moving Ahead:
Instagram: @uiowa_alma
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/alma-association-of-latinos-moving-ahead>

- Bangladeshi Student Association:
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/bsa>
- Bridges International:
Instagram: @ui_bridges
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/bridges-international-ui-chapter>
- Chinese Students and Scholars Association:
WeChat: uicssa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/chinese-students-and-scholars-association-cssa>
- Filipino Student Association:
Instagram: @uiowa.fsa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/fsa>
- Indian Student Alliance:
Instagram: @uiowaisa
- International and American Student Alliance at the University of Iowa:
Instagram: @iasa_uiowa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/uiowaiasa>
- Iowa Andhi:
Instagram: @iowaandhi
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/iowa-andhi>
- Iranian Students Organization:
Instagram: @iso.uiowa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/iranian-student-organization>
- Korean at Ulowa Student Association
Instagram: @kusa.iowa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/kusaiowa>
- Middle East and North African Students Association:
Instagram: @ui_menasa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/menasa>
- Muslim Students Association:
Instagram: @uiowamsa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/muslim-students-association>

- Nepalese Student Association:
Instagram: @uiowansa
- Organization for the Active Support of International Students (OASIS):
Instagram: @oasis_uiowa:
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/oasis>
- Pakistani Students Association:
Instagram: @psauiowa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/pakistani-student-association>
- South Asian Student Alliance:
Instagram: @uisasa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/south-asian-student-alliance>
- The University of Iowa Taiwanese Student Association
Instagram: @uiowa_tsa
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/UIowaTSA/>
- Vietnamese Student Association:
Instagram: @uiowa_vsa
Website: <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/vietnamese-student-association>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



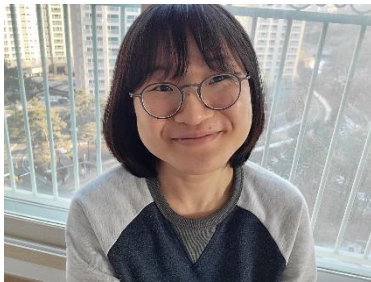
Fascha Aryasa (undergrad in Data Science; from Indonesia)

“Check your UIowa emails daily, ask for help if you need help, don't be shy to email the departments to ask for clarifications, make sure your health insurance work in the US, make sure you know where to live before coming to Iowa, and the most important thing before you come to Iowa, read all of the checklists from ISSS on iHawk page.”



Akash (PhD student in Computer Science; from India)

“Moving to a new environment with a new culture can be very shocking. Thankfully, the University provided me with different resources which eased the process of blending in and getting settled. As an international student, one of the first things I had to look for was housing. Thankfully, the Ulowa off-campus housing website provided me the opportunity to interact with fellow students looking for rooms and helped me find a potential roommate and an apartment to rent. The ISSS website also was helpful for me as the iHawk system provided me with the checklist of things I needed to do before arriving at Iowa. After coming to the University, the orientation sessions were helpful as they provided me with the necessary information about Health Insurance, OPT and CPT rules and the credit hour registration requirements (please note that this is very important and there are some exceptions in this as well). My department was helpful with different academic queries I had and assisted me with different parts of it (ESPA, previous degree transcripts, course choices, etc.). Finally, the I-Peer mentorship program helped me to match with a senior Graduate Student, who helped to with my initial doubts and apprehensions and settle in well. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the I-Connect program which helped me to connect with many Iowa residents and make friends with different international students.”



Hee Kyoung Jung (PhD student in Higher Education & Student Affairs; from South Korea)

“ISSS (International Student and Scholar Services) had provided information about the school and Iowa City before the first semester began. I made sure to thoroughly read and be equipped with the information I should be aware of about the new environment. Also, I joined the mentoring program and got connected with a current PhD international student. She has grown to be a great friend of mine and has helped me learn about the new city, fun things, and on-campus resources that can be helpful. Last but not least, ISSS has done a great job of keeping international students updated with events and resources that we should not miss!”



Eweosa (Professional Law- Juris Doctorate; from Nigeria)

“Settling into the University of Iowa was a smooth process for me. The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office sent me all the necessary documents and answered all my questions regarding moving my records from my previous institution, where I had completed my master's degree, promptly. The law school provided information packets on different areas of student life, including housing, course registration, internship, etc., well in advance of the resumption date. Also, the orientation programs

organized by ISSS and the law school helped me connect with other international students.”

AFTER ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Created by an international student, Shri Vishalini Rajaram

- Housing and **Lease agreement**
- **Transit** (<https://transitapp.com/>) Blue buses – Coralville Transit, White buses with orange stripes – Iowa City Transit, Yellow buses – Cambus
(Note: Iowa City buses and Cambuses are free until July 2025)
- **UPass** (<https://transportation.uiowa.edu/alternative-transportation/bus-pass-u-pass/student-u-pass-program>) – Register in MyUI, direct the cost to your U-Bill and get the pass at the WCTC - West Campus Transportation Center - 100 WCTC 840 Evashevski Dr. Iowa City, IA 52242 (Cambus – 31, 32)
(Note: You need to get a new card every year on or before May 31)
- **Student Insurance** (<https://hr.uiowa.edu/benefits/ui-student-insurance/grad-students-and-health-science-majors-benefits>) – Most Students take SHIP and dental insurance together; First month full payment must be paid – So September you will be paying \$298 (number as of May 2024*)
- Bank account (debit card)
- Important Stores
 - **Target** – Iowa City - 113 E. Washington St., Iowa City, IA 52240, Coralville – Coral Ridge Mall (Bus 21 or 23 – Stop Coral Ridge Mall)
 - **Walmart** – Iowa City (919 Hwy 1 W, Iowa City, IA 52246 – Bus 12 – Stop (Walmart)), Coralville (2801 Commerce Dr., Coralville, IA 52241) – Bus 21 – Stop (Commerce Drive and Heartland Drive)
 - **Hy-vee** – Iowa City - 1720 Waterfront Dr., Iowa City, IA 52240 (Bus 1); Coralville - 1914 8th St., Coralville, IA 52241 (Bus 21 – 20th Avenue 5th Street)
 - **Indian Stores – Kbrothers Grocery** - 2058 8th St., Coralville, IA 52241 (Bus – 21 5th St. – Stop (20th Avenue 5th Street)
 - **Taj International Food** - 2419 2nd St. #2, Coralville, IA 52241 (Bus – 23 10th Street – Stop (10th Street 25th Avenue)
- Social Security Number - Coralville (10th Street 10th Avenue – Bus 23) Get the letter from ISSS after one month of your arrival and fill in the information on Social Security website and schedule a meeting for document verification - <https://www.ssa.gov/>
- Credit Card
After you get the SSN apply for discover – Referral
(https://refer.discover.com/s/rajaram.shrivishalini?advocate.partner_share_id=381836714)
- Tuberculosis Test/Other Vaccinations
Immunization Ulowa - +1-3193358394
- Emergency Fund/Student Care
<https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/student-support-initiatives>

- Money Transfer Apps
 - **Remitly** - <https://remit.ly/317meidl>
 - **Venmo** - <https://venmo.com/visharajaram>
 - **Zelle** - www.zellepay.com
- Connecting to University Wifi (Eduroam)
 - <https://its.uiowa.edu/support/article/655>
 - <https://its.uiowa.edu/support/article/283>
- Sim Card
 - H2O – R & H Quick Phone repairs – Coral Ridge Mall near Target
- Driving License
 - Need SSN and complete Knowledge exam by scheduling - https://iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense/driverslicense/iadrivertest_start
- Student Organizations - <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>
- After Class Events - <https://afterclass.uiowa.edu/>
- Extra Workshops – sign into ihawk.uiowa.edu and check for events
- Tax – ISSS VITA - <https://international.uiowa.edu/issc/current-students/tax-information>