



Welcome to NIU!

A guide to life at Northern Illinois University

International Student & Faculty Office
406 Williston Hall
Northern Illinois University
isfo@niu.edu

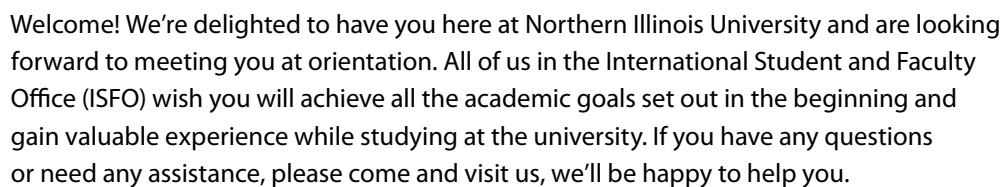


Northern Illinois University



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The primary responsibility of the staff of the International Student and Faculty Office (ISFO) is to advise international students and faculty on ways to succeed academically, socially and culturally at Northern Illinois University. We work to keep you informed regarding the federal regulations pertaining to your status as non-immigrants in the United States (in F, J or H status) and we are here to answer your questions about the regulations and to assist you in understanding your options. Staff also provides guidance regarding adjusting to a new culture and managing the new academic environment of the United States. We support various educational, social and cultural programming for international students. We are here to listen to your questions and concerns, to help you find answers and to refer you to the best sources of correct information.

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Location

406 Williston Hall
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115

Hours: 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. The office is closed from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. for lunch.

Phone: 815-753-1346

Fax: 815-753-1488

Email: isfo@niu.edu

Website: niu.edu/isfo

Facebook: [NIU - International Student and Faculty Office](#)

Staff

Sim Chin Tissa—Director

Stephanie Brown—Associate Director

Arezou Kashani—International Student Advisor

Dawn Galbreath—Office Support Associate

Walk-In Advising

We offer walk-in advising from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. You may come in with a question without making an appointment. Students will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.



Northern Illinois University

is located in DeKalb County, Illinois, population **90,000** and is approximately **60** miles west of Chicago. The towns of DeKalb and Sycamore have populations of **40,000** and **12,000** respectively.



Next Steps After Admission

Confirmation of Attendance

To confirm your attendance at NIU, please remember to login to the **MyNIU** network and mark that you will be attending school here.

Travel and Immigration Documents

You should be aware of the major immigration documents that will be required for your study in the United States—passport, U.S. Visa and I-20.

Passport

This is an official document issued by your country's government that certifies your identity and citizenship and allows you to travel to and from foreign countries. If you don't already have a passport, apply for one as soon as possible through your government.

U.S. Visa

Before you enter the United States, you must obtain a student visa. The visa category will either be F-1 or J-1. The first step in the process is paying the SEVIS fee.

Paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee

The SEVIS I-901 fee is mandatory and supports the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Before applying for an F-1 or J-1 visa, you must submit an I-901 form and the accompanying fee. It is recommended that you pay online and print several receipts. You will need this receipt (called an I-797) when applying for your visa.

To pay, go to: ice.gov/sevis/i901

Visa Application


Visit the U.S. Visa website first to learn about the process. Make an appointment to visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest you. Wait times for appointments may be lengthy, so schedule your appointment as soon as possible. You will need to bring:

- Form I-20
- Passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- NIU admission letter
- I-901 fee receipt
- Proof of your finances
- Other documents may be required by specific embassy or consulate—consult their website for more details

Learn more about the visa process:

travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange.html

Do not use the B-2 (visitor) visa or the Visa Waiver Program to enter the United States. Students entering the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program may stay in the U.S. only 90 days and may not change their status or extend their stay. People who enter the U.S. using the B-2 tourist/visitor visa are typically only allowed to stay in the United States for a short period of time and are not eligible for any form of employment.



Furthermore, according to government immigration regulations, it is not legal to begin a course of study in the U.S. on a B-2 visa. Intending students cannot begin their studies until their status change from visitor to student has been approved. It also may be very difficult to change a B-2 visa to an F-1 student visa after arrival to the U.S.

Visa Interview

When you apply for the F-1 student visa, it is very important to prove to the U.S. consular official that you intend to return to your home country after you complete your degree at Northern Illinois University. Such proof may consist of a job offer in your home country, immediate family in your home country, a bank account or property that you own in your home country, etc.

I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status)

This is a document issued by the university that provides supporting information about your F-1 student status. Once you have been admitted to NIU and provided information about your financial support, we will send you this document which you will need during your visa application, at customs when entering the United States and throughout your time as a student. Once you have arrived on campus and check in with the International Student and Faculty Office, you will receive a new I-20 indicating your continued attendance at NIU.

Upon receiving your I-20, you will need to do the following:

- Read all the information entered on your I-20. If any information on the form is incorrect, please contact ISFO immediately!
- If you have dependents (spouse and/or children under the age of 21) who will be accompanying you to the U.S. in F-2/J-2 status, please check to make sure that a separate I-20/DS 2019 is enclosed for each person.
- Sign and date the Form I-20 at Line 11, on page one.

Preparing for Departure

Packing your Luggage

Do not bring food, fruit or animal products. It is strictly prohibited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Documents Needed at Border Control

- Passport
- I-20/DS 2019
- Supporting financial and academic documents

You will pass through Immigration Control before you retrieve your checked luggage, **so having all these documents available in your hand-carried bags is essential!** When you present these documents to the immigration official at the Port of Entry, the official has the right to refuse you permission to enter the United States. For this reason it is very important to answer all questions politely and to be prepared to show any documents which the official requests. The official will expect you to prove again that you will return to your home country when you complete your educational program in the U.S.

I-94 (Arrival /Departure Record)

The I-94 is a record indicating the date and status of entry into the United States. When you enter, you will be given a stamp in your passport with the date and location of entry. An electronic form will also be generated and you will be able to access this online for future reference.

Arriving at NIU

To prepare for your arrival to NIU, you will want to make transportation and housing arrangements ahead of time. One of the first things you will do when you arrive at the NIU campus is to attend the New International Student Orientation (information about the orientation will be sent to you along with your I-20). You will also need to check in to the International Student and Faculty Office with your passport, I-20 and I-94.



Arrival

Transportation to NIU

NIU is located approximately 60 miles (98km) from O'Hare International Airport. Here is a list of taxi services that run from the airport to NIU:



Limo Services

Custom Limousine Service

Phone: (815) 895-6500
Toll-free Number: (800) 397-7921

DeKalb O'Hare Limousine Service

DeKalb, IL
Phone: (815) 758-0631
Toll-free Number: (877) 367-5525
Email: info@dekalboharelimo.com
Website: dekalblimo.com

Home James, Inc. Professional

Limousine Service
DeKalb, IL
Phone: (815) 748-5466
Toll-free Number: (877) 740-4663
Email: homejamesdekalb@gmail.com
Website: homejameslimo.com

Taxi Services

Fox Cab Dispatch

Geneva, IL
630-262-8822

J&J Taxi

DeKalb, IL
815-787-7490

Sycamore Transit Services

815-899-1902
Email: office@sycamoretaxi.com
Website: sycamoretaxi.com

Bus Service

Huskie Line

Shuttle Bus to Elburn (train station location to Chicago). Friday and Sunday schedule only.
Phone: 815-753-3146
Website: huskieline.com/12.htm.

Greyhound Bus Service

Website: greyhound.com

You may also use private arrangements between you and a friend.

Community Organizations not affiliated with NIU:

Network of Nations website: networkofnations.us/airportpickup.htm

Doorstep Project website: thedoorstep.org



Housing

Temporary Housing

If you are arriving before the semester starts, before your residence hall allows you to move in, or before your apartment lease starts, you may look into temporary housing at these hotels.

Holmes Student Center Guest Rooms

Northern Illinois University
Lucinda & Carroll Avenues
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 753-1444

Hampton Inn

663 S Annie Glidden Rd
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 748-4323
1.2 miles from Holmes Student Center

Red Roof Inn & Suites

1212 W Lincoln Hwy
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 758-8661
0.8 miles from Holmes Student Center

Super 8

800 Fairview Drive
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 748-4688
2.4 miles from Holmes Student Center

Baymont Inn & Suites

1314 West Lincoln Hwy
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 748-7100
1 mile from Holmes Student Center

Holiday Inn Express

1935 DeKalb Avenue
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 748-7400
4.6 miles from Holmes Student Center

Searching for Housing

It is your responsibility to secure your housing arrangements. NIU offers a wide variety of housing options.

On-campus Housing

Residence Halls

A great option for undergraduate students. Residence halls offer on-campus housing and meal plans for all students. Because of the social and academic benefits on-campus living offers students, **first-year students are required to live in a residence hall for the first full year.**

New undergraduate students should receive a housing application in the mail after they have been admitted. Please fill this out and return it (along with the deposit fee) to the Housing Office. If you do not return these things, no room will be reserved for you.

Please be aware, if you sign a housing contract, you will be required to live in the residence halls. Students who change their mind and decide to live off campus will not be able to cancel their residence hall room.

Northern View Community

The **Northern View Community** offers apartment-style housing for upper division students (at least 2 years past high school), graduate students, or students who have a partner or spouse and/or dependents.





Off-campus Housing

There are many off-campus housing options in DeKalb for students in their second year and beyond. NIU does not find or place students in off-campus housing, however, Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Student Services offers resources to help you make decisions about off-campus housing and find a roommate.

Resources

Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Student Services

niu.edu/comnontrad/housing

Northern Star Housing Guide

northernstar.info/housing_guide

University Plaza Student Apartments

uplaza.com

Health Requirements

The Illinois College Student Immunization Act (110-ILCS 2) and university policy states: All students enrolled in classes at the NIU DeKalb campus are required to provide proof of immunity for tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps and rubella. If documentation is not submitted by the

More information on required immunizations:

niu.edu/healthservices/immunizations/index.shtml

10th day of your first term enrolled on campus, a late fee and registration hold may be applied.





Health Insurance

You are automatically covered by, and billed for, **NIU's student health insurance plan** if you are enrolled in at least 1 credit hour.

If you are a student in an F status or a J status, you are required to have the NIU student insurance unless:

- You have **prior** approval of the **International Student & Faculty Office** & the **Student Health Insurance office**.
- You have another comparable policy from your program sponsor that meets the insurance requirements set by the U.S. Department of State.
- You are sponsored by your home government and provided with comparable insurance policy.
- You are dependents of H visa holder, lawful permanent resident or other working visa holder who has comparable coverage.

Student Health Insurance Office:

niu.edu/shi/contactus/index.shtml

Waiving Coverage

- If you are on H status you may cancel the NIU insurance if you have other comparable coverage.
- You cannot purchase insurance in your home country and then cancel the NIU insurance plan.
- Certain sponsored students who are eligible to cancel the insurance must contact either the **International Student and Faculty Office** or the **Student Health Insurance office** and provide proof of other comparable coverage during the semester's waiver period.
- Sponsored students who did not cancel the insurance after the waiver period has ended must file an appeal with the Student Health Insurance Office.
- If you waive the insurance you must do so each semester you attend NIU so your insurance information can be reviewed and approved as up-to-date.



Orientation

The International Student and Faculty Office offers an orientation for *newly admitted international students to NIU*. As a new international student at Northern Illinois University, *you must attend orientation* prior to the start of your first semester.

Orientation for international students starts one week before classes begin and continues through the entire week. During this very important week we will provide you with valuable information about how NIU operates. Information on the dates and times of your orientation will be mailed to you with your I-20.

At orientation, you will:

- Register for classes
- Meet with your academic advisors
- Learn about regulations pertaining to your immigration status
- Get your NIU student I.D. card
- Receive information on the University Libraries, student health insurance, and Health Services
- Receive information on applying for a Social Security number

At orientation you will also meet other students who are new to or currently attending NIU and get answers to any questions you may have.

All new students must report to the International Student and Faculty Office before or during orientation week with your visa, I-94, passport, I-20 or DS2019 and any other documents relevant to your stay in the U.S.

There will be a hold on your student account until you check-in with ISFO. This hold will prevent you from registering for classes, so you must check-in with ISFO before you can start classes at NIU.





Immigration

As an international student at NIU, there are certain U.S. federal immigration regulations that you **MUST** follow. If you do not follow these rules, your SEVIS record may be terminated and you would be required to return home.

Maintaining Status

“Maintaining your status” refers to your adherence to the immigration regulations specific to the visa you were granted. As an F-1 student, you must abide by the following rules:

- Enroll full-time each spring and fall semester.
 - 9 hours for graduate students.
 - 12 hours for undergraduate students.
 - F-1 students may only register for one online course per semester.
- Maintain good academic standing at all times.
- Know your academic deadlines and requirements.
- Update your **new address** with Registration and Records within 10 days of a change.
- Never let your I-20 expire before the completion of your program.
 - Submit an **extension request** form at least one month before the current program end date.
- Get work authorization from ISFO before working off campus.
 - On campus work is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session.
 - F-1 students must get work authorization for both on- and off-campus employment. Obtain a travel signature on your I-20 before traveling out of the U.S.
- Maintain a valid passport at all times. Apply for renewal at least 6 months prior to the current expiration date.
- Follow the appropriate procedures to:
 - Change your degree level or major or name.
 - Transfer to another school.
- Leave the U.S. on or before the end of your grace period upon completion of your program.
 - F-1: 60 day grace period from the program end date.
- Maintain NIU student insurance while enrolled at NIU. To opt out of NIU insurance, you must have prior approval.
- File an income tax return with form 8843 or/and 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ every year.
- Check your NIU student email account regularly for school/ISFO announcements.
- Contact ISFO for any further information and any questions related to immigration.



Mailing Address

Immigration regulations require all individuals in F status (including dependents) to report changes in their address—both home address and local address within 10 days of the move.

Address Changes or Corrections

You may inform ISFO of any changes or corrections to your addresses by going on-line at niu.edu/myniu

1. Click on “go to MyNIU”
2. Log in with your ZID and password
3. Click on “self-service”
4. Click on “Campus Personal Information”
5. Click on “Addresses”
6. Edit current address or add new addresses

Permanent Address

It is preferred you enter your address outside the U.S. in this field. Please check with registration and records to make sure information is not mailed to this address during the summer.

Local Address

This is where you live in the United States. ISFO is also required by law to report your local address to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through SEVIS.

When You Leave NIU

- If you remain in SEVIS on Optional Practical Training (OPT), you should continue to update your address by filling out the **OPT information update form**.
- If you are not in SEVIS because you have changed to another status, you should update your address with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by completing the AR-11 uscis.gov/files/form/ar-11.pdf and sending directly to DHS.





Academics

Studying at NIU

You will find that there are many differences between the American university system and that of your home country. Our educational system differs not only in structure but also in philosophy; we emphasize general education classes at the baccalaureate level, unlike the curricula in most other countries.

The school year is divided into three semesters:

- **Fall semester:** late August to early December with a short break in late November for Thanksgiving
- **Spring semester:** mid-January through mid-May with a one-week spring break occurring in March
- **Summer session:** mid-June to early August with no break (optional semester)

Required Times to Take Classes

International students are not required to study during the summer semester, but must be registered full-time during both fall and spring semesters. Undergraduate students are required to enroll for at least 12 hours; graduate students must enroll for at least nine hours.

Degree Requirements

The requirements for each degree program at an American university are measured in credit hours. Within each area of your degree program, you must earn a minimum number of credit hours to fulfill the requirements of your degree. Each course is assigned a certain number of credit hours (usually three hours). You will also have to satisfy various distribution requirements, which specify the courses you will need to take from a variety of general education and specialized subject areas. In addition to required classes in your major area, you are required to fulfill credit hours in other departments.

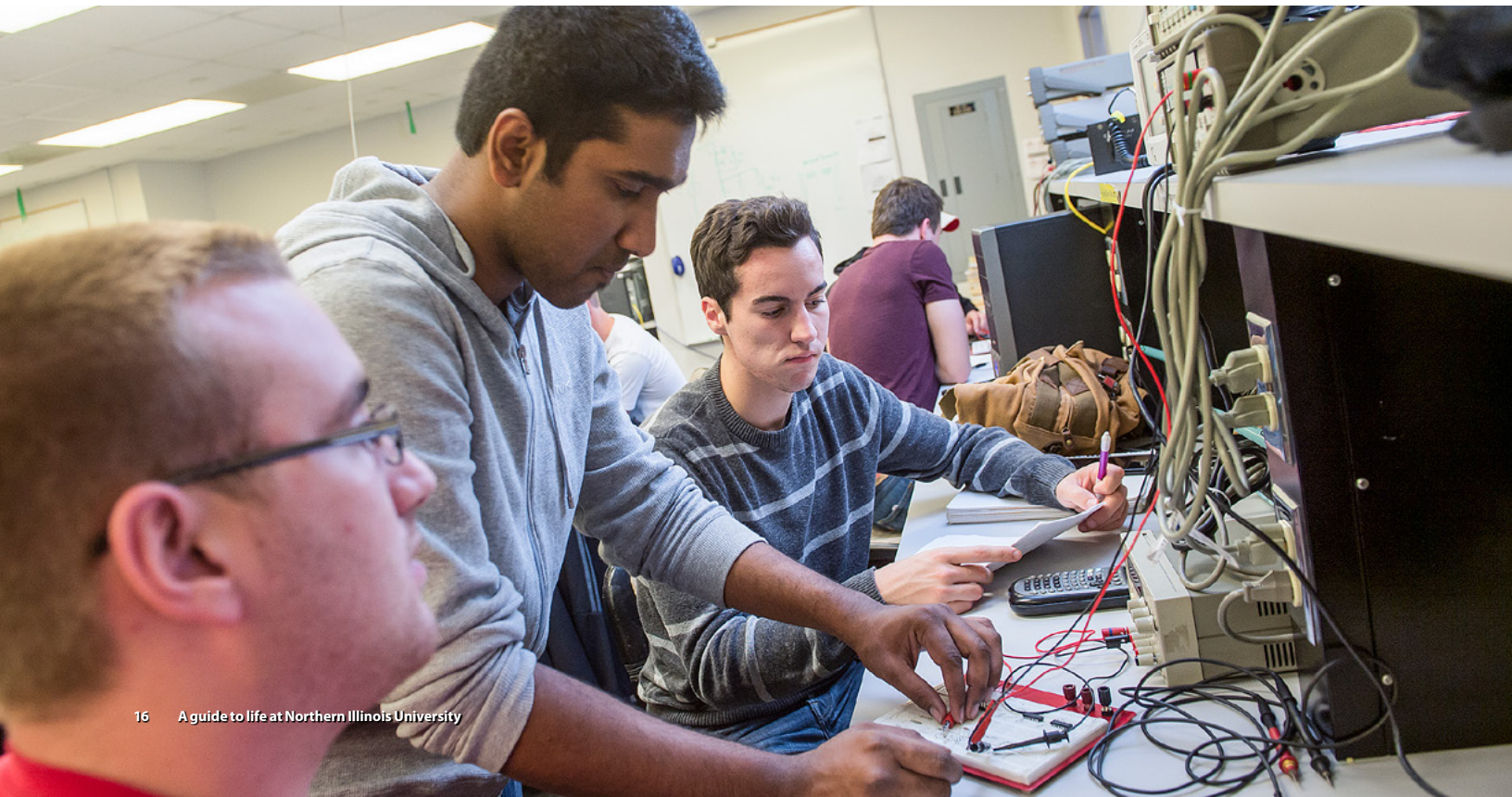
Your academic advisor will explain the details at your first advising session.




Understanding U.S. Academic Culture

As an international student, you may find differences in the ways you are expected to learn and in the general classroom culture between the U.S. and your home country. We hope this information about some of the common aspects of U.S. academic culture will help you be better prepared for a positive and successful experience at NIU.

- 1. Active and engaged learning:** You are encouraged and expected to ask questions and participate in your classes. Learning to ask and answer questions is part of the critical learning process.
- 2. Know what is expected from your courses:** It is important that you go through the course syllabus for each of your classes carefully at the beginning and throughout the semester. Make sure you understand the expectations and requirements from each of your professors. You are expected to come to class prepared with the reading assignments. Ask if you are not sure about something in the syllabus or class, you can schedule an appointment with your professor during his or her office hours if you need more time to discuss your issue.
- 3. Classroom etiquette:** In the U.S., the classroom etiquette and relationship between student-professor is generally informal. You may be surprised to occasionally hear your American classmates call professors by their first name. You may also notice that they chew gum, eat in the classroom or sit in a very relaxed position—all of these actions may seem disrespectful to you. Depending on the professor, most do not mind as long as their behaviors are not disrupting the class session. Each professor has his or her own rules for the classroom. If you aren't sure what the acceptable behavior is, ask.



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4. **Be on time:** Punctuality is very important in the U.S., especially if you have an appointment with a study group, advisor or professor. You are expected to be in class and in your seat before class begins! If you are going to be late, let your professor, advisor or classmates know by calling or emailing ahead.
5. **Academic integrity:** Academic integrity is extremely important in U.S. academic culture. You must understand and follow this important aspect of U.S. academic culture. Good academic work must be based on honesty. It is a serious offense to present work as your own if you have not produced it yourself. A student is cheating if he or she copies the work of another during an examination or turns in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism leads to serious consequences.
6. **Communication:** Be sure to check your student email account daily to check for communications from your academic department and other offices on campus. If you are required to reply, you should respond in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in negative or costly consequences.

Academic integrity online tutorial:
niu.edu/ai/students



Campus Basics

Health and Wellness

Northern Illinois University recognizes the need to provide health and wellness resources that are beneficial to students. Dimensions relating to overall wellness include but are not limited to:

- Physical
- Mental
- Social
- Emotional
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Career
- Intellectual
- Aesthetic
- Environmental

For more information, visit: niu.edu/wellness/index.shtml

Local Transportation

Northern Illinois University Huskie Line Service

This is one of the services covered by your student activity fee and a service that you will probably use often! The routes, each starting at the Holmes Student Center, take riders around campus to residential areas and to shopping sites around DeKalb. We recommend that you take the bus tour offered during orientation and that you also read the Huskie Line Route Maps and Service Guide that you will be given during orientation. Call (815) 758-6900 for Huskie Line information.

Bicycle

Riding a bike is a very popular mode of transportation from April through October (as long as there is no snow on the ground). Used bikes can be purchased at a very reasonable price; check the newspapers, go to garage sales or ask friends.

NIU also has a **Borrow-A-Bike** program on a semester to semester basis.





Safety tips

Be sensible about your personal safety! DeKalb is a safe place to live, but crime may occur anywhere. If you follow guidelines for protecting yourself and your property, such as you would practice in a large city in your home country, you are unlikely to be a crime victim.

Precautions

- **Lock your door.** Lock your doors and windows whenever you are out of your room, apartment or car.
- **Protect your property.** Participate in “Operation Identification” by engraving your driver’s license number on personal valuables. Engravers are available at the main desk of each residence hall and at the Department of Public Safety. Avoid leaving personal property unattended for ANY length of time. This includes textbooks and notebooks. During the week of final exams there is an increase in thefts of backpacks and textbooks on campus. Mark all books for identification and proof of ownership. Record all numbers of credit cards, your passport, your travelers’ checks, etc. and keep them in a separate (safe) place at home. If you are a victim of theft or burglary, report the incident immediately to the police.
 - Bicycle thefts do occur. With a lock and chain, secure your bicycle to a bike rack located in a well-lighted area. Register your bicycle with the City of DeKalb or NIU Public Safety.
- **Protect yourself.** Avoid walking alone at night. Stay on the paved and lighted public walkways that are well traveled by others and patrolled by the police. Take advantage of NIU’s free Huskie Safe Line, providing safe passage home for students, faculty and staff. The service operates Friday and Saturday nights from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. Call 753-2222 for a ride. Be Alert! If you should be followed, cross the street; if on campus, run to an on-campus emergency call box (blue light), a better lit area, towards a group of people or toward a lighted building, house or store and call the police.
- **Get help in an emergency.** If you need help in an emergency you should call 911 on your telephone. That connects you to the emergency service, which will send the police, ambulance or fire department immediately. Stay calm and always be aware of your surroundings. Always leave your destination and estimated time of arrival with a reliable friend and your approximate return time.





Weather

What can be said about Northern Illinois weather? Enjoyable? Unpredictable? Extreme? YES!

Hottest Days

During July and August, temperatures may reach 95-100 degrees Fahrenheit (35-37 Centigrade).

Coldest Days

During January, temperatures may drop to -5 degrees Fahrenheit (-20 degrees Centigrade).

Winter at NIU

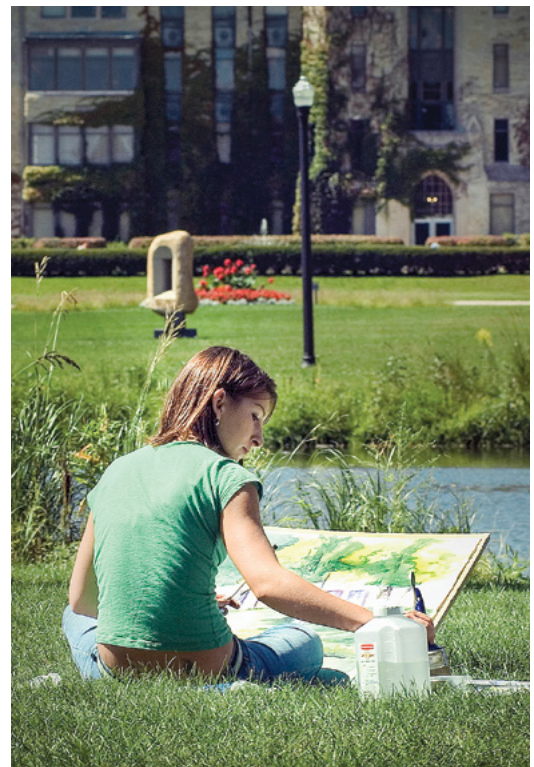
Winter usually lasts from November-April. The temperature is usually below 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4.4 degrees Centigrade).

Strong Winds

Because the DeKalb area is flat, it can be very windy. In the winter months the low temperature becomes more dangerous because of wind.

What to Wear

If you dress appropriately for winter weather, you will be comfortable outdoors most of the time. For this reason you must have the right outer clothing, which includes a hat to cover your ears and gloves to cover your hands. We also recommend that you have a heavy coat and boots. For those of you coming to NIU from tropical climates, we recommend that you purchase your winter clothes here after you arrive. Please ask ISFO staff for more information about dressing appropriately for the winter.





Social Security Number

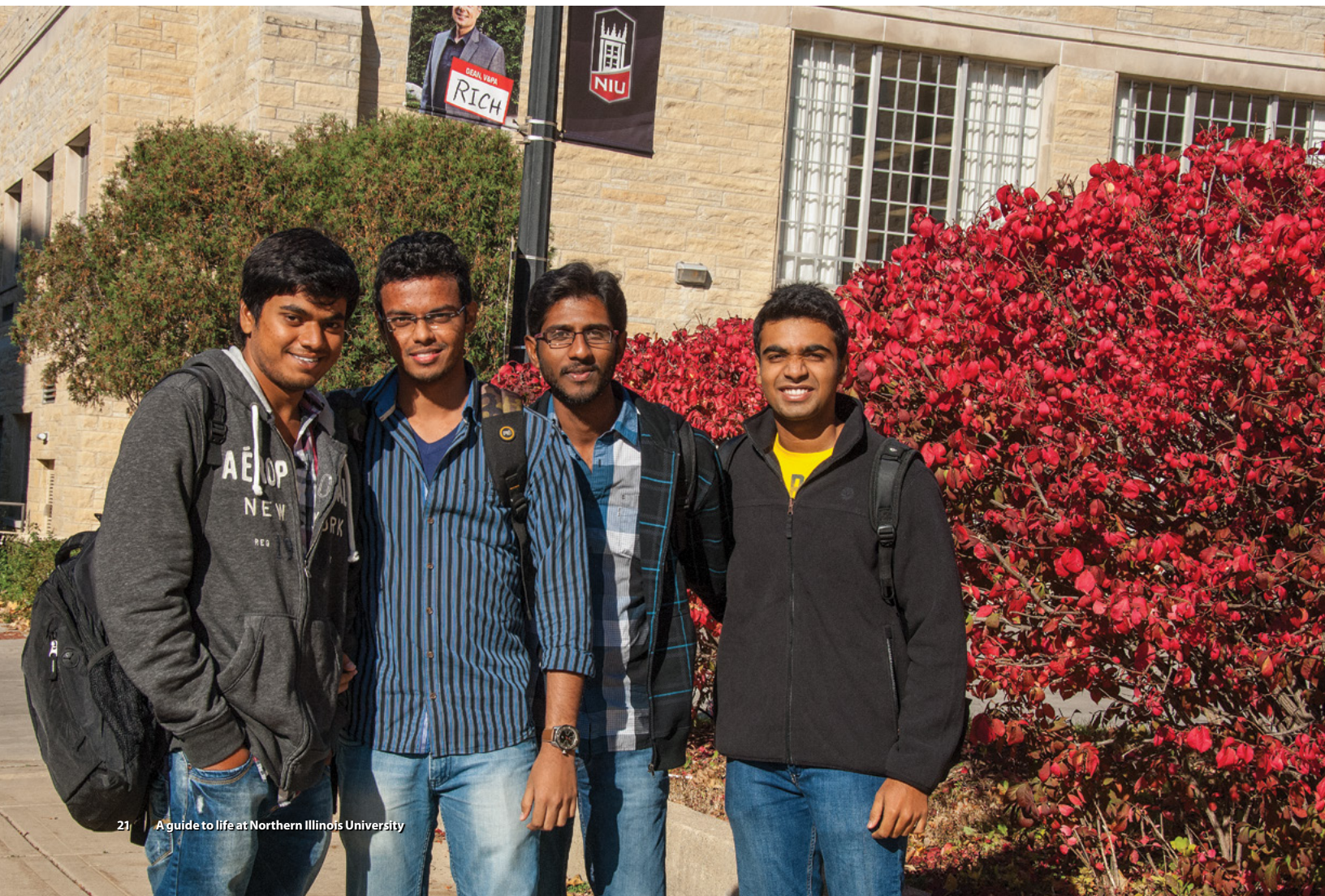
The Social Security number is used for employment purposes in the United States to report wages to the government. The Social Security Administration will issue a Social Security number for employment purposes only. ISFO advisors and front desk staff can walk you through the process and requirements for applying for an Social Security number. **Never share your Social Security number with anyone.**

More information about obtaining a Social Security number:
niu.edu/isfo/immigration/fstatus/ssn.shtml

Driver's License

As an International student, you are eligible for two types of driver's licenses depending on whether or not you have a Social Security number. If you already have a Social Security number, you can apply for a regular driver's license in the state of Illinois. If you do not have a Social Security number, you will be eligible for the Temporary Visitor's Driver's License (TVDL).

More information about driver's licenses:
niu.edu/isfo/programs/Drivers-License.pdf



Money Matters

Billing Information

You will not be charged tuition until after you register for classes. Your account statement will be mailed to your permanent address and can be viewed online 24/7 through your MyNIU account. You can provide the Bursar's office with an alternative billing address either in person or by emailing bursar@niu.edu from your NIU email address.

For payment methods, visit: niu.edu/bursar/payments/makeapayment.shtml

To use the Tuition Estimator, visit: niu.edu/bursar/tuition/estimator.shtml

For information about the Bursar's Office, visit: niu.edu/bursar

Non-immigrant Student Charge

We require a non-immigrant student charge of USD \$125.00. This fee will be charged to your account after you enroll at NIU. This is not an orientation fee; it is a one-time fee used to cover the cost of programs provided by the **International Student and Faculty Office**.

Expenditures and Income

You will have coursework and living expenses during the school year, especially in the first few weeks after your arrival in the U.S. It's important to have adequate funds to cover long-term and short-term expenses, especially for teaching assistants, research assistants and graduate fellows who are typically initially paid at the end of a half-month and then bimonthly. We suggest you bring at least \$1,500-\$2,000 in traveler's checks or on a debit card with you to cover immediate expenses.

Money and Banking in the US

Carrying Money

What you should have in your wallet? Americans seldom carry large amounts of cash with them. Instead, most people pay for their purchases using either a debit or credit card. Most bills are paid by mail, by automatic withdrawal from your checking account or through your bank's automated teller machine (ATM). This is very convenient and timesaving but can also cause some trouble if you do not handle your accounts wisely. Overextending or overdrawing your accounts leads to expensive service charges and will damage your credit history in the U.S. Therefore, it is important that you learn to use your checking account correctly and that you set up a budget for yourself.



Bank Accounts

Opening a bank account is very important. There are many banks in town so we suggest that you shop around to find the one that best fits your needs. All U.S. banks are under federal regulation.

What you should consider when choosing a bank:

- The location and convenience to the university and/or to your place of residence.
- Where the automatic teller machines (ATMs) are located.
- International banking relationships and procedures. Will these enable you to transfer funds easily to your account?
- Types of accounts offered by the bank (i.e., credit card services, emergency transfer from savings accounts, interest-bearing checking, etc.)
- Any charges and fees for checks, services and savings accounts.

To open a bank account in DeKalb, you will need your passport, NIU ID and a local address. Most banks will give you temporary checks to use immediately (if you have deposited money) and they will send you your printed checks in about one to two weeks. You should be aware that most stores in DeKalb do not accept temporary checks, so keep some cash with you for purchases.

Employment

Eligibility

If you are an F-1 student and you are **maintaining your immigration status** (which means following the rules and regulations of the immigration service), you may work on campus once you enroll for your first semester. J-1 students may work under certain circumstances. Student workers on campus are permitted to work 20 hours per week during the semester; full-time work is permitted during breaks. Please make an appointment at the **International Faculty & Staff Office** for questions about employment.



Job Inquiries

Human Resource Services maintains a listing of **available student job opportunities**. The **Student Employment Office** can provide you with information about finding a student job on campus after your arrival and class registration. You may also wish to inquire with **Housing and Dining** and **University Libraries**. The **computer labs** on campus also hire student workers.

Assistantships

Graduate assistantships provide students with a stipend and full-tuition waiver. Approximately 25% of degree-seeking graduate students receive assistantships. Before you apply for an assistantship, be sure to **read these tips** provided by NIU's Faculty Development & Instructional Design Center.

Financial Sponsorship

When you submitted your financial documents to the Graduate School or the International Student and Faculty Office to obtain your I-20 or DS-2019, it represented an absolute commitment on the part of the individual sponsoring you to provide financial support to you on a consistent and long-term basis. We understand that this support will not be withdrawn and we and you accept this promise to provide adequate funds. Sponsored students whose tuition and fees are paid by a sponsoring agency must present a statement from their sponsor authorizing the university to bill for tuition and fees to 3rd Party Billing which is an area of the Bursar's Office located in Swen Parson 210.

You must meet your financial obligations for tuition, fees and living expenses or you will risk losing your student status in the United States. NIU will not allow you to register for the next semester if you have an outstanding balance. It is impossible for non-immigrant students to earn enough money by working part-time on campus to cover their expenses. Please discuss these matters openly and honestly with your sponsor before coming to the United States.





Utilities (Electric & Gas)

When choosing an apartment, ask the manager if you will be paying utilities and if so, which utilities. If you are responsible for utilities you will need to know how to contact these companies (gas, electricity, phone or water).

Commonwealth Edison (Com Ed) Electric Company

You will need to call this number 1-800-334-7661. You will need to tell the company representative that you wish to have the electricity turned on or put in your name, at your new apartment.

They will ask for the following information:

- Your name
- Your temporary Social Security number (pink sheet you received from ISFO)
- Your employment status—your answer will be “NIU Student”
- If you have ever had electrical service in the U.S. before

After you have answered the above questions, they will tell you when your service will be connected. Usually it takes a day. There is NO deposit required for this service and there are NO start-up fees. You will receive a bill every month in the mail for your electrical service; please remember to pay promptly.

Northern Illinois Gas Company (Nicor)

(for your heat, hot water, cooking, etc.)

For apartments or homes that have heat, hot water or cook stoves using natural gas. If your apartment is all electric, you may NOT need to turn on the gas. You should ask your landlord.

If you do need to start up the gas, you will need to call this number: 1-800-942-6100. Again, you will be asked a number of questions so it is a good idea to have your answers prepared before calling (if you have any of the following).

- Home phone number
- Work phone number
- Place of employment; again you will answer “NIU student”
- Landlord’s name and phone number
- Social Security number (temporary or permanent)
- Driver’s license number

It usually takes three to five days to have the gas turned on. You will need to be present at the apartment on the day the serviceperson will be turning the gas on. The person on the phone will set this time for you. If you are not there they will not be able to start your service. You will also receive a bill once a month in the mail for this service.



About NIU



Northern Illinois University was founded in
1895
and is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Northern Illinois University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the **North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**. NIU holds professional accreditation from the **American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)** and from the **Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)**. The university is fully accredited by the **National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education** to offer teacher education programs. NIU is included in the Doctoral/Research Universities—Extensive category of the **Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching** and is a member of the **National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges**. The university and its colleges have institutional membership or other affiliations in or with the **American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education**, **American Council on Education**, **Association of State Colleges and Universities**, **Council of Graduate Schools** and **Universities Research Association**.



Northern Illinois University has a total enrollment of approximately

20,000

with approximately

950

international students from more than

100

different countries.





We look forward to having you here at NIU. If you have any questions that were not answered in this booklet, please contact ISFO.

International Student & Faculty Office (ISFO)

(815) 753-1346

isfo@niu.edu



Northern Illinois University