



Welcome

to Illinois State University

**Information for Visiting Foreign Researchers,
Professors, Short-term Scholars,
and Student Interns**



OFFICE OF

**INTERNATIONAL
ENGAGEMENT**

Illinois State University

IllinoisState.edu



**ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Illinois' first public university

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Dear Scholar/Exchange visitor,

Welcome to Illinois State University! We are delighted to have you join our community of scholars and researchers from around the world. As you embark on this exciting journey, we want to extend our warmest greetings and provide you with essential information to ensure a smooth and rewarding experience throughout your stay.

At ISU, we take immense pride in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that encourages collaboration, innovation, and intellectual growth. As a visiting scholar, you bring a unique perspective and expertise that enriches our academic community, and we look forward to the contributions you will make during your time here.

We are thrilled to have you as a part of our academic family and believe that your time here will be intellectually stimulating and personally enriching. Should you have any questions or require assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office or any of the support services available to you. International Student and Scholar Services is your first point of contact and will continue to provide services during your ISU experience.

Once again, welcome to Illinois State University! We eagerly anticipate the unique perspectives and contributions you will bring to our community.

Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable tenure!

Sincerely,

Roopa Rawjee

Dr. Roopa Rawjee

Executive Director, Office of International Engagement



Your Next Steps

Now that you have been approved as a future visiting scholar at Illinois State University, you will need to apply for a J-1 visa and a J-2 visa for any accompanying dependents. Before applying for your visa, you must first pay a SEVIS fee. SEVIS stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System and is the system that the U.S. government uses to keep track of international scholars and students. You can [pay the SEVIS fee online](#).

After paying the SEVIS fee, you will need to make an appointment to apply for a J-1 visa. You may visit travel.state.gov to learn more about the visa application process and find a U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate near you. When making an appointment, you should contact the consulate to ask for a complete list of the documents you will need. At minimum, you will need the following documents at your interview:

- Passport
- Original DS-2019 for you and any dependents
- Official invitation letter from host department
- Receipt for payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee
- Proof of financial support

These documents—and your approved J-1 visa—will also be needed when entering the U.S. Please keep them accessible in your carry-on-luggage so that you are able to present them to Customs and Border Protection officers.



Visiting Scholar Program Guidelines

The Exchange Visitor Program is managed by the U.S. Department of State. Its purpose is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges. In the spirit of exchange, it is the program's intent that the visiting scholar's university will also welcome Illinois State faculty or staff for research or teaching programs when possible.

Scholars are required by law to report to the sponsor within 10 days of arrival. After arriving in the U.S., you should email the University's Responsible Officer (RO) to notify them. You should also log in to the ISSS Scholar Portal to update your U.S. address and phone number and submit the following requests.

- Submit Arrival Documentation
- Submit Insurance Documentation

Requirements while participating in the Exchange Visitor Program

- Update International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) when you move to a new address or change any contact information
- Actively participate in your exchange visitor program and meet any deadlines given by the host department
- Participate in socio-cultural activities

Grounds for Dismissal from the Exchange Visitor Program

- Engaging in unauthorized employment
- Engaging in activities not outlined in your scholar application or DS-2019
- Failing to maintain health insurance coverage
- Violation of any Illinois State academic integrity policies or employee conduct guidelines
- Conviction of a criminal offense

Academic Resources

Illinois State University is comprised of seven academic colleges:

- College of Applied Science and Technology
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Fine Arts
- Mennonite College of Nursing
- Milner Library

Milner Library

If you are seeking a particular collection or resource to aid in your visiting scholar program, Milner Library can assist. In addition to having subject librarians who can track down a particular publication in their field of expertise, the [Milner Library website](#) can assist with citation, copyright, and interlibrary loan to help you in getting the resources you request.

Responsible Conduct of Research

At Illinois State University, plagiarism is a serious offense and is not taken lightly. Honesty and integrity in your work are expected of you as a scholar. For more information on the plagiarism policy at Illinois State University, please view [the Student Code of Conduct](#) and [the Research and Ethics Compliance code](#).

University Policy Resources

[University Policy and Procedures](#)

[Office of Equal Opportunity and Access](#)

[Research and Sponsored Programs Office](#)

[Human Resources](#)

Illinois State University has a commitment to provide an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment to all faculty, staff, and students. The University has policies in place to protect those who report criminal activity, ethical violations, and other non-compliance issues from retaliation based upon their actions. Policies are also in place to prevent discrimination and harassment.

Welcome to Bloomington-Normal

The Basics

- The Bloomington-Normal community is comprised of the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal with an area population of approximately 172,000
- Bloomington-Normal is 130 miles (209 km) southwest of Chicago, 170 miles (274 km) northeast of St. Louis, and 70 miles (113 km) northeast of Springfield (the state capital)
- State Farm and COUNTRY Financial call Bloomington-Normal home for their corporate headquarters
- Go to visitbn.org for more information on the community.



Housing

Scholars are responsible for making their own housing arrangements. Please refer to our website for useful information in searching for off-campus housing. Apartment costs in Bloomington-Normal can generally range from \$480 to \$1,200 depending on location, size, quality, and whether amenities (such as electric, gas, and water) are included.

Program Costs

Visiting scholars are not required to pay any expenses directly to Illinois State University unless a Redbird Card is required. The following is a list of outside costs that you are likely to incur. Estimates for costs not specified can be found using the [Living Wage Calculator for McLean County](#). Specified costs in list are valid as of 2022.

- I-901 SEVIS fee \$180 one-time
- Visa application fee \$160 per applicant
- Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable)
- Travel expenses to and from Bloomington-Normal
- Housing (including rent and utilities)
- Health insurance (including insurance for J-2 dependents)
- Other types of insurance—renter’s insurance, car insurance
- Redbird Identification Card \$8 (paid to Redbird Card Office upon arrival)
- Internet and phone service
- Transportation outside of Bloomington-Normal
- Personal expenses and entertainment costs
- Child care (if applicable)

Getting a cellular phone

Some mobile plans may require that you have a Social Security number to set up a contract. Pre-paid plans (where you pay your monthly bill in advance) are available from most providers and do not require a social security number. You have three options to set up service:

- Purchase a sim card from one of these providers to access cellular service on your current phone
- Purchase a new phone and sim card from a provider and sign a contract for service through that provider
- Purchase a “go phone” where you only need to purchase minutes and data as you need them from a retailer such as Target or Walmart.



Setting Up a Bank Account

Below is a list of banking options in close proximity to Illinois State University. Some banks will require that you have a social security number prior to setting up your account. It is always a good idea to bring your passport, visa, DS-2019, and a small amount of cash to open your account. Banking information for the banks listed below can be found online.

Heartland Bank

ISU Credit Union

Chase Bank (ATM)

PNC Bank

Commerce Bank

Places of Worship

A comprehensive list of places of worship in the area can be found at townsquarepublications.com/worship-in-bloomington-il

Employees of Illinois State University

Preparing for your Employment

Some visiting scholars are employed by the University and will receive payment for their work on research or for their hours teaching in the classroom. If you are a scholar who falls into this category be sure to follow the steps below to ensure that your HR paperwork is complete prior to starting your program:

1. Meet with Human Resources to complete your I-9 paperwork

To do so, you will need your passport, visa, DS-2019, and I-94.

Payment from Illinois State University

[A schedule of pay dates](#) is available online. It is strongly suggested that you set up a direct deposit of your net pay into a U.S. bank account.

Each payday you will be able to review your pay stub, or statement of your earnings, online in your iPeople portal. This statement will indicate your gross pay (pre-tax earnings), your deductions (i.e. tax, health insurance benefits, etc.), and your net pay (post-deduction earnings).

Federal tax withholding rates and certain benefits are based on a Substantial Presence Test (SPT) that determines your status as a resident alien or nonresident alien for tax purposes. You will receive an email from noreply@sprintax.com with an activation link to your Sprintax Calculus profile to collect information from students and scholars to complete the SPT. This profile will determine tax residency status, tax treaty benefit eligibility, and generate the necessary tax forms for submission. For more



information on tax withholding for nonresident aliens visit the tax information page for international students and scholars on the Payroll site or reach out to TaxOffice@ilstu.edu. Resident aliens are treated like U.S. persons for tax withholding and reporting.

Please note that you will need to report earnings to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) prior to April 15 of the following year. ISSS purchases a tax program to assist nonresident aliens with completing the appropriate federal tax forms. In some instances, you may be required to pay state taxes as well.

2. Apply for a Social Security number

Federal laws on reporting employment income will require you to receive a Social Security number. After turning in your application at the Social Security Administration Office, be sure to request a receipt for your application and understand that it may take two to four weeks to receive your SSN. You will receive additional information on this process once you are at the University.

Health Insurance

General Health Insurance Information

Every exchange visitor must have health insurance for the duration of the scholar's program. This means that you and any dependents must have health insurance that meets the federally mandated requirements (see below) from your program start date to its end date. The U.S. Government requires that all insurance policies meet the following **minimum** requirements:

- \$100,000 for each illness or accident with a deductible to not exceed \$500 per illness or accident
- \$50,000 for medical evacuation
- \$25,000 for repatriation of remains
- Must cover pre-existing conditions at start of policy or with a reasonable waiting period
- Meet one of the following requirements:
 - Underwritten by an insurance corporation having: an A.M Best rating of "A+" or above; a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of "A+" or above; a Weiss Research Inc. rating of "B+" or above; a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of "A+" or above; a Moody's Investor Services rating of "A3" or above
 - Be backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the visiting scholar's home country
 - Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees by the sponsor
 - Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health

Maintenance Organization or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

In most instances, visiting scholars are not eligible for the student or employee insurance plans through Illinois State. In this case, scholars must obtain coverage that meets the federal requirements for J-1 visa holders in their home country or seek insurance options here in the United States.

If you would like help finding a plan, please contact ISSS for U.S. plans available to visa holders.



Health care and taking care of illnesses

There are many facilities where people in the United States can go for medical treatment.

For Minor Illnesses:

If you have the need to see a doctor while you are here for a minor illness (such as an upset stomach, headache, flu, cold, etc.), you may visit any doctor's office or clinic in town that is covered by your health insurance company.

For Emergencies and Serious Illnesses:

If you have an emergency (such as broken bones, difficulty breathing, pain in your chest, etc.), Bloomington/Normal has two hospitals:

Carle BroMenn Medical Center

Virginia and Franklin streets, Normal, (309) 454-1400

OSF St. Joseph Medical Center

2200 E. Washington St., Bloomington, (309) 662-3311

Safety

While Bloomington-Normal is a fairly safe community, it is helpful to be aware of the ways that local people behave with regard to safety. The following are some tips to keep in mind:

- Emergencies—to contact the police, the fire department or to call for an ambulance, dial 911 on any telephone.
- Leave your money in a safe place. Americans do not carry a lot of cash with them.
- Lock your doors when you are out and while you are sleeping. Carry your key with you and do not leave it where someone might take it.
- Walk with others when you are out at night.
- There are 18 emergency blue lights with a yellow box and red button located on campus. These are connected to the Illinois State University Police Department. If you have an emergency while you are on campus, push the red button at a blue light station, then tell the person who answers the phone why you are calling and your name. A police officer will be sent to help you with your emergency at that location.
- Be aware of your department's emergency policies and procedures.
- Never give strangers personal information about yourself, family, or friends.
- When using an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), please be careful when going to and from the ATM. Never count your money in front of the machine or where others can see you. Remember to take your ATM receipt with you.



Transportation around town

During your stay in Bloomington-Normal, you will have access to community buses and ISU buses.

The University's Office of Parking and Transportation offers multiple bus services to students, faculty, and staff to transport them not only around campus, but also around the Bloomington-Normal area.

Universal Access is a program that gives faculty, staff, and students with an ISU Redbird Card access to the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System's fixed bus routes. Simply swipe your Redbird Card when boarding the bus to ride it for free around town! Visit the [Connect Transit website](#) for information on routes.

Other Modes of Transportation:

- Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA) serves as a hub for connecting flights. Parking is free, and the airport is also accessible by Connect Transit. Fly out of CIRA to catch connections to your home country from most major cities in the United States.
- Amtrak (station located in Uptown Normal) provides rail service across the U.S. including trips to Chicago and St. Louis. Visit amtrak.com for schedules and rates.
- You can also access Chicago, St. Louis, and other major cities by bus using Greyhound, Peoria Charter, or Burlington Trailways. Visit the individual sites or contact these companies for rates and schedules.

Driving:

- In order to drive in the United States and the state of Illinois, you need to hold a valid driver's license. If you have been issued a driver's license from your home country, you may drive on that for up to 90 days.
- You may apply for an Illinois driver's license if you will stay in the United States for more than one year.
 - Expect to sit for a written test and a driving test. More information about what is covered in these tests can be found at cyberdriveillinois.com.
 - In order to take the driving test, you must have a car and proof of insurance for the vehicle. For more information, see our [Driving in Illinois page](#).

Buying a car:

- When purchasing a car, you must show proof of car insurance to the dealership soon after purchasing your vehicle. Car insurance is required in the state of Illinois.
- As a part of the purchasing process, you will apply for Illinois license plates. These plates are unique to your car and cannot be interchanged with another vehicle.
- Be prepared to pay to register the car with the state, receive the title to the vehicle, and apply for a license plate.

Culture shock

During your time in the United States, you may discover some differences from your country and Bloomington-Normal. People may speak, dress, or behave differently and may even have different values. Should you find yourself feeling uncomfortable, you may be experiencing something called culture shock.

Experiencing culture shock is normal for many people who travel abroad. Here are some things you can do to feel better:

- Talk with other people about what you are feeling as you adjust to a new culture.
- Try to continue doing things you enjoy.

People from your home culture can also help by sharing their past experiences with culture shock and what they did to feel better. The main thing to understand is that culture shock is a very normal part of getting used to a new culture.

Dependents

Visiting scholars are able to bring dependent spouses and children (under the age of 21) to accompany them on their journey to Illinois State. Dependents are also required to follow immigration regulations:

- J-2 dependents are eligible to study and work (with authorization from USCIS) in the United States. Contact ISSS for information.
- J-2 dependents must adhere to the health insurance requirements listed in this handbook. Failure to maintain health insurance may result in the termination of your dependent's visa status(es).
- If one or all of your dependents leave the United States with no plans to return prior to the program end date listed on your DS-2019, you must notify ISSS within 10 days of the departure. Failure to do so is a violation of status.

Changes to DS-2019

Change of Scholar Program or Category

If your research and program objectives change during your stay, please contact ISSS immediately. If your objectives include a change in category (professor to short-term scholar, for example) or substantial changes in your program (moving from a physics-based program to a program based in chemistry, for example) you must consult with ISSS prior to engaging in any new program objectives.



Transfer of Program

If you elect to transfer to continue your program objectives at another SEVIS-approved institution, you are able to do so provided that you are within the window of participation for your category (six months for short-term scholars and five years for professors/researchers). Prior to leaving ISU, you must transfer your SEVIS record to your new school. Please see the SEVIS Transfer Out page of the ISSS website for full details.

Extension of Program

In some instances, in order to complete your program objectives it is necessary to extend your stay at ISU. You will need to complete the following to begin the extension process:

- Application to Extend
- Provide proof of funding for the duration of time that you plan to extend for you and any dependents

Bars on repeat participation and 212e Home Residency Requirement

212e Home Residency Requirement

Visiting scholars from certain countries engaging in activities in certain programs may be subject to 212e. Those who are subject will have a notation on the bottom of their J-1 visa that states “Subject to 212e two-Year Home Residency Requirement” and will have to reside and be physically present in their home country for a total of two years before being eligible to receive certain immigration benefits, such as:

- Eligibility for an immigrant visa or U.S. Permanent Residency
- Eligibility for H, K, and L visa statuses
- Eligibility to change status to another non-immigrant visa category in the U.S.
 - Exceptions to this are for A, G, or U category visas

If you have questions as to your eligibility or why you may be deemed subject, contact ISSS.

12- and 24-Month Bars on Repeat Participation

The 12-month bar states that anyone in any J-1/J-2 category who is hoping to begin a new J-1/J-2 program as a researcher or professor must wait at least 12 months before being eligible to do so. Exceptions to this rule are for transfers, and those who were in J-1 status for less than six months.

The 24-month bar states that those who have completed their full five years as a professor or researcher, or those who have left the U.S. after participation in a program as a professor or researcher, must wait for 24 months prior to being eligible to return to the U.S. to begin another professor or researcher program.

If you have questions about these bars and requirements, please contact ISSS.



International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

For any questions during your stay, please consult ISSS. You may find information in four ways:

- By phone: (309) 438-5276
- By email: InternationalStudents@IllinoisState.edu
- By walk-in hours: InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu/Students
- Online: InternationalStudies.IllinoisState.edu

Enjoy your stay at Illinois State University!



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|----|-------------------------------------|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Adelaide Street Field B3 | 43 | Linkins Dining Center C2 | 77 | University Galleries F10 |
| 2 | Allen Theatre F6 | 44 | Manchester Hall D9 | 78 | University High School B5 |
| 3 | Alumni Center A7 | 45 | Marian Kneer Softball Stadium B2 | 79 | University High School Tennis Courts B4 |
| 4 | Bone Student Center C6 | 46 | Mennonite Lab Building C6 | 80 | University Residence A3 |
| 5 | Bowling and Billiards Center C8 | 47 | Metcalf School D4 | 81 | Vidette Building C6 |
| 6 | Braden Auditorium C6 | 48 | Milner Library C7 | 82 | Vitro Center (Glass House) B5 |
| 7 | Brown Ballroom C6 | 49 | Moulton Hall D7 | 83 | Vrooman Center D9 |
| 8 | Campus Religious Center D9 | 50 | Multicultural Center D3 | 84 | Watterson Dining Commons E10 |
| 9 | Capen Auditorium D6 | 51 | Nelson Smith Building C1 | 85 | Watterson Towers E9 |
| 10 | Cardinal Court B5 | 52 | Office of Residential Life Building E4 | 86 | Weibring Golf Club A2 |
| 11 | Carter Harris Building B5 | 53 | Office of Sustainability C8 | 87 | Welcome Desk, Dr. Larry and Marlene Dietz C7 |
| 12 | CEFCU Arena C2 | 54 | Old Union E7 | 88 | Westhoff Theatre F6 |
| 13 | Centennial East F7 | 55 | Parking and Transportation Building, Bill Waller A6 | 89 | Wilkins Hall C2 |
| 14 | Centennial West F6 | 56 | Parking Garage, North University Street C5 | 90 | Williams Hall E7 |
| 15 | Center for Civic Engagement E10 | 57 | Parking Garage, School Street F8 | 91 | Wright Hall B2 |
| 16 | Center for the Performing Arts E7 | 58 | Parking Garage, South University Street F4 | 92 | 209 North Fell Avenue Apartment Building D10 |
| 17 | Center for the Visual Arts F5 | 59 | Parking, Visitor C7 and F4 | 93 | 210 North Main Street Building C5 |
| 18 | Chiller Plant C2, F2, and F9 | 60 | Planetarium D8 | 94 | 211 North Fell Avenue Apartment Building D10 |
| 19 | College Place Uptown E10 | 61 | Professional Development Annex D3 | 95 | 211 North University Street Building C5 |
| 20 | Cook Hall D6 | 62 | Quad E6 | 96 | 302 North School Street Apartment Building C9 |
| 21 | DeGarmo Hall D5 | 63 | Rachel Cooper D4 | 97 | 308 Kingsley Street Building D2 |
| 22 | Duffy Bass Field B4 | 64 | Redbird Adventure Center A1 | 98 | 604 North Adelaide Street Complex B4 |
| 23 | Edwards Hall D6 | 65 | Redbird Plaza E5 | | |
| 24 | Eyestone School Museum C1 | 66 | Risk Management C7 | | |
| 25 | Fairchild Hall D4 | 67 | Ropp Agriculture Building C5 | | |
| 26 | Fell Hall E5 | 68 | Schroeder Hall D6 | | |
| 27 | Felmley Hall of Science D7 | 69 | Science Laboratory Building D9 | | |
| 28 | Gregory Street Fields A1 | 70 | State Farm Hall of Business E5 | | |
| 29 | Hancock Stadium C4 | 71 | Stevenson Hall E8 | | |
| 30 | Hayden Auditorium D5 | 72 | Stroud Auditorium B5 | | |
| 31 | Haynie Hall C2 | 73 | Student Accounts Building D2 | | |
| 32 | Heating Plant D5 | 74 | Student Fitness Center and McCormick Hall E3-E5 | | |
| 33 | Hewett Hall D10 | 75 | Student Services Building C5 | | |
| 34 | Honors Program Building D3 | 76 | Turner Hall C3 | | |
| 35 | Horton Field House C3 | | | | |
| 36 | Hovey Hall D8 | | | | |
| 37 | Hudelson Building B5 | | | | |
| 38 | In Exchange E8 | | | | |
| 39 | John Green Food Service Building B6 | | | | |
| 40 | Julian Hall D8 | | | | |
| 41 | Kaufman Football Building C4 | | | | |
| 42 | Kemp Recital Hall F6 | | | | |



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Illinois' first public university