
Minnesota State University Moorhead

International Student Handbook 2018-2019

International Student Services Office Staff & Information

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Letter from the Director of International Student Services

On behalf of the staff of International Student Services, I would like to welcome you to Minnesota State University Moorhead! Our office staff looks forward to assisting you as you become acclimated to MSUM and the Fargo-Moorhead area. We will do our best to make your experience at MSUM a positive and productive one. Please feel free to contact us at any time as you encounter the many issues that “come with the territory” of traveling to a foreign land. Again, we will be happy to help you the best we know how.

When you arrive, it is not uncommon to have many questions, and your first weeks on campus are likely to be the most confusing. Much information will come at you quickly and it will be hard to absorb it all; however, I would like to highlight a few things that you might find important.

At the beginning of each semester, our office hosts many new student orientation activities that are designed to help introduce you to the services and people available to help you as you experience life at MSUM. Please take advantage of our International Student Orientation as it will help you adjust more quickly. International Student Services also hosts many events throughout the academic year. Through these events, you will have an opportunity to meet many friends and enjoy intriguing conversation. Please join us and bring your friends!

Our office is located in CMU. Feel free to visit ISS any time we can be of assistance to you - or just stop in to say hi!

Best wishes in all of your pursuits.

Sincerely,

Janet Hohenstein
Director, International Student Services

Orientation

MSUM's International Student Orientation takes place in August before the beginning of Fall Semester. A less extensive orientation is offered at the start of Spring Semester. International students who have attended the orientation program have found it to be beneficial both for making new friends as well as understanding the academic requirements, immigration regulations and support services available. We encourage you to actively participate in International Student Orientation. It will help to guide and direct you as you begin your academic endeavors here at MSUM. Many current MSUM students serve as orientation volunteers called "Diplomats." They greet you when you arrive, help with academic advising, lead campus tours and introduce new students to the community. International Student Orientation also gives you a good opportunity to become acquainted with some of the staff with whom you will associate during your stay here. Make the best of this opportunity that is given to you!

1. International Student Services (ISS)

Our Mission

- International Student Services is committed to promoting, supporting and celebrating an international environment at Minnesota State University Moorhead. To accomplish this, ISS strives to create access to and appreciation for international and cross-cultural experiences, perspectives, initiatives, and advocacy with a view to preparing individuals to interact in the global community.

Included in our commitment is:

- Providing dependable, accurate information and services to international students.
- Helping to support international students in maintaining their legal status while in the United States.
- Supporting international students in successfully accomplishing their academic and career goals.
- Assisting the Fargo/Moorhead community and region in its commitment to diversity.

Office Hours

International Student Services is open all year except on official MSUM holidays. The office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. You can stop by the office, e-mail international@mnstate.edu or call 218-477-2956 to ask general questions or schedule an appointment.

One of the many benefits of attending MSUM is that International Student Services tries to be as flexible with your schedule as possible. With this being said, if you think your appointment will last more than 15 minutes, we suggest that you schedule an appointment ahead of time rather than dropping in.

Advising Services

Our experiences have trained us to provide information to foreign nationals about academic, immigration, financial, personal, and family matters, as well as issues such as cross-cultural adjustment. In addition, we provide training and programs that enhance the awareness and understanding of cross-cultural and international issues. We consult daily with MSUM faculty and staff on issues related to international students in their departments. Other resources provided to students are:

Academic Support Center (ASC)
Career Development Center
Hendrix Health Clinic

Phone: 477-4318
Phone: 477-2131
Phone: 477-2211

Visa Documents

International Student Services assists international students maintain their nonimmigrant visa status. ISS prepares or assists in preparing certain nonimmigrant visa documents required by the U.S. government for persons with F-1 (student) visas. These include documents for travel, dependent travel, changes of degree program, transfer of schools, extension of stay, employment options and admission to MSUM.

International Student Services (ISS) Resources

ISS WEBSITE.

You can find a wide range of information—from visa regulations and downloadable forms to newsletters and intercultural opportunities—published on the web. Check out ISS website at www.mnstate.edu/international. Click on the “Current Student” link.

INTERNATIONAL LISTSERV

The International Student Listserv is a way to keep our international student population informed on important issues. All international students will be subscribed to the listserv upon arrival to MSUM. Information provided includes office schedules, special events, U.S. government regulatory changes and other news items of concern to the international population at MSUM.

BROCHURES/PACKETS/FORMS

ISS also provides many brochures and other documents on visa regulations and other useful information to complement the student handbook. You may view and print this information at www.mnstate.edu/international and click on the “Current Student” link or pick up copies of the following brochures/packets from ISS.

- Social Security Cards
- Student Payroll Tax Information
- Health Insurance

Special F-1 Brochure Series:

- F-1 Curricular Practical Training
- F-1 Optional Practical Training
- When Is It Acceptable to Delay My Graduation?
- Fulfilling the Requirements of SEVIS: A Guide for Students in F-1 Status
- A Guide for F1 Students Traveling Outside the US

Forms

- Program Extension Packet
- Part-Time Enrollment Authorization Due to Medical Condition
- Part-Time Enrollment Authorization
- Letter Request Form for Inviting Friends and Family to the U.S.
- Concurrent Enrollment

Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and education opportunity. No person shall be discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices, or access to and participation in, programs, services, and activities with regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or sexual orientation. In addition, discrimination in employment based on membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law is prohibited.

Harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or sexual orientation is prohibited. Harassment may occur in a variety of relationships, including faculty and student, supervisor and employee, student and student, staff and student, employee and employee, and other relationships with persons having business at, or visiting the educational or working environment.

This policy is directed at verbal or physical conduct that constitutes discrimination/harassment under state and federal law and is not directed at the content of speech. In cases in which verbal statements and other forms of expression are involved, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities will give due consideration to an individual's constitutionally protected right to free speech and academic freedom. However, discrimination and harassment are not within the protections of academic freedom or free speech.

The system office, colleges, and universities shall maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of expression, inquiry, teaching and research. Academic freedom comes with a responsibility that all members of our education community benefit from it without intimidation, exploitation or coercion.

This policy shall apply to all individuals affiliated with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including but not limited to, its students, employees, applicants, volunteers, agents, and Board of Trustees, and is intended to protect the rights and privacy of both the complainant and respondent and other involved individuals, as well as to prevent retaliation or reprisal. Individuals who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary or other corrective action.

This policy supersedes all existing system, college, and university nondiscrimination policies.

Copies of the Nondiscrimination Policy and complaint procedure are available at www.mnstate.edu/affirm/ or Owens 206.

Persons to contact for questions or assistance regarding these policies:

Ashley Atteberry, Director of Student Conduct and Resolution / Title IX Coordinator
Owens Hall 206D, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN 56563
218-477-2174
ashley.atteberry@mnstate.edu

Donna Brown, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity and Inclusion / Affirmative Action
Owens Hall 208C, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN 56563
218-477-2721
donna.brown@mnstate.edu

For questions or assistance relating to violence, including sexual violence, contact:

Public Safety
1616 9th Avenue South, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN 56563
218-477-2449
dispatch@mnstate.edu
<http://www.mnstate.edu/publicsafety/>

2. Your Legal Status in the United States

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

SEVIS is an electronic reporting system that provides the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), formerly part of the Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS) with information on international students and scholars in the United States who hold F, J, and M visas. The Department of Homeland Security has created an internet-based record-keeping system to maintain electronic data. The system also tracks entries into the U.S. and departures from the U.S. Every school, college, and university that admits students or scholars on F, J, or M visas is mandated to use SEVIS.

SEVIS requires daily reporting on full course enrollment and changes students may make in their academic program (i.e. change of major, change of degree program). Students should ensure that they complete a full course of study each semester or have a Part-Time Enrollment Form on file in ISS. In addition to the information that is printed on I-20s (F-1 visas), other information is reported, including but not limited to: academic status, employment, and residential address. Students should make sure that all information on their I-20 or DS 2019 remains accurate. Students should contact the office regarding a new I-20/DS2019 if there has been a change (i.e. name has changed, financial support, new program, etc.)

For more information on SEVIS, go to <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>

Visa vs. Immigration Status

It is important to clarify two legal terms in order to fully understand how to maintain your legal status in the U.S. People are often confused about the terms “visa” and “immigration status.” Students frequently say to us, “My visa is expired. How do I get my visa extended?” In some cases, the students mean the visa stamp in their passport has expired while others are referring to the I-20 Form. In order to be of help, the office will ask questions to clarify whether you mean, in fact, the visa stamp or your I-20.

If you are referring to the F-1 visa stamp in your passport, that stamp cannot be renewed in the U.S. You can renew your visa only at a U.S. embassy or consulate outside the U.S. However, you do not need to renew your visa if you will remain in the U.S., hold a valid I-20 and have remained in valid F-1/F-2 status. If your SEVIS I-20 has expired, then you will need to see International Student Services about a program extension or reinstatement. The paragraphs below offer detailed explanations of these terms.

Visa

You obtained the visa stamp in your passport at a U.S. embassy or consulate in your country or the country where you have been living. The purpose of the visa is for entry into the United States in a particular status. The expiration date on the visa stamp does not indicate the length of time you are allowed to stay in the U.S.; it indicates only the latest date on which you may apply to enter this country. The validity of a visa stamp pertains only to the period during which it may be used for admission to the United States. It does not indicate how long you may stay in the United States. Visitors may remain in the United States with an expired visa as long as their certificate of eligibility is valid and the proper immigration status is indicated on the I-94 card. On the visa stamp, there is also an indication of the number of entries permitted, usually One, Two or M (for multiple). If a student uses up his or her entries (or the visa expires) and wishes to enter the United States again during the same validity period, he or she must at that time obtain a new visa. When entering the U.S. through a “port of entry,” the immigration inspector examines your passport, your visa and your I-20 or Certificate of Eligibility and determines whether you are admissible to the United States. The visa basically functions as a key to enter the U.S. Once you have entered, you will not have to worry about whether your visa is valid or expired. However, when you leave and need to re-enter the U.S., you must have a valid “key,” or visa, to return. F and J visas can be obtained only at a

U.S. embassy or consulate outside the United States. Information about applying for a visa at many U.S. embassies and consulates around the world is available online at http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/questions/questions_1253.html. Look for information about nonimmigrant visas.

Note: Canadian citizens are not required to have a visa if entering the U.S. within the Western Hemisphere. However, they must show their passport, I-20, financial documents used to obtain I-20 and a receipt of SEVIS payment at the U.S. port of entry in order to obtain the F-1 visa status.

Immigration Status

Once the immigration inspector at the port of entry determines you are admissible to the U.S., he/she will grant you an immigration status, which is indicated on your I-94 Arrival/Departure Card and on your I-20. The I-94 card is a very important document, so be sure you always keep it safely with your passport. The inspector will write on the card "F-1" or "J-1" and below it "D/S" which refers to your status and the length of time you are permitted to remain in the U.S. "D/S" means "duration of status." The number at the top of the I-94 card is your USCIS admission number, which you will keep for the duration of your studies, unless you leave the U.S. for a period of five (5) months or more. You will be issued a new admission number when you re-enter after that period of time.

F-1 / J-1 Legal Status

The United States has laws governing foreign nationals living within its borders. It is vital that you take responsibility and learn about these laws which are constantly updated. If you have **any questions** in regards to immigration laws and regulations **please contact International Student Services**. ISS is happy to help you understand what you need to know so that you do not jeopardize your current visit or any other future plans that you may have for returning to the United States.

Students who come to the U.S. are granted nonimmigrant classifications known as "F-1", "J-1" and "M". This is commonly referred to as your "status." (Minnesota State University Moorhead only admits F-1 and J-1 Students.) A spouse or child under the age of 21 who is allowed to come to the United States to be with an F-1 or J-1 student is considered a "dependent" and is given F-2 or J-2 status. This status is valid as long as the F-1/ J-1 student maintains valid status.

In order to remain legally present in the United States, you must "maintain" your status. To maintain legal status in the United States, you must follow the rules that apply to your status. **It is your legal responsibility to know and adhere to these rules.**

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULES FOR F-1 STUDENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- You must attend the school that you were authorized to attend on your I-20.
- You must maintain a full course of study during the academic year. (Attendance at summer sessions is not required unless you were admitted to begin your studies during summer session.)
- You cannot be employed off campus without proper authorization.
- You must follow the Department of Homeland Security rules regarding:
 - extending your stay (apply for extensions before I-20 expires)
 - changing from one degree program to another (bachelor's, master's, Ph.D.)
 - transferring to another school
 - report any changes in your residential address by updating the current mailing address in your E-Services account or the MSUM Records Office.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULES FOR J-1 STUDENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- You must attend the school that you were authorized to attend on your DS-2019.
- You must engage only in activities permitted under your program and category.

- Students must maintain a full course of study during the academic year.
- Scholars must teach or perform the research they were authorized to do.
- You must maintain the required health insurance coverage.
- You cannot be employed without proper authorization, on and off campus.
- You must follow the Department of Homeland Security rules regarding:
 - Filing timely and appropriate transfer and extension notifications

Losing Your Legal Status

Read the section on maintaining F-1 / J-1 status. If you fail to follow these guidelines you will lose your legal status and related benefits. This means you lose any eligibility for employment, even on-campus employment. Further, if the DHS or an immigration law judge becomes aware of your lost legal status, you may be declared “unlawfully present.” Unlawful presence in the United States for 180 days means being barred from returning to the United States for three years. Twelve months (continuous or aggregate) of unlawful presence means being barred from returning to the United States for ten years. The DHS or an immigration law judge may also find you have stayed in the United States beyond the time authorized. This is called “overstaying” your visa. If you overstay the time allowed on your I-20, any U.S. entry visa in your passport is automatically cancelled. All new U.S. entry visas, for the rest of your life, can be issued only by the U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country. After being unlawfully present or overstaying your visa, you may have trouble getting another visa altogether.

Regaining Your Legal Status

You cannot regain your legal status without new documents from ISS and your sponsor. There are two ways to regain your legal status: reinstatement or reentry (under certain circumstances) into the U.S. Both methods are expensive and time-consuming, and success cannot be guaranteed.

REINSTATEMENT

If you have fallen “out of status,” you must apply to the USCIS for reinstatement. International Student Services will assist you in this process if it is your first time out of status, but you will be required to submit the application for reinstatement available online at www.mnstate.edu/international. The fee for this is \$290.00 (subject to change). Students who have previously been reinstated and are out of status again will have a difficult time winning reinstatement. ISS can provide an attorney referral list for these students.

You may also be reinstated, if this is your first time out of status, by leaving the U.S. and returning on a new I-20 prepared by ISS. However, you should discuss your options with ISS because leaving the U.S. for reinstatement may jeopardize your eligibility for any practical training.

USCIS may consider reinstating a student to F-1 status if:

1. the student has not been out of status for more than 5 months
2. the student establishes, to the satisfaction of the USCIS, in a detailed letter that:
 - the violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond the student’s control; circumstances might include serious injury or illness, closure of the institution or a natural disaster; **excuses of inadvertence, oversight, neglect, or willful failure on the part of the student are not accepted.**
 - the violation relates to a reduction in course load that would have been within International Student Services’ power to authorize, and that failure to approve reinstatement would result in extreme hardship to the student.
3. the student is pursuing or intending to pursue a full course of study in the immediate future at the school which issued the I-20; and
4. the student has not engaged in unauthorized employment.

A decision to reinstate an individual to F-1 student status is completely at the discretion of USCIS. MSUM has no control over this matter. If you are denied reinstatement, you must stop attending classes and depart the U.S. within 30 days. ***If you think you may be out of status, please contact International Student Services as soon as possible!***

F-1 reinstatement currently takes about 3-6 months to process and requires a letter from the Director of ISS to recommend the reinstatement. While your reinstatement request is being processed, you cannot legally work in the United States. Further, any reinstatement may result in a greater risk that future visa applications may be denied.

**** Students in J-1 status requiring reinstatement should meet with ISS to determine whether you are eligible for reinstatement. At that time, we will indicate what is needed to apply for reinstatement.**

Grace Periods

F-1 students who have completed their studies or completed their optional practical training period have 60 days to prepare to leave the U.S. or to transfer to a new school or move to a new level at the same school. Students who drop out of school or withdraw and have prior approval from ISS have 15 days to prepare to leave the U.S. J-1 students and scholars have 30 days to prepare to leave the U.S.

Students who drop out of school, who are refused registration due to failure to maintain a minimum GPA or who withdraw without prior approval must leave the U.S. immediately. If you think you may be in this situation, make an appointment with ISS as soon as possible.

Important Immigration Documents

PASSPORT

The U.S. government requires that international students keep their passports valid at least six months into the future. Additionally, students working on campus will find that the payroll office is unable to issue your paycheck if your passport is expired. Only your government can renew or extend your passport. Contact your country's embassy or consulate in the United States for information on the appropriate procedure. Addresses and telephone numbers for foreign embassies in the United States are available online at

<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm>.

FORM I-94

The DHS immigration inspector at the U.S. port of entry will determine your status in the United States and how long you may remain in that status. The inspector will record this information on a Form I-94 and staple it to your passport. The I-94 is an official document used by the DHS to confirm that you have been lawfully admitted and is also used to record changes of nonimmigrant status.

Admission Number: The 11-digit number on your I-94 is used by the DHS to monitor your arrival and departure from the United States.

Expiration Date: On your I-94 you will find the notation D/S. This signifies Duration of Status and means that you can stay in the United States until your program ends or your I-20 expires, whichever is first. If you *complete* your program, you have an additional 60 day grace period if you have F-1 status. Dependent status (F-2) ends when the F-1 status ends. (J-1 Students have a 30 day grace period.) In order to remain longer, you must apply for an extension of stay before your I-20 expires.

FORM I-20

Students with F-1 legal status have an I-20 document.

SEVIS ID Number: A number assigned to your record by the SEVIS system. You will find this number printed on your I-20.

I-20: This document contains information about the student, the school, the student's academic program, the student's expenses and funding and the length of time the student is allowed to complete an academic program. Students must complete their academic programs before the date in item 5 on the I-20, or request additional time from ISS before this date arrives. If the I-20 expires before the program is completed, the student loses his or her legal status in the United States. Students may attend only the school listed on the I-20 unless prior approval is gained prior to taking courses at the other school. A transfer process is available for students who want to change schools.

FORM DS-2019

Students with J-1 legal status have a DS-2019 document.

SEVIS ID Number: A number assigned to your record by the SEVIS system. You will find this number printed on your DS-2019.

DS-2019: This document contains information about the student, the school, the student's exchange program and the length of time the student is allowed to complete an academic program. Students must complete their exchange programs before the date in item 3 on the DS-2019, or request additional time from ISS before this date. If the DS-2019 expires before the exchange program is completed, the student loses his or her legal status in the United States. Students may attend only the school listed on the DS-2019 unless transfer approval is gained prior to taking courses at the other school. A transfer process is available for students who want to change schools.

Note on Travel and Reentry: After using your I-20 or DS-2019 for your initial entry into the U.S., you will need to have your document signed by a designated official in International Student Services before you travel outside the U.S. again. For further information on travel and reentry, contact ISS.

F-1 / J-1 EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD)

If you are in F-1 or J-1 status and have a current employment card issued by DHS for Optional Practical Training or Off-Campus Work Permission, that employment permission is no longer valid when you start a new academic program with a new I-20 or DS -2019. Please discuss this with ISS before you transfer or change levels.

SAFEKEEPING OF YOUR IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

It is extremely important to keep and protect your immigration documents in order to identify yourself, apply for employment authorization, prove your status and maintain a record of your status throughout your stay in the United States. We encourage you to place these documents in a safe deposit box at a local bank. It is also prudent to keep copies of the following documents in case you lose them:

- I-94
- Passport
- F-1 students and F-2 dependents: I-20 (each have their own I-20)
- J-1 students and J-2 dependents: DS-2019 (each have their own DS-2019)
- EAD (if applicable)
- Old passport (some governments allow you to keep them, some do not)
- F-1 students: staple all of your previous I-20s to your current I-20

Full Course of Study Requirement

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires all international students with F-1 or J-1 visas to register for a minimum number of credits each semester to maintain their student status in the United States. It also requires MSUM to verify that its international students are registered for a full course of study.

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Minimum credit levels for an academic year:

- Undergraduate students: 12 credits per semester (including transfer undergraduate students and non-degree undergraduate students)
- Graduate students: 8 credits per semester
- Students may take online classes, but must take 9 in-class credits per semester (undergraduate) and 6 in-class credits per semester (graduate)

Important: Audited courses do not count towards full-time enrollment. The number of units of audit enrollment is not displayed on a student's transcript. To be able to audit a class, you must first be taking a full course load that you are earning grades of A-F and/or P/F courses. Furthermore, only 3 credits of online courses can count toward full-time enrollment each semester.

TAKING LESS THAN A FULL COURSE OF STUDY

In some circumstances, students are allowed to take less than a full course of study during an academic term. However, **you must have prior approval from the designated official in International Student Services before registering for less than a full course of study or dropping below a full course of study.** The legal regulations allow only a few acceptable reasons for not carrying a full course of study through the entire academic term as listed below. A part-time enrollment verification form is available online at www.mnstate.edu/international Fill out the form and schedule an appointment with ISS. If approved, the form is processed and kept in your permanent file in the Records Office. It is important to keep copies of your signed forms. You may be required to present them to a U.S. consular or USCIS official in the future if you request a new visa stamp, file for a change of visa status or request an adjustment of status to permanent residence. If you fall below full-time status during a term for any reason that is not recognized in the regulations, you will lose your legal status in the United States. This is the most common way students lose their legal status!

Note: For independent study courses and for courses in which you have taken an "incomplete," the credits count only in the academic term in which you registered for them.

Reasons that **are not** considered acceptable by the Immigration Service or U.S. State Department include:

- I don't have enough money.
- I'm too busy finishing incomplete classes from last semester.
- I'm too busy with employment.
- I'm too busy with extracurricular activities.
- I'm studying for the GMAT, GRE, CPA or other similar exams.
- I'm suspended from my college and cannot register.

Reasons that **are** considered acceptable by the Immigration Service or U.S. State Department include:

Student is experiencing academic difficulty because:

- Student is in first year of study and is having initial difficulty with the English language.
- Student is in first year of study and is having initial difficulty with reading requirements.
- Student is in first year of study and is unfamiliar with American teaching methods.
- Student has been advised to drop a course because of improper course of placement. (This option may be used only ONCE per degree level and the student must still register for 6 semester hours.)
- Student is in the final semester and will complete the course of study in the current semester. (This can be used only once per degree level.)

Dependent Study: F-2 / J-2 Status

Effective January 1, 2003 USCIS regulations specify that individuals holding F-2 status are not eligible to pursue a program of study in U.S. educational institutions. The exception to this regulation is:

- Minor children holding F-2 status are able to attend elementary and secondary school on a full-time basis.

- The regulation allows F-2 visa holders to participate in craft, casual or recreational classes or one ESL class (full-time ESL classes are prohibited). It must be considered a vocational. Students must change their status to F-1 student status prior to taking more than one course.

** There is currently no regulatory restriction on study for J-2 dependents.

Insurance Requirement

All students are required to have Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Student Injury and Sickness Insurance. The full premium must be paid the first semester you are here. More information is available at www.mnstate.edu/international

3. Employment Options

F-1 / J-1 Employment Options

The most important employment issue to keep in mind is the issue of legal, or “authorized,” versus illegal, or “unauthorized,” employment. It is your responsibility to make sure that you engage only in legal employment, i.e., that which qualifies under USCIS regulations as permissible for F-1 students. **Any unauthorized, illegal employment – even if it is for a few hours, even if you did not know it was illegal – renders you out of status and terminates your stay in the United States. You must always make sure that you have the necessary employment authorization before you begin work, since starting work without prior authorization, even if you receive an authorization later, constitutes illegal employment.**

Always consult with ISS before starting any employment. This is the only way to ensure that you do not engage in illegal employment and suffer adverse consequences for your future in the U.S.

J-1 Visa Holders: Must inform ISS prior to beginning employment on campus so that ISS can update the SEVIS record which gives them authorization to work on campus.

BEFORE ONE CAN OFFICIALLY START WORKING, A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER MUST BE OBTAINED!

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

All persons in the U.S. use a 9 digit U.S. Social Security Number as an ID number. This SSN will appear on all student records, ID cards and payrolls. This number is required for employment; however, the Social Security Administration will not issue a Social Security Number until a student can show or verify that they have secured on-campus employment. The Fargo Social Security Office is located at 657 2nd Avenue North.

Note: **Social Security Numbers are not employment authorizations.** Please see the next section which pertains to off-campus employment for information on employment authorizations.

ON-CAMPUS WORK PERMISSION REGULATIONS

- Job must be located on Minnesota State University Moorhead’s campus.
- Includes student employment jobs and graduate assistantships.
- For student employment, an employment list can be found at www.mnstate.edu/dragonjobs. International students are not eligible for “work study” jobs.
- Can begin working first semester at the University, once registered.
- Must be considered a full-time student by registration or valid Part-Time Enrollment Verification Form.
- Hours limited to part time (20 hours or less per week) during the academic year, and 40 hours per week during semester breaks and summer vacation period.
- Must get authorization. Meet with International Student Services to discuss appropriate documents.

PRACTICAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- Directly related to field of study.
- Must be in F-1 status for at least one academic year (except graduate students applying for a required internship).
- Must be in good academic standing.
- Work is limited to part time (20 hours or less per week) before completion of required coursework, full-time (21 hours and up) during vacation periods and after completion of required coursework for degree.
- Do not begin working until your authorization has been issued.
- Application materials can be obtained from ISS website at <http://www.mnstate.edu/international> . Schedule a meeting with ISS once you have completed the appropriate documents.

There are two types of practical training: curricular and optional.

Curricular Practical Training, or CPT, is an option available to F-1 students when employment is part of your academic program or when you will receive academic credit for work. This employment may be in the form of an internship, practicum, or any other work experience that is either required for your degree, as defined in the course catalog, or for which academic credit is awarded.

Optional Practical Training is the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to a practical work experience off campus. OPT is authorized by USCIS. This authorization generally takes 90 to 120 days to obtain but can take as long as 6 months. The maximum time granted to work in F-1 OPT status is 12 months, not to exceed 14 months after completion of studies. You may use some or all of the available 12 months of practical training during your course of study or save the full 12 months to use after graduation. While on optional practical training, you will be required to provide your current address to ISS, along with the name and location of your employer(s) and start date of employment.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Pre-graduation only.
- The work must be required by the degree program, be a co-op program or you must receive course credit for the internship/job.
- A student authorized for full-time CPT for 12 months loses future optional practical training eligibility.
- Authorization processed by ISS will be completed by the end of your appointment.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Total of 12 months can be used before and/or after graduation.
- The Department of Homeland Security takes 2-4 months to process the authorization; \$380 fee.
- Start date of employment must begin within 60 days of your degree-completion date for post-completion optional practical training.
- Your OPT application must be submitted to DHS *before* all requirements for the program of study have been completed.
- A 12 month period of OPT is available per degree program as long as the subsequent degree(s) is at a higher educational level.

OFF-CAMPUS WORK PERMISSION (GENERAL)

“If other employment opportunities are not available or are otherwise insufficient, an eligible F-1 student may request off-campus employment work authorization based upon severe economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student’s control. These circumstances may include loss of financial support or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student, substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate, inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student’s source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses.”

Eligibility

If you feel your circumstances qualify as a severe economic hardship, you should fill out the Economic Hardship Employment Authorization packet at www.mnstate.edu/international and schedule an appointment with ISS to review the documents. To be eligible to apply for off-campus employment authorization based on severe economic hardship, F-1 students must meet the following conditions:

- Based on economic necessity.
- Very difficult to obtain.
- Must document sudden, unforeseen change in financial circumstances.
- Job not required to be related to field of study.
- Must be in F-1 status at least one academic year.
- Must be in good academic standing.

- Work is limited to half time during the academic year, full time (20 or more hours) during vacation periods.
- Do not begin working until your authorization has been issued by the DHS.
- The Department of Homeland Security takes 2-4 months to approve or deny an authorization; \$380 fee. Application does not guarantee EAD.

4. Minnesota State University Moorhead

Important Documents and Procedures

Important Documents

STUDENT ID CARD (DRAGON ID)

As an international student at Minnesota State University Moorhead, you will have at least two forms of picture identification (I.D.): your passport and your MSUM student I.D. card, or “Dragon ID.” You do not need to use your passport for everyday identification. Keep it at home in a safe place. Keep your MSUM I.D. with you at all times. You need it to access certain facilities on campus, including the library and computer labs. Occasionally you will be asked to show your I.D. card to University department staff members as proof that you are a student at MSUM and that you are entitled to use the services provided by these offices. Your Dragon ID is also needed to ride the MAT bus.

STUDENT SCHEDULE

Any time you register for a class (from home, a computer lab or at a registration center) you will generate a student schedule for that semester. You may view and print a schedule for the current academic term any time you like by going online to E-Services.

Payment and Payment Plan Procedures

You will be able to access an online billing statement from E-Services each term that you register. Once you have logged on, you have access to your academic record, your schedule and your fee statement. This bill includes tuition, fees, student health insurance, on-campus housing and certain other campus charges. You can also view your account online in order to monitor your current balance. You may pay in person at the Business Office, online, or by campus or U.S. mail. If payment is sent by mail, be sure to send it several days before the due date so it is received on time. When you applied to Minnesota State University Moorhead, you indicated on your application forms that you had sufficient funds to pay for your tuition, fees, insurance, room and meals. MSUM’s standard policy is that all students must pay their bill in full by the due date each semester. **Please read the following carefully as it will affect your ability to stay in school and remain in status.**

1. MSUM does not mail bills to the students; it is your responsibility to ensure that you have paid your balance. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain their balance due by checking their account balance online at <http://www.mnstate.edu/eservices/>. Payment plans may be setup online through E-Services or in person at the Business Office.
2. **Payment Information & Due Dates:** <http://www.mnstate.edu/business-services/>
3. Late Registrations:
 - Students who are dropped for nonpayment will be required to pay their balance completely before they are allowed to add their classes back.

- New students that register after the drop for nonpayment date shall require payment in full at the time of registration.

Registration Information on MSUM's Website

In order to access the most accurate, up-to-date information about MSUM's course offerings, degree requirements and registration guides, please refer to the online registration website E-Services. Some of the features included on this site are:

Web Registration: You register for classes on this site. You may also cancel and add courses after you have registered. (The web registration will not allow International Students to drop below 12 credit hours per semester. If you are looking to drop a course, add a new course before you drop the course you do not want.)

Semester Class Schedule: Lists of all courses in all departments being offered in a particular semester, also scheduling and registration information.

Student Record: Contains information on academic advisers, majors and minors, fees, DARS Evaluation (transfer of credits from other schools) and your current academic record.

Catalog: Descriptions of a semester's courses, with information provided by instructors. The Catalog also includes information about degree programs, program requirements, course offerings and faculty members. The catalog can be accessed by going to the following link: <http://www.mnstate.edu/academics/collegesdepartments.aspx>

E-mail Account

As a student of Minnesota State University Moorhead you will utilize various electronic resources and electronic mail. You will be given your e-mail account during orientation after receiving your Dragon ID and your PIN Number (password). It is very important that you use MSUM's email even if you already have another e-mail account.

Messages from your professors or messages pertaining to changes in the immigration information will be sent to your MSUM e-mail account only. If you use another e-mail service, please forward your MSUM e-mails to that account so you do not miss information that can affect your legal status in the United States. If you have problems or questions about your MSUM email account, please contact the I.T. Help Desk at 218-477-2603.

MSUM Facilities and Services

Bookstore

Minnesota State University Moorhead's Bookstore is located in MacLean Hall. In the bookstore, students find their own books and pay for them at the counter as they exit. Occasionally there are used books on the shelves. These are less expensive than new books and are usually in good condition.

<http://bookstore.mnstate.edu/>

Career Development Center

Career counselors offer exploration of career options and opportunities to fine-tune job search skills. They also arrange for interviews both on and off campus, participate in regional job fairs, publish a weekly Jobline, and offer free resume-writing and job-seeking skills workshops. <http://www.mnstate.edu/career/>

Center for Arts

The Roland Dille Center for the Arts houses an auditorium, theatre, gallery, recital hall, instrumental and choral rehearsal rooms, electronic music studio, synthesizer and keyboard labs, recording library and listening room, 22 individual practice rooms, two scene shops, drama rehearsal room, dressing rooms, costume shop, classrooms, and studios for painting, drawing, design, glass blowing, ceramics, sculpture, graphics, crafts and heat processing. The Center is also the scene of year-round cultural activity.

Counseling Center

MSUM's Counseling Center is staffed by professionals who offer assistance in career planning, skills building, academic planning and personal counseling. The Counseling Center services are free to students. Free peer tutoring is also available. <http://www.mnstate.edu/hendrix/counseling.aspx>

Dining Facilities

The university offers a complete dining service. Meals are provided for all students living in campus residence halls, depending on the meal plan that they select. Off-campus students and guests are also welcome to use the dining facilities. <https://mnstate.sodexomyway.com/dining-choices/index.html>

Disability Services

Minnesota State University Moorhead has a commitment to ensure that all students with physical, sensory, psychological or learning disabilities have equal access to programs and services. Disability Services addresses the needs of students who have disabilities or other health impairments that may interfere with a successful college experience. <http://www.mnstate.edu/disability/>

Hendrix Health Clinic

Hendrix Health Center is a medical clinic for students located on MSUM's campus. The mission of the health center is to support academic success and personal development through the integration of health education and clinical treatment of illness. Staff at the clinic provides non-emergency medical care. There is also a pharmacy on site to fill any drug prescriptions that you may need. The clinic and pharmacy hours during the regular school year are Monday – Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm. <http://www.mnstate.edu/hendrix/>

Dragon Jobs

The Dragon Jobs manages the listing of a variety of available on-campus jobs. This is an excellent place to begin looking for on-campus employment. www.mnstate.edu/dragonjobs

Library

Minnesota State University Moorhead's Livingston Lord Library is one of the finest in the area, giving access to virtually every other campus library in the state and region. It has 365,000 volumes, 1,626 periodical titles and is open 94 hours a week. <http://www.mnstate.edu/library/>

MSUM Wellness Center

The Wellness Center provides an opportunity for an active and healthy lifestyle to become a focus of our campus culture. The Wellness Center offers different programs and classes. <http://www.mnstate.edu/wellness/>

Write Site

The Write Site is a writing resource center for Minnesota State University Moorhead students. It offers help and answers questions regarding writing. Tutors, MSUM students, provide one-on-one guidance with any kind of writing project-essays, essay exams, research papers, abstracts and summaries, resumes and letters. This is not for English language tutoring, but for writing assistance. <http://www.mnstate.edu/write/>

5. Health Care in the U.S. and at MSUM

Health Care Options for International Students

The cost of health care in the United States is very high. A short stay in the hospital can cost thousands of dollars. Individuals must make their own plans for dealing with health care issues. International students and their dependents that are in the U.S. on temporary, nonimmigrant student visas are not eligible for U.S. government programs like Medical Assistance or Medicaid. You can protect yourself from the high cost of health care by obtaining health insurance coverage.

HEALTH INSURANCE

International students are required to have the student insurance plan offered through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' System Office. Information on this policy is available at www.mnstate.edu/international. In order to be eligible for MnSCU Student Injury and Sickness Insurance, students must be registered full-time. To obtain the MnSCU health insurance, students registered for less than full-time (and all non-degree seeking students) must contact the insurance company.

MEDICAL SERVICES FOR YOUR FAMILY

If your family members are covered by health insurance, arrange medical services through a provider that accepts your insurance. Verify coverage with the insurance company as well as the provider before scheduling appointments. Important: If you have uninsured family members, it is your responsibility to pay for any medical services they receive. Dependent Coverage can be added under the MnSCU insurance plan if you would like.

HENDRIX HEALTH CENTER

All regularly enrolled students are eligible for medical care at Minnesota State University Moorhead's Hendrix Health Center. Students not enrolled during summer are charged a co-pay at Hendrix. Its purpose is to provide quality medical care to students and to assist them in acquiring and maintaining good health practices.

A physician, nurse practitioner, nurses, licensed addition counselor, licensed social worker, support staff and pharmacist staff the Hendrix Health Center. Facilities are available for diagnosis, treatment and consultation. There is no charge for visits but there may be some fees for some services, labs and prescription medication. There is an onsite full service pharmacy staffed by a Dr. of Pharmacy. Students are referred to outside physicians and/or medical facilities if their medical requirements exceed those of Hendrix Health Center.

Hendrix Health Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and closed on weekends and MSUM holidays. Summer hours are limited - see HHC website link for these hours. Students should call 911 for life threatening emergencies. www.mnstate.edu/hendrix/

MEDICAL CONSULTATION

You may contact Hendrix Health Center Nursing Staff at 477-2211 for any healthcare questions or for medical triage. They will discuss your symptoms with you and may recommend home treatment measures or assist you with an appointment to see a healthcare provider at Hendrix Health Center. For all clinic appointments you must present your insurance card at the time of your visit. Insurance will be filed. If once evaluated you need a referral to an outside medical facility, arrangements will be made for you. The co-pay for an outside office is reduced if a referral is made by Hendrix Health Center prior to the visit.

IMMUNIZATIONS – All students must complete online verification of immunization requirements for the following: TD (tetanus) done within the past 10 years and MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) 1 dose. Please complete this online at www.mnstate.edu/hendrix/.

TB HEALTH SCREENING

International students are required to complete the TB screening questionnaire upon arrival to campus at MSUM (this will be done during orientation and is coordinated by Hendrix Health Center). Students from high risk countries are required to complete TB testing in the United States. Hendrix Health Center nurses will determine if you are high risk for TB and request you to do the TB blood test. TB test results and chest x-rays results from outside the United States will not be accepted. Hendrix Health Center has a scheduled TB testing clinic for international students during orientation at MSUM. The international insurance plan covers the cost of the TB test. If your results are positive you will be contacted for further instructions.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

You may not use any type of public funding during your stay in the United States as a nonimmigrant. Examples of public funding include medical assistance, public housing and community services such as day care benefits.

Although state and local services may determine non-immigrants to be eligible for some form of public assistance, federal law prohibits its use. U.S. government officials may deny an entry visa request or entry into the United States if they determine an individual has previously used public funds.

“OVER-THE-COUNTER” REMEDIES

For minor aches and pains, or common colds and flu, medications are available at drug stores, pharmacies and discount department stores. Medications that do not require a doctor’s prescription, such as aspirin, cold and flu medication, and other pain relievers, are often referred to as “over-the-counter” medications.

Emergency and Urgent Care

Health care providers distinguish between emergency services and urgent care. *Emergency services* are those required for a serious injury or life-threatening illness. *Urgent care* is given for problems that are less serious but cannot wait for a regular doctor appointment.

EMERGENCY CARE

You should go to a hospital emergency department only if the problem is life-threatening or extremely serious. Services provided at an emergency room cost much more than the same services at a regular clinic. The Emergency Room is located at Sanford Health, 801 Broadway North, Fargo, ND: 701-234-2000, Sanford emergency phone: 701-234-5121. Innovis is located at 300 32nd Avenue S, Fargo ND: emergency phone 9-364-8400.

For Emergencies: Call 911

Ask-A-Nurse (24 hour nurse phone line): 701-234-5000

URGENT CARE

Call Hendrix Health Center or your doctor’s office first—you may be able to get an immediate appointment. If not, go to an urgent care department or clinic designated by your health insurance plan. Be sure you know where you can go for immediate care before the need arises.

Dental Care

Dental insurance is not as easily obtained as medical insurance. If you do not have dental insurance, you will be required to pay for dental services, usually before services are rendered. Below are a few more inexpensive options for dental care.

- Family HealthCare Center provides services to walk-ins, no appointments – first come, first served. Charges apply. Visit www.famhealthcare.org/services/dental.html for more information.

- Family HealthCare Center, Moorhead Dental Clinic, Family Service Center, 715 North 11th Street, Suite 106 B, Moorhead, MN 56560, 218-299-7830
 - Family HealthCare Center, 306 4th Street North (Lower Level), Fargo, ND 58102, 701-271-3332
 - Minnesota State Community and Technical College – Moorhead. Charges apply. MSCTC Dental Clinic, 1900 28th Avenue South, Moorhead, MN 56560, 218-299-6560
 - The Apple Tree Dental clinic in the city of Hawley is near the city of Moorhead. Apple Tree Dental, 520 Main Street, Hawley, MN 56549, 218-483-1038 or toll free 888-683-1038
 - For Dental Emergencies, students can contact Red River Valley Dental Access. They will help students at a very affordable price: 701-364-5364.
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6. Culture in the United States

U.S. Cultural Values

No doubt you already know a great deal about the U.S. and perhaps about U.S. Americans. Yet if you are new to studying in the U.S. there are probably a few things that may surprise you and possibly challenge you about some common U.S. values. We describe a few here so that you may be prepared for these values and how they differ (or don't) from your own cultural values.

The Importance of Time

In the United States, time is treated like a tangible asset and is used carefully and productively. Being "on time" (arriving at the stated time) for class or meeting with friends is of the utmost importance.

Work Ethic

Like people in many countries, U.S. Americans place a high value on hard work. However, they tend to feel personally responsible for their accomplishments and take personal credit for what they've done. It is believed that people achieve results on the basis of how hard they work, so they judge others by how hard they work and how task-oriented they are.

Achievement

A very high value is placed on a person's accomplishments and productivity. Individuals evaluate themselves and are evaluated by others in terms of their achievements and accomplishments.

Individualism

U.S. Americans tend to view themselves first and foremost as individuals with both freedom and responsibility to manage their own lives, make their own decisions and accomplish their own goals. Families and friends are important, but individuals are expected to consider their own needs, desires and values. U.S. Americans seem to be less comfortable being obligated to or dependent on others. People are also held individually accountable for things they have promised to do, and international students may find that they are expected to do more of their work independently than they are accustomed to at home.

Direct Communication and Problem-Solving Style

While this varies greatly by region and family background, people in the United States generally place a higher priority on clear, factual communication. This means that at times, U.S. Americans may choose to be direct even if it means possibly hurting or embarrassing another person.

Pragmatism

U.S. Americans can be pragmatic and oriented toward practical matters. They are attracted to things and ideas that are seen as "useful." This goes together with the orientation toward work and achievement. There is a high value on being able to relate "theory" to "practice." Understanding these values can help you understand why things are as they are in the U.S. and help you to adjust to your new "home-away-from-home".

Friendship and Dating in the United States

You may find that people in the United States have very different ideas than you do about making friends. Because of the value put on friendliness, U.S. Americans sometimes misread people from other countries who are reserved or formal as being cold or rude. In the U.S., saying "Good morning," "Hi" or "Hello" with a smile will usually indicate that you do not have any bad feelings towards colleagues, faculty or friends. Until you get used to it, this friendliness (smiling and being sociable and helpful) can be confused with an invitation for a friendship.

U.S. Americans are often much slower to form deep relationships than first impressions may indicate. They may shy away from international students out of respect for your privacy or to avoid offense, so you may need to be the one to initiate friendships.

Because U.S. Americans are “doers,” it is helpful when trying to make friends to ask someone to do something with you: go out for coffee, to a movie, shopping, bowling, etc. Another approach is to join a club or activity on campus or in the community.

Generally, dating among students is very casual due to the expense of going out. There are no set rules in terms of who asks for the date or who pays. In many cases the person who asks for the date will pay, but one should be prepared to cover their share of the expenses. Volunteering to cover some of the costs would be a nice gesture and probably appreciated by your date.

Adapted from *American Ways* by Gary Althen, University of Iowa

Perspectives on Friendships: U.S. American and Contrasting Viewpoints

U.S. AMERICAN	GENERAL CONTRASTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A friend is anyone from a passing acquaintance to a lifetime intimate. 2. Friends are often limited to an area of common interest, such as work, school or recreation. 3. Friends gather to enjoy an activity together. 4. If someone has a problem, it is acceptable to go to a professional (i.e., counselor) for help. 5. Friends may be “dropped” if they do not live up to our expectations or standards of behavior. 6 Friendships cross genders. 7 Friendships cross generations. 8 One schedules time to see friends. 9 Americans act friendly and informally with almost everyone. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A friend is someone with whom one is very close. 2. A friendship embraces the whole person. 3. Friends gather just to be together. 4. Someone with a problem goes to a friend or family member for help at any time. 5. One tolerates a lot from someone who is a friend. 6. Friendships are made only with the same gender. 7. Friendships are made with people of the same age. 8. Friends are available at any time. 9. People who don’t know each other maintain a formal relationship.

Adapted from *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, by E. C. Stewart

Protocol

FIRST NAMES AND TITLES

There are strong regional and cultural differences within the United States with regard to formality and the use of titles with names. These include “Mr.” (pronounced “Mister” and meaning male, married or single), “Ms.” (pronounced “Miz,” meaning female, married or single), “Mrs. (pronounced “Missus,” meaning a married female), “Prof.” (short for “Professor,” meaning someone who has a faculty appointment or tenure at a college or university), or “Dr.” (short for “Doctor,” meaning a medical doctor or someone with a Ph.D.).

In the Midwest, people generally use first names when speaking. This can make addressing professors and staff very confusing for international students when they first arrive. Do you call a professor by a title such as “Professor Brown,” or do you call her by first name, “Judith,” as you may hear other students do? Sometimes it’s one way, and sometimes it’s another, so how can you tell when each is appropriate?

It is best when dealing with professors to err on the side of politeness and use their titles — Professor, Doctor, Mr., or Ms. Often instructors will tell you on the first day of class what they would like to be called. If you are not sure, it is appropriate to ask them how they would like to be addressed. Graduate students, especially graduate assistants, are more likely than undergraduates to be on a first-name basis with their professors. And most professors are on a first-name basis with each other. Office staff, receptionists and administrative assistants are almost always on a first-name basis with students.

It is most important to remember that informality is not an indication of disrespect. It is simply a cultural habit that may indicate mutual respect, equality and a willingness to engage in open dialogue and intellectual exchange.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

In the United States one’s way of dressing is expected to suit the circumstance. As students, dressing casually (jeans, shorts, t-shirts) is acceptable. In the workplace or other professional settings, follow the norms of that particular place. Professional attire for men generally requires dress slacks, shirt and tie or a suit. For women it may require a suit (with slacks or skirt), dress or skirt and blouse. Be observant of what others are wearing or ask a supervisor before wearing casual clothes. Also note that because people are dressed casually doesn’t mean it is an informal environment or that supervisors or professors are to be treated as equals.

DEALING WITH ORGANIZATIONS

We have all experienced frustration in dealing with organizations. This frustration is often worse in a foreign country. When it is combined with common misperceptions that many international students have about the roles and status of office personnel in their host country, there can be serious misunderstandings. This can lead to anger, hurt feelings and even greater difficulties in getting what you need.

Guidelines for Getting Things Done

- There is a strong trend toward informality in the United States. In many countries, administrative assistants and receptionists are trained to use specific, formal behavior in order to serve people courteously, including set greetings such as, “Good morning, may I help you?” In the United States, especially the Midwest, the desire to be on “equal footing” with others tends to make people uncomfortable with this kind of formal behavior. You may encounter a very casual attitude from many of the University staff with whom you have business. In comparison with your background and experience, you may find this very helpful and courteous, or casual to the point of disrespect. Try not to take it personally!
- Be respectful of all employees. In the United States, administrative assistants and receptionists often have power to make decisions, and they may have the information you need.
- Remember that in the United States, many rules really are followed, and procedures often are not negotiable. Arguing or demanding to see someone “in charge” will not lead to success. It is more effective

to explain exactly what you need and what kind of problem you have been having, and ask, “What do I do now?” or “Is there someone who could help me?” Even though employees usually can’t “bend the rules”, if they like you, they are more likely to put a little extra energy into problem solving.

- If you follow procedures and instructions carefully, a lot of time and energy can be saved. In the United States, many things are done over e-mail, phone or through the mail, making a personal visit unnecessary. Take the names, e-mails and phone numbers of people you talk to, in case some delay or complication does arise and you need further help.

Adapted from *American Ways* by Gary Althen, University of Iowa

Legal Issues

While many internationals may expect the U.S. to be the “land of the free”, it is often not long after arrival that sojourners realize this is a country of many rules and regulations. As you will see from the following description of some of the laws that may affect you, the rules and regulations are intended to protect the rights of the individual - the basis for the U.S. legal system.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Smoking in public buildings is prohibited by the Minnesota Clean Air Act. Smoking is generally allowed in certain outdoor areas and in one’s home. If you want to smoke, first look for “no smoking” signs or ask an employee to find out if smoking is allowed. When in someone else’s home, you should step outside to smoke. Cigarettes and other tobacco products may not be purchased or used by people under the age of 18.

Alcohol use in the United States is also regulated by law. In Minnesota, alcohol may not be legally purchased or consumed by anyone under the age of 21, and it may not be consumed while in an automobile. Driving while intoxicated is considered a serious crime, punishable by large fines, jail sentences and the loss of driving privileges. Bartenders and others who serve alcohol (such as hosts of parties) can be held legally responsible if a guest becomes intoxicated and injures another person. It is also a serious crime to offer or provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21.

DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

Street drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates and other mood-altering substances that are not prescribed by a medical doctor may not be possessed or sold legally in the U.S. Strict laws and severe penalties apply. Medications prescribed by doctors may not be sold or used by anyone other than the patient.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND STALKING

Sexual harassment and stalking laws legally protect individuals from being victims of sexual and other harassment. These laws apply to all within the U.S. - citizens, residents and visitors.

Sexual harassment is the misuse of power that has sexual overtones and generally falls under the following circumstances: as a condition of an individual’s employment or academic advancement, or in a situation that unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work or academic performance. Sexual harassment can be verbal or physical. As a result of sexual harassment laws, many U.S. Americans now avoid physical contact with acquaintances; an exception to this is the hand shake, which is a recognized form of greeting.

It is also illegal to “stalk” an individual by following the person, continually making unwanted phone calls or other unwelcome attempts to contact another person. If you force unwanted physical or verbal contact on another person, you may violate Minnesota law as well as social norms.

If you have questions about what sexual harassment is, or feel you are being harassed, you are encouraged to contact ISS or the Counseling Center. If you believe you are being stalked, contact the police.

DOMESTIC ASSAULT

Minnesota law prohibits individuals from inflicting bodily harm on their spouse or partner and children. Police have the ability, under the law, to arrest and jail a person, even if the victim does not want to press criminal charges. Often police will proceed with such action.

U.S. CRIMINAL SEXUAL CONDUCT LAWS

It is important to have an understanding of U.S. law in the Criminal Sexual Conduct Code. Individuals have the right to stop sexual contact at any time. This means that when a person says “no” to any type of sexual contact, it violates the law if the partner attempts to emotionally or verbally coerce or physically force that person into continuing the sexual contact. Violation of the Criminal Sexual Conduct Code ranges from forced rape to improperly (without consent) touching the clothed or unclothed intimate body parts of another person. Violation of these Minnesota laws can result in a prison or jail term of one to forty years and/or a fine from \$3,000 to \$40,000. If you become a sexual assault victim, contact the local police. The Counseling Center can also provide assistance.

SHOPLIFTING

You may find shopping here very different from what you are used to at home. Generally, merchandise is sold “self-service,” and clerks are not close at hand. It is very important when shopping in U.S. stores, especially very large stores, to use a cart or basket provided by the store. Never put a piece of merchandise in your pocket, your purse or a fold of your clothing. If you do, it may appear to a store employee that you intend to take it without paying for it. In the past, such misunderstandings have led to international students’ arrests by the police on charges of “shoplifting.” Stores often have devices attached to items to prevent shoplifting and you may sometimes find you are being watched by an employee or a hidden camera. Shoplifting is a crime, and you can be taken to court even over a misunderstanding.

RENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Landlord-Tenant and Consumer Issues

Rights and Responsibilities of Non-Immigrants

While non-immigrants may have essentially the same legal rights and obligations as citizens, they are perhaps more likely to encounter legal problems. Language and cultural barriers, differing value systems and lack of familial support are all factors which can cause a problem to significantly worsen for the non-immigrant student. Among the most common problems encountered by non-immigrant students are those involving landlord-tenant and consumer issues. Both of these areas can involve complicated contracts and transactions. These two areas of the law are particularly well-suited to preventative strategies. Basic and general advice can go a long way to help students avoid or limit legal problems in these areas. The following are general guidelines which may be helpful in preventing problems with landlord-tenant and consumer transactions:

- Never sign any document until it has been fully read and understood. Contracts cannot be easily broken.
- Keep written records of all transactions. Get a receipt for cash payments.
- Do not rely on verbal assurances or promises from landlords or sellers of consumer goods; document them in writing.
- When purchasing or renting, inspect the goods thoroughly prior to signing any agreement. This includes a thorough inspection of an apartment to be rented. Document the condition of the apartment in writing.
- Be aware of how any transaction conflicts with immigration and visa requirements.

Laws related to landlord-tenant and consumer issues vary from state to state. Some regulated activities and parties which are commonly covered by federal and state consumer laws include:

- Door to door sales
- Club contracts (i.e. health clubs)
- Seller's duty to disclose defects

- Motor vehicle odometer tampering, dealer's sales contracts, sales tactics
- False advertising
- Mail order transactions
- Credit card billing
- Collection agencies
- Purchase and sale of goods - warranties
- Rental deposit refunds

Students who encounter problems related to the above items should be advised to seek legal assistance.

*Adapted from: Barbara Boysen, University of Minnesota
NAFSA (6-89)*

LEGAL QUESTIONS

If you have legal questions, we have several lawyers employed as professors here on campus. Please contact ISS to inquire about who you can talk with.

Personal Safety

Although the Moorhead community is relatively safe, it is not free from crime. With this being said, you can take some simple precautions to keep yourself and your belongings safe while you are living here. Trust your instincts regarding people and places, and do not be afraid to ask for help. If you feel you are in danger, notify the police by calling 911.

Campus Security provides a free escort service 24 hours a day, every day, where an employee of Campus Security will walk with you to your destination on Minnesota State University Moorhead's campus. The number to call is 218-477-2449. There are also emergency phones and campus phones located around campus which you can use to call 911 if you have an emergency. Below are some additional suggestions to protect yourself and your property:

- After dark, walk with someone else and stay on well-lit streets.
- Do not give your name, telephone number, home address or e-mail address to someone whom you do not know well. Ask the person for a contact number if you are interested in meeting again.
- You can suppress your personal information from the MSUM online directory by contacting the Records Office at 218-477-2565.
- Learn that it is acceptable to say "no" directly. Anything else may be taken as "yes" or "maybe."
- Do not wear headphones, as they may decrease your ability to hear noises around you.
- Wear bright or light colors to increase your visibility at night.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic if no sidewalk is available.
- Have your keys out and ready for use when approaching your building or car.
- Always carry your cell phone with you to make a phone call.
- Do not leave any valuables—your backpack, purse, books, etc.—unattended.
- When using an ATM machine, try to find one in a well-lit and busy area. Avoid counting your cash where other people can see you.
- Lock your room whenever you leave it, as well as at night when you are studying or sleeping.
- Do not let strangers into your home to use the phone or for any other reason.
- Never give your credit card number or Social Security Number on a telephone call you did not initiate.

Health and Hygiene

This section provides basic information about health concerns in the United States. Although this will not be new information to most international students, there are some students who find it very helpful.

CLEANLINESS

U.S. Americans place a strong emphasis on cleanliness. Daily bathing, use of a deodorant and brushing one's teeth twice a day is recommended. Many people in the United States become uncomfortable when they are in close contact with someone who has noticeable body or mouth odor. Though U.S. Americans communicate directly on many topics, they will probably avoid that person rather than discuss the problem.

Personal care products such as soaps, deodorants, shampoos, toothpaste, mouthwash and feminine hygiene products can be purchased in grocery, drug or discount stores. Pharmacies are the best place to ask questions about specific product information. If the clerk is unable to help you, talk directly with the pharmacist.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Toilet facilities are known by many names. In Minnesota, you will be understood if you ask for the restroom, toilet, ladies' or men's room or bathroom. Most public restrooms have two separate facilities, one for men and one for women, but some facilities may be "unisex," meaning they are used by both males and females (usually not at the same time). Women's restrooms often have a vending machine with tampons and/or sanitary napkins, as well as a container for disposing of used ones. Paper towels and feminine hygiene products should not be flushed down the toilet.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

Generally, U.S. Americans may seem very open about sex, but this openness does not necessarily mean that they are promiscuous or even sexually active. Because of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as unplanned pregnancy, it is important that individuals share responsibility with their partner in having protected sex. "Safe sex" is highly promoted in the United States—you will see television, magazine and newspaper ads for it. The use of a latex condom is regarded as essential to safe sex. Condoms can be purchased in drug stores or discount stores such as Wal-Mart. Women as well as men may carry condoms.

CONTRACEPTIVES (BIRTH CONTROL)

Protection against unwanted pregnancy is available in both prescription and nonprescription form. The OB/GYN (obstetrics/gynecology) department in any clinic can provide information on the effectiveness of various birth control methods and help you determine what would best meet your needs. You will be required to have a pelvic exam before any prescription contraceptives, including the pill, diaphragm or Norplant implants can be given. Nonprescription contraceptives include condoms and vaginal spermicides. All nonprescription contraceptives can be purchased in a pharmacy or in a discount store such as Wal-Mart. Proper use of a contraceptive and knowledge of its effectiveness are important factors in preventing pregnancy. Hendrix Health Center provides contraceptives. The Counseling Center is also a great resource for students who find themselves or their partner pregnant.

Living in a Different Culture

Living in a culture different from your own is an exciting and often challenging experience. Besides finding housing, registering for courses and getting to know a new city, you will probably go through "cultural adjustment" - the transition to a new culture. Most people will experience some "culture shock" as part of this process.

WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?

"Culture shock" is the name given to a feeling of disorientation or confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one. Coming to Moorhead from another country, you will encounter a multitude of new things—buildings, stores, and even the trees may look different. Food may not be

the same, and people may look, speak and act differently from people at home. Even the smells may be different. Your English might not serve you as well as you expected it would. You might not be able to convey your full personality in English, with the result that you think other people are seeing you as a child. And your family and friends are far away. As a result of all this you may feel confused, unsure of yourself and may have some doubts about the wisdom of your decision to come here.

Symptoms

Some people are more affected by culture shock than others. People experiencing culture shock tend to become nervous and unusually tired. They may want to sleep a lot or may have difficulty sleeping. They may write many letters home. They may feel frustrated and hostile toward the local people. They may get excessively angry about minor irritations. It is not unusual to become very dependent on fellow nationals. All these feelings may make it difficult to deal with residents of the host country and use their language.

COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Different people react differently to culture shock. Some become depressed or even physically ill. Others are stimulated by the new experiences. Here are some ideas that might be helpful to you:

Maintain your Perspective

Try to remember that thousands of people have come to Minnesota from other countries and have survived (even when they arrived in the cold of winter).

Take Some Practical Steps

In *The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning*, J. Daniel Hess makes these suggestions for people who are experiencing the loneliness or distress of culture shock:

1. **Find people to interact with.** Ask them questions. As you take an interest in them, your feelings will have a focal point outside of yourself.
2. **Surround yourself with familiar things.** A favorite jacket, a photo, a CD, etc. Make your environment pleasant and reinforcing.
3. **Slow down.** Simplify your daily tasks. Relax. Let your emotions catch up with the newness around you.
4. **Develop patterns.** Follow the same routine each day so that you get a sense of returning to the familiar.
5. **Give expression to your feelings.** Cry. Laugh. Sing. Pray. Draw a picture.
6. **Revise your goals** to accommodate detours instead of scolding yourself for failures.
7. **Keep working on language skills.** Practice the American idiom, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."
8. **Confide to friends**, and even your host family, that you are sad. Their support will warm you.
9. **Make a few small decisions and carry them out.** Your resolve in small things will increase your confidence. Be assured that, however stressful, culture shock passes if you are willing to let the process of cross-cultural adaptation take its course.

Be Patient with Yourself and with Other People

Adjustment is a gradual, day-by-day process. It normally takes some time—a few weeks, a few months and maybe longer—for people to become comfortable in a new country.

Take Care of Yourself

It is particularly important in times of stress to eat a balanced diet, get enough rest and get regular physical exercise. Take breaks for recreation or socializing. Studying or working constantly, without taking care of yourself, may make yourself sick, and make your entire situation worse.

Realize that You May be Treated as a Stereotype

On many occasions, international students will be responded to as "a foreign student" or "a student from country X." Whether the stereotype is positive or negative depends on the person's experience, not on anything about you

personally. Try not to let this discourage you. Try to start some interesting conversations about the subject of stereotypes—what peoples’ stereotypes are, where they came from and so on. And remember that you probably have your own stereotypes about U.S. Americans.

Talk with Experienced International Students from your Country and Other Countries

Their observations and advice can help you. Ask them what things they have found most bothersome, most interesting and most perplexing. Ask them what sources of information and support have been most helpful.

Learn the Local Criteria for Success

Find out what is considered a good performance in studies, research, social relations and other aspects of your life here. You can get information about this from teachers, native students, secretaries, neighbors and many others.

Realize How the Status of your Role Here Compares to the Status to Which You are Accustomed

Different societies attach different importance to roles or positions; for example, in many countries, the role of “university student” or “professor” is accorded more respect or status than it is in the United States. It can be difficult to adjust to having a lower social status than you are accustomed to. It helps to recognize that you personally are not being downgraded, but that you happen to be in a society where respect is expressed differently than is the case at home.

Avoid Being Excessively Influenced by Dramatic Events

Newcomers to a society may have a particular, very noticeable experience from which they generalize about the new society and the people who live in it. In fact, the experience might be very unusual, not a safe basis for generalization. For example, a new male international student found that his residence hall roommate removed all of his clothes when he was in the room studying or relaxing. The new international student at first supposed this was what U.S. students customarily did, and wondered if he should do the same. He wisely asked around, though, and found that his roommate’s behavior was not typical. If you have a dramatic experience that influences your opinions or feelings about local people, discuss the experience with others and get an idea whether it is typical or unusual.

Do What You Think is Appropriate and Explain If Necessary

New students should act in the way they consider appropriate, and then, if the host responds in an unexpected way, give an explanation of the culture and customs that led you to behave in the way you did.

Learn From the Experience

Moving into a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It gives you the opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living and compare it to your own. Here are some questions that you might try to answer as you encounter the local people:

- How do they make friends?
- How do friends treat each other?
- Who respects whom, and how is respect shown?
- What attitudes do they have about their families?
- What is the relationship between males and females?
- How do people spend their time? Why?
- How do they deal with conflicts or disagreements?
- What do they talk about?
- What kind of evidence do they seek or use when evaluating an idea or trying to win an argument?

You can compare the answers you get to the answers you would get to the same questions in your country, and you can help yourself develop a better understanding of your own society and of the one where you are living now.

Visit International Student Services

A discussion with the ISS staff can help achieve a useful perspective on culture shock and insights into U.S. culture. The Counseling Center is also a great resource for students or family members who are dealing with depression based on their adjustment to U.S. Culture.

ADJUSTMENT FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN

Spouses and children of international students go through the same phases of cultural adjustment as the students themselves and can benefit from many of the suggestions above. But their initial attitudes and feelings may be different. A spouse may have left a job in the home country, may not have wanted to come to the United States, may have a lower level of English proficiency and may have lost the support of family members with an active role in child care and household matters. If the family's economic status has changed, this can also lead to greater frustration for the spouse, especially if the spouse has been accustomed to help with cooking, cleaning, and child care. The spouse needs to adjust to a new country and new roles. During the initial period, the spouse may feel a loss of self-confidence and independence. He or she may feel very isolated and lonely. These feelings may be more severe if the student is deeply involved in studies and is often gone from home.

Spouses who have been in this position advise that the best way to overcome these difficulties is to go out and meet other people. This may seem frightening at first, but the new spouse will meet many others who feel the same frustrations, and talking with them can be quite helpful. A good way to meet other people around campus is through ISS sponsored events such as Celebration of Nations, ISO events and other cultural events. Another suggestion is to take as many English classes as possible, because the spouse's feelings of insecurity will decrease with easier communication. Additional advice: join some organizations or do volunteer work. In Moorhead there are many groups and volunteer opportunities. Moorhead is home to people from all over the world; spouses can find cultural activities and religious assemblies, all of which are good opportunities to meet people with common interests.

Children also need time to adjust to being in a new place. In general they learn English very quickly, but school, daycare or babysitters may be frightening for them at first. Younger children may want a parent to be with them all the time and older children may want their parents to stay with them for a short time at daycare or school. Talk with their teachers to see if this is possible. The teacher may also be a good source of information about other activities, such as sports, music or art in which your child can participate.

One key issue facing parents who are raising children in another culture is the degree to which they feel comfortable in seeing their children adopt the local ways. Some international students do not mind if their children seem "American", but others prefer for their children to behave according to the standards of the culture back home. Such parents want their children to do well in school here and to make friends, but may fear that the children are losing their native identity and are adopting inappropriate behaviors.

Children are observant and learn quickly. They may want an American first name and may learn attitudes about independence and choice (from school, friends and the media) that you believe are not appropriate for your culture. Each family needs to decide how important it is to them to help their children retain their native culture. The importance of this will probably vary with the child's age and the length of the parents' planned stay in the United States. It may be helpful for you to talk with other parents to see how they deal with this perplexing issue.

"Living in a Different Culture" Office of International Students and Scholars, University of Iowa.

UNDERSTANDING THIS MODEL OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Pre-Departure Anxiety

There is a lot to do before going to another country. People often become overwhelmed with details and are nervous about leaving family and friends for so long. Boarding the plane can bring enthusiasm back.

"The Honeymoon"

Just like with many new relationships, the first reaction to a new culture is often euphoric. You have finally arrived after months, maybe years, of planning. The differences in scenery, food, language or customs can be exhilarating!

Initial Culture Shock

This is where the excitement of differences can often quickly turn to frustration. For many, the shock can come at the first meal when familiar foods are nowhere to be found. For others, it is the realization that speaking a second language all day is not only exhausting; it's frustrating to feel limited in your communication. For others, the initial shock is an accumulation of many factors, including the lack of familiar faces and cultural cues.

Surface Adjustment

This can occur when you have settled into a new routine. Maybe you have successfully registered and made it to your classes. Perhaps you've met some people in your classes that seem like they will become friends.

Adaptation and Adjustment

It takes time to adapt and adjust to your new environment. Skills you developed in previous transitions will help you when you encounter future intercultural challenges. Adjusting and adapting to a new culture requires the ability to know yourself well and to know the ways of the culture and its expectations of you.

Reentry Shock or Adjustment

The challenges of coming home can be many – the most significant can be that you did not expect it to be hard to come home. But it can be difficult, no matter how excited you are to see family and friends. Moreover, it can be hard to make sense of your experiences in the U.S., especially if you have to immediately find a job or return to your studies. With reentry, the goal is not to jump right back into everything – otherwise, why did you leave? You want to put your new found skills to good use: seeing things from another point of view, speaking another language and learning of another area of the world. Staying connected with other international alumni is one strategy that can lessen the shock of reentry.

Culture Shock

This is a state of mind you reach when the deeper differences between cultures are experienced and the novelty of the difference decreases. There may be unresolved cultural conflicts in the classroom, with friends or with the society in general.

Places of True Cultural Learning

Moving out of culture shock and into adaptation and adjustment is not simply a matter of feeling better. Rather, it requires understanding the reasons behind culture shock and developing personal strategies for dealing with cultural differences. Most sojourners cannot do this process alone; get help from others with international experience or from International Student Services to understand U.S. culture and appropriate coping strategies.

7. Education in the United States

The following characteristics can help you understand how U.S. cultural values influence behaviors and expectations in the classroom. The value placed on individualism, achievement, importance of time, work ethic and pragmatism are evaluated in the following section.

Characteristics of the U.S. Academic Environment

The U.S. cultural values listed in the previous section shape the academic environment in the following ways:

1. Active classroom participation is expected.
2. Time pressure is high - often there are many small assignments due each week - and time management is an important skill to develop.
3. Critical thinking must be developed.
4. Independent thinking is highly valued.
5. Presenting ideas concisely in class is expected.
6. Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.
7. Competition is a common mind-set.
8. Achievement and hard work are highly valued; the finished product is most important.
9. Students must be responsible for themselves.
10. Equality—all students should be treated equally.
11. Informality is normal.
12. Direct and straightforward communication is expected.
13. Friendship is usually based on doing things in common—sports, studying, etc.
14. Combining theory and practice—the practical application of ideas—is emphasized.
15. Problem-solving orientation—“If it’s broken, we ought to be able to fix it!”
16. The scientific method and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.

Methods of Instruction at MSUM

Lectures: Lecture is the most common method of instruction. This may involve note taking and class discussions. You are highly encouraged to participate in the classroom discussion and to voice your opinions. Evaluation is based on your scholarly effort and classroom participation. You should always ask questions any time you do not understand something or need any clarification.

Seminars: A seminar is a small class, usually at the upper levels. Students are often required to prepare presentations.

Term Papers: A term paper, or simply a “paper”, is basically a report on research you carry out during the semester. Usually you are given a topic for the paper early in the semester. All papers and any work that is to be submitted are generally typed. You will be required to use the library for the research for your paper.

Examinations: Most classes have a final exam at the end of the semester, plus a few tests and many “quizzes” throughout the semester. Almost all exams are closed books and the dates are announced at the beginning of the semester. Some “pop quizzes” are unannounced, and students are expected to be prepared for these surprise quizzes. Some exams are objective tests, designed to test your knowledge of particular facts.

Objective exams could be:

- true/false
- multiple choice

- matching
- identification
- fill in the blanks

Other exams are subjective tests, and include “essay questions” which require you to write an essay in response to the question or statement. An exam could include both subjective and objective parts.

Advisors and Instructors: Asking for Advice

At MSUM, you will have two main advisors: an international student advisor and an academic advisor. Listed below are the types of questions and concerns that each can address.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR (International Student Services staff)

- passport, visa or Department of Homeland Security (DHS) matters
- other legal matters
- University policies, procedures and services
- transfers to other schools
- work permission
- travel outside the United States
- health insurance
- financial problems
- academic concerns and problems
- career planning and job strategies
- personal concerns: adjustment, day-to-day living, relationships with family, friends, roommates, etc.
- social and cultural issues
- how to read and interpret your class schedule
- detailed information on the registration process
- how to transfer credits

ACADEMIC ADVISOR/INSTRUCTORS/PROFESSORS

Advising on course selection, graduation requirements and registration is done by academic advisors. Undergraduate students with declared majors will have an academic advisor assigned to them. Undergraduates who have not declared a major must declare a major. If you don't, you will fall out of status in the SEVIS system. You can obtain academic advising from Academic Resource Office staff if you have declared a major but are unsure of whether you would like to continue in that major. You should plan to confer with your academic advisor several days before the start of classes about:

- which classes to take, advice on schedules
- short- or long-term academic requirements or planning
- availability of graduate assistantships
- probation/suspension and help for poor grades
- majors or minors
- grading system
- academic calendar
- academic terminology
- course content
- course schedule, syllabus, requirements
- exams, papers and grading
- advice, assistance in comprehending course material, finding library resources and assessing your progress

Clarifying Advisor Roles

Do these situations differ from your expectations? In many cases, the answer could be both true and false, depending on the circumstances!

- My academic advisor will be an expert in my specific field of study and in my special area of interest.
Usually true.
 - I can expect that both my international student advisor and my academic advisor will maintain a formal relationship with me on all occasions.
It depends on the advisor and the situation.
 - In situations where I disagree with a University rule, the international student advisor will be able to help me get what I need.
False. While an advisor will serve as an advocate to support your viewpoint, the international student advisors need to follow University policy as well.
 - My academic advisor will be able to tell me which professors are the best teachers.
False. Get advice from other students and remember that advice varies according to the person.
 - The person with whom I will need to talk about specific regulations for graduation from the University will be my academic advisor.
True; however, you can also talk with the Registrar.
 - It is the responsibility of my academic advisor to tell me which classes I must register for each semester.
Usually you and your advisor work on this together. However, you are ultimately responsible for taking the right courses.
 - The international student advisor can help me with a dispute I am having with my academic advisor or another professor.
Often true. ISS can work on your behalf to resolve the problem.
 - I can go to ISS during normal business hours and always find an advisor available to answer my questions.
False. Please e-mail or call before you come to check availability.
 - Both my international student advisor and my academic advisor will be available to complete applications or other forms for me if I ask them.
False. The emphasis on individualism and independence means that students are responsible for completing their own forms; however, they can help.
 - If I am having difficulty in a particular course, an international student advisor or my academic advisor will be able to influence the instructor to give me special consideration.
False. Again, while ISS will serve as a resource to help you understand the U.S. educational system and U.S. Americans' behavior, the staff will not intervene for you. However, they can help you to become more effective in communicating with your professors.
 - When I meet my international student advisor on the street, she or he will remember my name and my particular situation.
Sometimes false. Unfortunately, they cannot always remember students' names. Do not interpret this as a sign of disinterest; rather, it is due to the large number of students they work with every year.
 - My academic advisor will help me by correcting my written work because he or she knows that English is not my native language and I might not always use correct spelling or grammar.
False. This is your responsibility.
 - I will have the opportunity to interact with my academic advisor in social settings.
Sometimes true.
 - I will be able to talk to my academic advisor about my personal, non-academic problems.
Depends on advisor.
 - I can change academic advisors if I don't feel that I am getting the help I need from my current advisor.
True—check with your department.
-

Standards of Academic Conduct

Academic standards and practices are influenced by culture. What is considered appropriate academic behavior in your home country might be different from what is appropriate in the United States. Therefore, it is important that you understand U.S. standards and practices. Not meeting these standards can result in charges of academic dishonesty and possible expulsion from MSUM. The U.S. definition of academic dishonesty is based on the cultural values of individualism, fairness, the idea that individuals must think and work independently and a strong value of original thinking, creativity, and invention.

At Minnesota State University Moorhead, academic dishonesty is defined as any act violating the rights of another student in academic work, or involving misrepresentation of your own work. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, cheating on assignments and examinations; plagiarizing or representing as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same work, or substantially similar works, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

EXAMS AND CHEATING

It is common in many countries for students to study and work together to prepare for exams. This is customary in the United States as well. However, once in the classroom, students are on their own for exams. Students cannot copy or discuss answers with each other during an exam. It is essential in the U.S. education system that each student be evaluated individually on his or her own work. "Cheating" is defined as copying someone else's work or taking prohibited information or tools to an exam.

PLAGIARISM

"Plagiarism" is defined as copying the work of someone else and not naming your source. In the United States, this will be considered an attempt by you to pass off the ideas or words of another person as your own. **Plagiarism is one of the most serious violations of the standards of academic conduct in the United States.** It can ruin your academic career. Of course, when you are writing a paper, you research many sources and present or summarize other people's ideas. But you must name your sources and identify when you are using their words and ideas by these methods:

- name your sources in the text
- put quotation marks around words and sentences that you copy from someone else's work
- provide footnotes and endnotes (even when you are paraphrasing someone's words)
- include a list of references or a bibliography

This also applies to the work of other students. Discussing ideas for a paper with friends is okay, but it is not acceptable to hand in papers that are the same as your friends' or to let someone else write your paper for you, even though the ideas are yours.

HELPFUL RESOURCES ON RESEARCH AND WRITING

- Consult a publication manual from your discipline, such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, for specific guidelines on citing the written and spoken work of others.
- Ask in your department if a particular style or publication manual is used in your field.
- Contact the Write Site: <http://www.mnstate.edu/write/>.

8. Living in Moorhead

Campus Living

New international students admitted to MSUM have the option of living in university residence halls upon arrival. To live on campus at MSUM you must submit the appropriate application along with the application fee. Housing and dining services information was sent to you when you were admitted. More information is available at <http://www.mnstate.edu/housing/>.

National research has shown that students who live in residence halls are more likely to be satisfied with their college experience, complete their education, have a higher level of involvement in campus activities and maintain higher GPAs than their off-campus peers. This is largely due to living closely among peers in an educational environment and being near campus resources.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CAMPUS LIVING

Convenience is very valuable for busy college students. Beyond being in an environment where you will develop lasting friendships, living on-campus offers the following conveniences:

- Close walking distances to classes, computer labs, the library and recreational areas
- All-you-can-eat meals in Kise Commons, as well as other various options
- A variety of programs and activities within your living area
- Nearby parking for all residence halls
- Lounges to gather with friends and study groups
- Quiet places to study
- Fun & friends – there's always something going on!

RESIDENTIAL LIFE STAFF

Each floor of each residence hall has an RA (Resident Assistant) who is selected and trained to assist with student concerns – personal, social and academic. Each RA also advises a Hall Council comprised of house residents. Together, the RA and the Residence Hall Association plan social, recreational, service, educational and diversity programs for the halls. Area Directors are professional staff members who live on campus and are responsible for the management of their area, its various facilities and operations, and the social and economic development of the residents that live in their area. Additionally, the Area Directors supervise the RA staff, advise programming and are available for individual assistance and referrals to other University services.

If you would like to live off of campus, you must find accommodations on your own.

Typical Week

All classes are held sometime Monday through Friday – exact days and times may vary.

Most of your evenings are occupied with assignments, projects and homework. You will need to work on your time management skills the first few weeks of school. As you get more used to organizing your own schedules, you will find time to be involved in other extracurricular activities or personal interest. So it is very important that you manage your time well, plan ahead and give yourself enough time to just relax.

During the weekends, most of the students catch up with their laundry, room cleaning, writing e-mail, reading books, homework, etc. Although it may appear that very few are actually studying during the weekends, most of the students at U.S. colleges and universities have designed themselves a daily and weekly schedule for studies

and homework. You can also get ideas and suggestions from your roommates, classmates or ISS on time management.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students at Minnesota State University Moorhead have ample opportunity to participate in different extracurricular activities organized by different student clubs and organizations. These programs are mostly entertainment, sporting and cultural events. Membership to these clubs and organizations is open to all students and is free. There are also college publications, theater productions, choirs and intramural sports, which are produced and participated in by students. Event posters can be seen around campus or online for information on these events.

Transportation

METRO AREA TRANSIT (MAT)

The Metro Area Transit Service shuttles people around the cities of Moorhead and Fargo. University students who have a current college I.D. are able to ride for free. Visit <http://www.matbus.com/> for more information.

CARS

If you are thinking about getting a car, consider it carefully. Tax, license, insurance and maintenance are major expenses many people do not anticipate: potentially as much as \$1,500 per year. Some students choose to purchase nice cars and have difficulty paying their school fees because of this. Make sure your priorities are straight. Ask yourself what your primary purpose for being here is. If your car payments will affect your ability to pay your school and other bills, you are putting yourself at risk. Do not buy a car you cannot afford! Many times, students can purchase a used car that will get you back and forth between school and your apartment for less than \$500. While there will be some maintenance repairs, you will be better off in the long run. Keep in mind that your main reason for being here is to get your degree. A nice car will eventually come as a result of hard work now.

BIKES

Many students commute on bicycles. In Minnesota biking is most common during the warmer months, but winter biking is also possible. To make winter biking a safe and enjoyable transportation option, consult with the staff of a local bike shop. If you purchase a bike, remember to keep it locked at all times. Do not lock your bike to hand rails or to sign posts where your bike might obstruct the sidewalk.

Shopping

GENERAL ADVICE

In the United States, as in most countries, live by the rule *buyer beware!* Compare prices—the same items are often sold at different prices in different stores. Ask your friends where to buy at bargain prices. Watch for sales advertised online and in newspapers and for items “on sale.” “Want ads” in the newspapers and Craigslist list sales of used household goods and furnishings. Prices in stores are normally fixed, and the customer does not bargain with the sales clerk. It is common, however, to bargain when you buy from a private individual. (It is also common to negotiate the price on automobiles.)

When you buy merchandise:

- If you must buy on credit, calculate the total amount you will end up paying, not just the monthly payments. Many credit cards charge interest rates of 20% or more. Be sure to keep up with payments; the seller usually has the legal right to force you to return items if you don't.
- Read tags and labels. Check sales slips and written guarantees. Be sure you understand them; keep them in a safe place in case you need to return or exchange an item.

If a problem arises:

- Take your complaint to the store first, and write down the name of the person you spoke with; often they can solve the problem. Many buyers mistakenly fail to get in touch with the store before seeking outside assistance.
- Be prepared to wait a few days or a week; some complaints take time to be resolved.
- If, after a reasonable length of time, you have not received satisfaction from the store, collect all receipts and sales slips and call a consumer protection agency (e.g., the Better Business Bureau) for help.
- Try to save copies of everything—bills, canceled checks, warranties and correspondence—you have sent or received concerning the problem.

THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

The Better Business Bureau is a non-profit organization designed to protect buyers. You can get information on whether or not the Bureau has received any complaints against a company. For more information, visit <http://www.bbb.org>.

BEWARE OF SOLICITORS!

Often people will come to your door, call you on the telephone, e-mail you or stop you on the street and ask you to buy or sign up for something. Be careful. Find out more about them. Never sign anything from solicitors unless you read it carefully and understand what you are signing. You may receive e-mails or letters in the mail that say “you may already have won” a large sum of money or some other wonderful prize. These are contests, and millions of these letters are mailed to people all over the U.S. It is very unlikely that you will actually win anything. If the letter asks you to send money, throw it away—these contests are created to make a profit for the organizer.

GROCERY STORES

Grocery stores sell all types of food—fresh, frozen and canned—“staples,” and spices. Most also sell toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste and paper products such as toilet paper, paper toweling, sanitary napkins, paper plates, and paper cups, etc.

CLOTHING, PHARMACEUTICALS AND HOUSEWARES

Department Stores

Department stores sell shoes, clothing, appliances, furniture, fabrics, dishes, pots and pans, linens, towels and toys. You can find them at the Moorhead Center Mall or West Acres. Discount department stores, such as Target, Wal-Mart and KMart, sell fair- to good-quality items for discount prices.

Hardware Stores

Hardware stores sell many household goods, small appliances and tools. Wal-Mart, Kmart and Target also sell many hardware items.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies are the only places that sell doctor-prescribed medicines. Many drugs may only be obtained with a doctor’s prescription in the United States. If you get a prescription from a doctor, have it filled at a pharmacy approved by your insurance plan.

Non-prescription drugs, often called “over-the-counter” medications—aspirin, cold tablets, vitamins, some contraceptives (e.g., condoms), etc., are in plain view on drug store shelves. If you do not see the item you are looking for, ask the pharmacist for help.

CUTTING COSTS

Buying used or second-hand clothing and furniture is very common in the United States—especially among students who are trying to cut costs. Students also post notices of second-hand items to buy or sell online, in newspaper classified ads, on bulletin boards, Craigslist, Facebook and listserves.

Winter in Minnesota

Minnesota is known for its four distinct seasons. The weather is influenced by winds from the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic regions. While each season has remarkable features to offer, Minnesota's best-known season is undoubtedly winter.

Weather information is usually reported in non-metric measurements. Temperature is reported in degrees Fahrenheit, rather than Celsius. Wind speed is reported as miles per hour, rainfall and snowfall in inches. Weather forecasts are reported online, by newspapers, television and radio stations. Additional weather information is available online at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/> and on sites linked to by the NWS. Minnesota State University Moorhead always posts school closings on the front page of the website <http://www.mnstate.edu/home/>. Weather throughout the State of Minnesota is extremely variable. Be sure to get local information concerning storms and conditions. Sign up for MSUM's emergency notifications at <http://www.mnstate.edu/security/>.

Fahrenheit - Celsius Conversion

These are the formulae used to convert temperatures:

$$^{\circ}\text{F} = (^{\circ}\text{C} \times 1.8) + 32 - \text{ex: } (20^{\circ}\text{C} \times 1.8) + 32 = 68^{\circ}\text{F}$$

$$^{\circ}\text{C} = (^{\circ}\text{F} - 32) / 1.8 - \text{ex: } (70^{\circ}\text{F} - 32) / 1.8 = 21^{\circ}\text{C}$$

WIND CHILL

During winter, people often speak of temperature and wind chill. When the wind blows, it causes people and animals to lose heat much more rapidly than when there is no wind. In extreme cold and windy conditions, with wind chills many degrees below 0° Fahrenheit, **exposed skin can freeze in a few minutes**. The danger increases if you have wet clothes or hair. To view a wind chill temperature chart go to <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/windchill/index.shtm>.

SNOW AND ICE

Minnesota's first snowfall is usually in late October or early November. The coldest months are January and February. Lakes and rivers develop ice soon after the temperature remains below 32° Fahrenheit for an extended period of time. Ice remains dangerously thin, however, until several inches of ice have formed under the surface. Each year a number of people die in Minnesota after falling through ice that was too thin to support their weight. The winter pre-preparedness website from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has information about preparing for a winter storm: www.fema.gov/areyouready/winter.shtm.

WINTER AND YOUR HEALTH

The winter season may affect your health in ways other than dangerous temperatures and wind chills. In cold weather, you will experience watery eyes and a runny nose. These are normal reactions to cold and do not mean you are ill. Colds and flu are common during the winter, however. Mild depression is also fairly common: Minnesota's northern latitude means that the days are much shorter in winter than in summer, and the short days, combined with cold weather, often affect one's mood. If you find yourself feeling sad, or not wanting to go outside at all, you may be getting depressed. A good way to combat mild depression is to get out in the sunlight and exercise. Avoid isolating yourself at home.

WINTER CLOTHES

Dressing for winter involves a basic principle: **dress in layers**. Layers of clothing trap air, which insulates your body from the cold. You should also have a water resistant outer layer and warm, water-resistant boots. Wear a warm hat as well. Your head has little insulation and loses heat very quickly. A wise saying to remember: **the best way to keep your feet warm is to keep your head warm**.

Select a close-fitting garment to wear next to your skin, such as a t-shirt, tights or long underwear. Silk or polypropylene is best, because it wicks moisture away from your skin, unlike cotton. Over the first garment, wear a

sweater, sweatshirt or something similar. On the outside, wear a winter jacket such as a parka. Be sure to wear warm boots and a hat, as well as mittens or gloves. Winter clothing may be found at many stores - Wal-Mart or Kmart are a great place to start. Scheels is a sporting goods store that also has a fine selection.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

You can enjoy most winter days outside if you are dressed appropriately. There are many fun activities that can be enjoyed only in the winter, such as skiing, skating outdoors, snow-shoeing, sledding, winter camping, ice fishing and more.

DRIVING AND PARKING IN WINTER

Driving in the winter is more complicated than at other times of the year. You should have blankets or extra clothes in your car in case you become trapped in your car due to a winter storm. You will need antifreeze in your car's radiator, an ice scraper to clear your windshield and a shovel in case you get stuck in the snow. Snow and ice are slippery and car accidents are common. Also common are cars that will not start due to the cold.

Winter Emergency Car Kit

- Starter ("jumper") cables
- Ice scraper
- A large bag of sand
- Small shovel
- Flashlight and flares
- Extra window cleaning fluid (*Do not use water—it will freeze!*)
- Candles and matches and a blanket

If you get stuck in a snow storm on a highway, do not attempt to leave your car. Stay put and wait for the Highway Patrol to come by. Also, run your engine sparingly and make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of snow. (A clogged exhaust pipe can result in carbon monoxide poisoning.)

Snow Emergency Parking Rules and Regulations

In order to remove snow quickly and thoroughly, the cities of Moorhead and Fargo will declare "snow emergencies." Special parking restrictions will go into effect so snowplows can work efficiently through the city. Some streets are designated as snow emergency routes and will be cleared first. If you or your friends have a car, pay attention to snow emergency regulations or the car will be ticketed, towed and subject to fines!

Emergency Telephone Numbers

For all emergencies, whether you are on or off campus, in Minnesota or any other state, all you need to dial is the three-digit number 911. The 911 operator answering will ask you questions in order to determine who to send to help you (police, paramedics, fire department, etc.). You may also be asked to speak to the police or fire department, depending upon the situation. **This number should be used only in emergency situations!**

WARNING SIRENS

At 1:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month, cities in the United States test their warning sirens. The test will last approximately one minute. Warning sirens are used when severe weather is approaching (e.g., tornadoes). Immediately turn on a radio or television if you hear the sirens at a non-testing time and take shelter as instructed.

Gambling

The Fargo Moorhead region has several casinos within driving distance that students are able to access. We urge you to use caution when/if you chose to visit one of these establishments. We have had students in the past find themselves in financial crisis because they have gambled away their tuition/rent/living expenses. If you chose to go to a casino, make sure you set your limits and you only bring an amount of money you are willing to lose. These casinos are big and luxurious because people lose their money...not because everybody wins. Your odds of losing your money to one of these casinos are much greater than your odds of winning money.

9. Money and Banking

Financial Institutions

It is not safe to keep a lot of cash (currency) with you. Financial institutions—credit unions, banks and savings and loans institutions—provide a safe way to keep your money because they carry insurance on all funds kept in them. Most U.S. Americans pay their expenses with personal checks from their bank checking account.

FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION SERVICES

In general, local banks do not keep much foreign currency on hand. You may need to travel to Minneapolis to exchange foreign currency. Please contact your local bank to find out specific details.

BANK ACCOUNTS

To keep your money in a financial institution, you must open an account. You will need a student I.D, Passport & I-20 to open an account. Ask the institution's staff about the types of services it offers. These can vary widely. However, there are basically two different types of accounts:

Checking Accounts: Institutions often offer free checking to students. You must make a deposit of at certain amount to open an account. All new international students will need to open a checking account. Below is a list of financial institutions that you may want to check into when opening a checking account.

Savings Accounts: Savings accounts earn interest. You can withdraw any amount at any time during regular hours by transferring the funds to your checking account or taking it in cash.

NEARBY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union
MSUM campus
<http://www.affinityplus.org/>

Wells Fargo
101 11th Street South
Moorhead
<https://www.wellsfargo.com/>

Bremer Bank
3131 Frontage Road South
Moorhead
<http://www.bremer.com/>

Flywire
<https://www.flywire.com/pay/mnstate>

Bank of the West
800 30th Avenue South
Moorhead
<https://www.bankofthewest.com/>

American Federal Bank
601 Center Avenue
Moorhead
<http://www.americanfederalbank.com/>

Gate City Bank
305 8th Street South
Moorhead
<https://www.gatecitybank.com/>

US Bank
403 Center Avenue
Moorhead
<http://www.usbank.com/>

ATM CARDS AND CHECK (DEBIT) CARDS

ATM (or instant cash) cards and check (or debit) cards look like credit cards. They allow you to withdraw money from your account 24 hours a day from ATM machines at different locations. Check cards are also used for purchase; the money is electronically transferred from your checking account to the merchant. You must have a

checking account in order to get a check card. However, you can have an instant cash (ATM) card even if you only have a savings account. **If you decide to use an ATM or check card, be sure to record your withdrawals, purchases and fees in your checkbook! The same as you do when you write a check.** Make sure you keep your account balanced as overdraft checks and withdrawals (writing checks or taking out money when there is not enough money in your account) fees are very costly. Never leave your ATM receipts lying near the ATM machine.

MONEY TRANSFERS

Students are advised to have money wired directly to their own local bank account through electronic transfer from another bank. (Money can also be wired to MSUM.) Ask at your local bank for instructions for completing this process.

Money transfers are also available through a private company such as Western Union. Visit <http://www.westernunion.com/> for more information.

Recommendations for Handling your Money

HANDLING MONEY WHILE TRAVELING

1. Consider buying a money belt to wear underneath your clothing.
2. Buy travelers' checks in U.S. dollars.
 - Buy them in small denominations—\$20 and \$50.
 - Sign them before leaving the bank.
 - Keep travelers' check receipts in a separate place.
 - Recommended: American Express or Citibank (Sometimes your travelers' checks may be refused.)
3. Do not carry large amounts of cash at any time. When traveling, carry no more than \$300-\$400 in cash.
 - Use small bills: \$5, \$10, \$20
 - Once you are settled, carry no more than \$50, unless shopping.
4. Always keep your money and travelers' checks on your person while traveling.
 - Not in a suitcase
 - Not left in hotel rooms, dorm rooms or in the homes of friends or relatives

GENERAL FINANCIAL TIPS AND ADVICE

1. Your financial matters are personal and should not be discussed in public places. You should take responsibility for managing your own money.
2. It is always best not to borrow money. Similarly, do not lend anyone more money than you can afford to lose.
3. Always keep your belongings with you in public places, classrooms, libraries and at parties.
4. Get a safe-deposit box for valuables and important documents such as jewelry, passports, birth certificates, money, etc.
5. If your money is stolen:
 - Inform the local or campus police immediately. File a police report.
 - Contact your travelers' check or credit card company for instructions.
 - Contact your international student advisor and your academic advisor.
6. Consider on-campus student employment for the following reasons:
 - earn spending money
 - establish savings
 - increase and practice your English-language skills
 - meet a variety of students and staff
 - get work experience in the United States

- learn more about U.S. culture

Financial Tips Related to Housing

1. University residence halls must be paid in advance.
2. Most apartments require the first month's rent when you move in. Other charges may include:
 - Damage deposit
 - Key deposit
 - Application fee, which may include a background check
3. Always, at all times, keep dorm rooms and apartment doors locked.
4. Consider having your personal property insured.
 - Apartment (renter's) insurance, available from any insurance company, is not expensive and can save you thousands of dollars if property is stolen or damaged by fires, flooding, etc.
 - Travelers' insurance
5. Allocate some money for "settling in" to your new home for items such as small appliances, cleaning products, and other household goods.

CREDIT CARDS

Try to avoid the frequent use of credit cards. Buy only what you can afford to pay. If you need to use a credit card, carefully review each month's statement, especially if you have used your account number online. Remember that if your credit or check card is lost or stolen; it can be a very unpleasant and expensive experience.

Taxes

INCOME TAX INFORMATION

Anyone who earns income from a U.S. source must file an "income tax return" each year. This affects students who hold teaching assistantship, teaching fellowships, research assistants, graduate students, those students with Practical Training Authorization or those employed by off-campus or on-campus jobs. Your monthly paycheck will show a deduction for federal, state and local taxes. These are three of the agencies to which you must report by April 15 of each year. Your employer will provide you with a "1042S" or a "W-2" form, usually in late January or February. These forms show your total earnings and any income tax deducted. You must submit this form along with the appropriate income tax to federal, state and local Internal Revenue Service offices. Should you, over the course of the year, pay more than your tax bracket demands, you will obtain a refund; should you pay less, you'll owe the government.

Depending on your country of citizenship, certain tax treaties apply, which may reduce the amount of federal tax you pay. If your country does have a tax treaty with the U.S. you should read the whole treaty carefully to see if you qualify for any treaty benefits. Some treaties only exempt part of your income from taxation. You may owe on the rest. If after reading the treaty you feel that you qualify for the treaty benefits, you should complete and submit to the Internal Revenue Service Form 8233 and accompanying statements to your employer each year.

Federal income tax forms and instructional booklets are available from the IRS. State and local tax forms are available from the state and city revenue offices, public libraries, online and the MSUM library. You should keep copies of all forms submitted to the IRS and any other government agencies. If your forms are lost or questioned, it is your responsibility to provide duplicate information. "Tax evasion" (failure to pay and report taxes) is a federal offense; do not forget to file.

As an international student in the United States, you must know and meet your obligations under applicable federal, state and local laws. Tax forms and instructions are available from the IRS website at: www.irs.gov.

Lifestyle Choices and Decisions

Make a budget! Most of your expenses are based on what you, as an individual, decide are important based on your new lifestyle here. You will find some necessities (such as insurance) cost much more than you are accustomed to paying, while there are other ways to simplify your lifestyle and save money. Think about the following items. Which of these are necessities which you cannot change (e.g. tuition & fees)? Which could be easily modified to fit your budget (e.g. sending e-mail instead of phoning home, buying used books)?

computer	books
warm clothing, boots	car
credit card finance charges	tuition & fees
health insurance	camera
TV/VCR	phone calls home
international travel	rent & utilities
concerts, sports, movies	stereo
food	renter's insurance
transportation costs	eye glasses

Sample Semester Budget Worksheet

Below is a suggested format for a budget worksheet. By completing this, you will become more aware of your financial situation and should be able to manage your finances more efficiently. At the end of the semester, check to see how well you kept to your budget, then make adjustments for the next semester.

Financial Resources	September	October	November	December
1. Employment				
2. Sponsor funds				
3. Other funds				

School Expenses

1. Tuition				
2. Room and board				
3. Fees and insurance				
4. Books and supplies				
5. Miscellaneous				

Living Expenses

1. Food				
2. Rent and utilities				
3. Renters' insurance				
4. Phone				
5. Clothing				
6. "Settling in"				
7. Child care				
8. Transportation				
9. Savings/emergencies				
10. Bills (indebtedness)				
11. Entertainment				

10. Metric Conversions

LENGTH

1 millimeter (mm) = 0.0397 in
1 centimeter (cm) = 10 mm = 0.3937 in
1 meter (m) = 100 cm = 1.0936 yd
1 kilometer (km) = 1,000 m = 0.6214 mile
1 inch (in) = 25.4 mm
1 foot (ft) = 12 in = 0.3048 m
1 yard (yd) = 3 ft = 0.9144 m
1 mile = 1, 760 yd = 1.6093 km

AREA

1 square cm (cm²) = 100 mm² = 0.1550 in²
1 square meter (m²) = 10,000 cm² = 1.1960 yd²
1 hectare (ha) = 10,000 m² = 2.4711 acres
1 square km (km²) = 100 ha = 0.3861 mile²
1 square inch (in²) = 645.16 mm²
1 square foot (ft²) = 0.093 m²
1 square yard (yd²) = 9 ft² = 0.8361 m²
1 acre = 4840 yd² = 4046.86 m²
1 square mile (mile²) = 640 acres = 2.59 km²

MEASUREMENTS

1 Teaspoon = 5 ml
3 Teaspoons = 1 Tablespoon
16 Tablespoons = 1 U.S. cup
2 Quarts = 8 pints = 16 cups = 128 fluid ounces = 1 U.S. gallon

TEMPERATURE

Conversion °F to °C: Subtract 32, Divide by 1.8
Conversion °C to °F: Multiply by 1.8, Add 32

VOLUME/CAPACITY

1 cubic cm (cm³) = 0.0610 in³
1 cubic decimeter (dm³) = 1,000 cm³ = 0.0353 ft³
1 cubic meter (m³) = 1,000 dm³ = 1.3080 yd³
1 liter (l) = 1 dm³ = 0.2642 US gal
1 liter = 0.2200 Imp gal
1 hectoliter (h) = 100 l = 2.8378 US bu
1 cubic inch (in³) = 16.387 cm³
1 cubic foot (ft³) = 0.0283 m³
1 cubic yard (yd³) = 27 ft³ = 0.7646 m³
1 US dry pint = 0.5506 l
1 US bushel = 64 US dry pints = 35.239 l
1 US liquid pint = 0.4732 l
1 US gallon = 8 US liquid pints = 3.7854 l

MASS (WEIGHT)

1 gram (g) = 1, 000 mg = 0.0353 oz
1 kilogram (kg) = 1,000 g = 2.2046 lb
1 ton (t) = 1,000 kg = 1.1023 short tons

1 ton = 0.9842 long ton
1 ounce (oz) = 437.5 grains = 28.350 g
1 pound (lb) = 16 oz = 0.4536 kg
1 short cwt = 100 lb = 45.359 kg
1 long cwt = 112 lb = 50.802 kg
1 short ton = 2,000 lb = 0.9072 t
1 long ton = 2.240 lb = 1.0161 t

Slang Terms and Idioms

A lemon:	a bad buy or purchase
At one's fingertips:	easily recalled
Bar:	place where alcoholic beverages are served
BBQ (barbecue):	an outdoor cooking party, like a picnic
Beat around the bush:	to avoid speaking directly about a subject
Big shot:	supposedly important person or someone who thinks he or she is important
Break the ice:	make a beginning in a conversation
Brown-nose:	1) overly pleasing to person in authority 2) "kiss up"
Buck:	dollar bill
BYOB:	acronym for Bring Your Own Beverage or Booze (liquor)
Cocky:	over-confident; egotistic; big ego, show-off
Cool:	1) something good, strange, or unusual 2) awesome, far-out, excellent, radical, wow
Cop:	slang for police officer; pig, bacon, the heat
Copy-cat:	copies others actions
Couch potato:	lazy person who watches too much television
Crabby:	irritable, angry, tense, moody, pissed-off; ticked-off
Cram:	to study hard the night before the test
Cut to the chase:	get to the point of the subject; don't beat around the bush
Dope:	illegal drugs: marijuana, hashish; someone stupid
Dude:	friend; buddy
Dumb:	a term for a person meaning stupid
Finals:	3-5 days of tests at the end of each semester
Foot in the mouth:	saying something that is an embarrassing mistake
Gas:	gasoline or petrol for a car
Geek:	weird or unusual person; nerd, dork, weird-o, doorknob
Get real:	get serious
Give the cold shoulder:	ignore rudely; cold-hearted
Go Dutch:	pay one's own way
Go fly a kite:	go away; take a hike
Goof-off:	lazy or idle person who sometimes does silly things; slacker, procrastinator
Gotcha:	1) I understand 2) I fooled you
Hassle:	troublesome, a nuisance; bug, annoy, irritate, pet peeve
Having a fit:	anxiety and nervousness, emotional explosion; freaking out, having a cow
In a jam:	in a difficult situation; in a pickle
Jerk:	unfriendly person, mean or rude
Jock:	athlete
Loose:	promiscuous or easy
Make ends meet:	budget within one's income
Make-out:	kissing

Make-up:	1) to apologize after a fight 2) do an assignment after it was due 3) facial cosmetics a woman uses
Mid-term:	tests held in the middle of a semester to determine part of a student's grade
Nerd:	weird or unusual person; geek, dork
No way:	not possible
OK:	term for approval of something meaning all right
Once in a blue moon:	seldom, rarely
Out of it:	1) somebody whose mind is far away 2) somebody not fitting into a certain group
Out of the question:	unthinkable, impossible
Phony:	someone or something that is false
The Pill:	common term for the contraceptive birth control pill
Play the field:	go out with a variety of people on dates
Psyched up:	excited about something to come
Pull one's leg:	tease a person; lie, fooling you, pulling your chain
Quiz:	short test (many times unexpected)
Radical:	something good, strange, unusual; awesome, cool
Rain cats and dogs:	rain heavily
Run around with:	be friends with; hang out, chillin'
Show:	cinema, movie, film
Skip:	not go to class
Spill the beans:	to reveal a secret, thus ruining a surprise or to gossip; let the cat out of the bag
Stuck-up:	to think highly of oneself; snob, snobbish, snot, conceited
Stud:	confident and good-looking male
Stuffy:	inflexible person; boring, conservative
Take for granted:	to assume something about someone or something
Through the grapevine:	hear about something through gossip
Under the weather:	sick, not feeling well
Whatever:	1) I don't believe you 2) doesn't bother me 3) no big deal
What's up?	"What have you been doing?", "What's happening?"
You betcha:	agreement or confirmation

11. Emergency Numbers

(Dialed from a phone located on campus)

Emergencies: Most of the U.S., including Moorhead, 9-911

Ask-A-Nurse (24 hour nurse phone line): 9-234-5000

Public Safety: 2449

Clay County Sheriff: 9-299-5151

Hendrix Health Center/ Counseling Center: 2211

Innovis emergency phone: 9-364-8400

International Student Services Interim Director (Janet Hohenstein): 2959

Minnesota Highway Patrol (non-emergency): 9-299-5099

Minnesota Poison Control Center: 9-1-800-222-1222

Moorhead Police: 9-299-5120

Sanford Hospital: 9-234-2000

Sanford emergency phone: 9-234-5121

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. When and how do I pre-register for next semester?** Dates and hours, scheduled according to seniority and alphabetical order of last names, are announced in the semester schedule. Advising Week is one week prior to pre-registration. You are expected to see your advisor during Advising Week. You will be able to register online through E-Services.
- 2. How do I register for Tri-college classes?** Just register as usual, but in addition, check in at the special tri-college station at registration. You do not have to register at the other colleges. In a few situations there are limitations, which your stop at the tri-college registration station will make clear.
- 3. Do I have to take a full load every semester?** You must register for a minimum of 12 credits if you are pursuing an undergraduate degree and a minimum of 8 credits if you are pursuing a graduate degree.
- 4. Is it possible to take more than 18 credits?** Yes, if you have completed over 90 credits, including transfer credits. Students with fewer than 90 credits and a 3.00 or better cumulative GPA may request special permission from a faculty dean.
- 5. Why do I have to take so many liberal arts classes?** All universities in the U.S. require broad general education or liberal arts programs, which are designed to give all students academically well-rounded experience in all areas of knowledge.
- 6. Is it better to get liberal arts credits over with first so I can concentrate on my major?** Not necessarily, but it is best to concentrate on liberal arts courses the first few semesters and to take beginning courses in major(s) you are considering. The more liberal arts courses you take, the better you are prepared for most majors and careers. It is advisable to take the deepest and widest selection of liberal arts courses possible.
- 7. Why does everyone have to take freshman English?** All programs at MSUM require intensive writing courses. Freshman English helps you to establish a solid foundation, helping you to be able to write effectively.
- 8. What are the biggest majors on campus?** Accounting, Business and Education.
- 9. How many hours a night should I study?** The usual rule is an average of 2 hours per hour in class. Most freshmen find, a little late, that they studied too little their first semester. Help with study habits is readily available in the Counseling Center.
- 10. Can I repeat a course for a higher grade?** Yes. If you received a D, F or I, you may repeat (register and pay for) the course. If you complete a repeat form during or after the semester in which you repeat it, only the higher grade will count on your GPA. Re-taking a course in which you receive a W is not considered repeating. You may repeat for the purpose of raising your grade only once; i.e. if you fail a course twice and then repeat it, the second F, as well as your grade from your second repeat, is counted in your GPA.
- 11. How often can I skip classes?** Basically never – skipping class is not advised. Absence from classes is the primary reason students fail courses. Skipping, if started, becomes a very self-destructive habit. Some teachers announce an absolute maximum number of absences allowed. Some departments also have absence policies for certain courses (i.e., Freshman English, Speech, Education).
- 12. Do all classes require papers?** No, but many do. Learning to write well is one of the most valuable skills a student can learn. It affects the grade received in almost every class.
- 13. When is the last day to withdraw from a class?** Visit the Records Office website at <http://www.mnstate.edu/records/>. The deadline is posted in the semester class schedule and other places. If you don't get the drop slip signed by the instructor and your advisor in to the Records Office by the deadline, you will receive the grade you have earned in the class - usually an F if you have not attended.
- 14. If I drop a class, can I get a refund?** Only before the drop/add date. (Note: a "W" stays on your transcript forever). After the deadline, it is often possible to withdraw from one class and add another, using the tuition already paid.
- 15. What is an "I" (incomplete) grade?** An instructor may be willing to give you an "I" if you have completed most of the work for the course but are unable, for example, to take the final or turn in a term paper, etc. An incomplete should be made up as soon as possible. They count as F's for GPA purposes. The policies governing the grade of I are now being reconsidered and may be changed during the year.
- 16. How does a person withdraw from college?** Visit the Counseling Center. If this is impossible, visit the Records Office.

- 17. What are the greatest academic dangers for new MSUM students?** Not attending every class (even occasional skipping is dangerous practice); working too many hours; not realizing how different college is from high school.
- 18. How is a GPA figured?** Visit the Records Office website at <http://www.mnstate.edu/records/>.
- 19. What is the minimum acceptable GPA? What is academic probation and suspension?** For freshmen, 1.6 is minimum. After attempting 60 graded credits, including transfer credits, the minimum is 1.90. "Probation" means having under a 2.00 cumulative GPA. It is a general academic warning and does not imply any immediate action. "Subject to Suspension" means that a student must do well or be suspended at the end of the current semester. Check with your academic department for departmental required GPAs.
- 20. How do I find out about tutoring services? Is there a charge?** See the ARO or check in your department. All tutoring services at MSUM are free to students.
- 21. Are scholarships available after the freshman year?** Yes. Apply at Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.
- 22. When does a person have to declare a major?** Immediately. USCIS regulations require all students have a major declared in the SEVIS system. Furthermore, it is important to note that some majors, because of pre-requisite sequence courses, must be started in their first semester of their freshman year if students are to graduate in 8 semesters. These include, particularly, science majors and science-related majors as well as music and art. If you are uncertain about your major, do not change your major at the Records Office until you have determined what major you will follow.
- 23. How do I change majors and my faculty advisor?** Get a "Change of Major-Advisor" form at the Records Office or the Academic Resource Office and take it to the department (or individual advisor) of your choice, then return to the ARO.
- 24. What is an "arrange" slip?** A permit, signed by the instructor of the class you want to take, to gain admittance into an arranged class or a closed class.
- 25. What is an individualized major?** An individualized major is 70 credits designed by a junior or senior student with his/her advisor. See Jan Flagel in External Studies located in the blue house across from Owens Hall.
- 26. Where are "good" places to study?** In the library, CMU, empty classrooms or dorm study areas.
- 27. Where do I get an MSUM catalog, phone directory and MSUM student handbook?** Catalog - Admissions Office; new phone directories will be distributed in early November; MSUM student handbook – see Director of Student Conduct and Resolution.
- 28. Where can I get a copy of my transcripts?** Your advisor gets copies (one to keep and one to give you) each semester. Ask for your copy. You can also get a copy through the Records Office.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

MSUM International Student Services

Please read each of the statements below and ask questions about any that you do not completely understand.

1. Maintaining Your Visa Status: You must follow the rules that apply to your non-immigrant visa (F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2, etc.) in order to maintain your legal status.

- Your passport must be valid for at least six months at all times.
- Any change of address/name change must be reported to the University within 10 days (student and any dependents in the U.S.)

For F-1 Students:

- You must attend the school specified on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- You must register for and complete a full course of study each semester.
- You must notify ISS when you change your major or degree program level (e.g. change from BA to MA) or change your funding (expenses, amount or source) more than 25%.
- You **must** receive approval from ISS **before**:
 - a) being allowed to enroll for less than, or dropping below, a full course of study (see item 2 below).
 - b) terminating your program of study.
- You must receive work authorization before you engage in any employment off-campus (see item 3 below).
- You must notify ISS if you plan to transfer to another school. ISS must release your SEVIS record online before another school can issue you an I-20 or DS-2019.

2. Full-Time Enrollment:

- US immigration law requires that F-1 and J-1 students register for and complete a full course of study each semester:
 - 12 credits for undergraduate, non-degree seeking and professional college students;
 - 8 credits for graduate students.
- If you cannot enroll full-time or you need to withdraw from a class and fall below the minimum amount of credits outlined above, you **must be authorized to drop below a full course load** by ISS **before** the beginning of the semester or **before** dropping below

full-time enrollment. You must submit a **“Part-Time Enrollment Verification” form.**

3. Work Permission for students whose I-20 or DS-2019 was issued by MSUM: You may work on campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session, and full-time during official vacation periods and semester breaks. Any off-campus employment requires prior authorization by ISS or the USCIS.

4. Keeping Immigration Documents Up to Date:

- Upon initial entry, and any subsequent change, F-1 and J-1 students must present their own and F-2 and J-2 dependents’ documents to ISS including: I-20, passport, entry visa stamp, I-94 card and Employment Authorization Document (EAD card). Notify ISS immediately if you or your dependents change visa status.
- Keep your documents safe and save all your new and old I-20s or DS-2019s during your stay in the U.S.

5. You are Responsible for Keeping Up-to-Date on Immigration Matters: Visit with ISS for updates.

6. Use of Consistent Name: The name on all of your documents and in the MSUM database must be consistent. You must use the same first, middle (if applicable) and last name in your passport, I-94 card, I-20, Social Security card, Dragon ID, Minnesota Driver’s License/State ID, bank accounts, checks and any other documents you may acquire during your stay in the U.S.

7. If Any of Your Information Changes (name, residential address, phone number, etc.) or that of your dependent(s), you must update your information on E-Services or at the Records Office. This must be done **within 10 days**. Failure to report such changes to MSUM will result in loss of legal status.

8. Release of Information: ISS cannot legally release information about you to anyone unless you give written permission first. ISS is required by law,

however, to report to USCIS information regarding your presence in the U.S. and your student status at MSUM. In addition, other U.S. government agencies may be designated to request information about you.

9. Use of Public Funding: As a nonimmigrant, you are not eligible to use any type of public funding during your stay in the U.S. Federal law prohibits its use regardless of what local services determine.

10. Required Health Insurance: MSUM requires all international students to be enrolled in the MnSCU Student Injury and Sickness Plan (unless specified in your exchange program contract.)

11. You Must Pay All Your Tuition, Fees, Loans and Other MSUM Bills:
Nonpayment will result in a registration hold

and may result in loss of legal status.

12. You Must File a U.S. Income Tax Form by April 15 each year, even if you have not earned any income in the U.S. ISS makes available resources for tax assistance but does not offer any tax advising.

13. F-2 Dependents: Study and Work in the U.S.: F-2's are prohibited by law from being employed. Enrollment in a program of study at an institution of higher learning is not permitted unless it falls under the following description: enrollment is limited to one ESL class, short-term study to pursue a hobby or a course that is occasional, casual or recreational in nature. F-2 children may engage in full-time study in elementary or secondary level (K-12).

- F-2's admitted to begin a program will not be eligible to enroll until they receive approval of F-1 status.

I have carefully read these responsibilities and understand their importance. I am aware that my legal status in the U.S. depends on fulfilling these responsibilities to the best of my ability. If I have any questions at any time about these matters, I know that I may e-mail or call ISS at international@mnstate.edu or 218-477-2956.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Student ID Number: _____ Name (print clearly): _____