

# PRE-ARRIVAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

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# Welcome

## From the Office of International Programs

Welcome to North Dakota State University! Your efforts and hard work in applying to an American university have been rewarded with your acceptance to North Dakota State University. For more than 100 years, NDSU has offered students an educational tradition of excellence and opportunity.

When you come to NDSU you will face many challenges; adjusting to a new culture, new food, and for some of you a new climate! We know that you have questions and concerns about university life at NDSU. This brochure will provide information to help you make decisions before you leave home and come to the United States. We hope that you find this brochure helpful. Many more questions will be answered during New International Student Orientation.

We look forward to your arrival and wish you well in your academic pursuits.

See you soon!

Kerri Spiering  
Director  
Office of International Programs

## IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

### U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

The regulations that govern non-immigrant students (F or J) are very complicated. These regulations are also challenged by citizens and lawmakers, and sometimes change with little warning. Whatever is printed one year may be incorrect the following year.

**Once in the U.S., you must contact the Office of International Programs for valid information regarding immigration issues.**

### Obtaining a Student Visa

When officially admitting a student, North Dakota State University will supply a visa qualifying document (I-20 or DS-2019). This document, together with your passport, financial certification, and health certificate should be presented to the nearest U.S. consulate in order to obtain a visa to enter the United States. (Canadian citizens do not need to obtain a visa; they simply retain the I-20 or DS-2019 and present it along with their receipt of payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee, financial certification and a form of photo identification at the point of entry into the United States.) The most common visa types are the Student (F-1) and Exchange Visitor (J-1). In general, students are required to hold one of these visa classifications in order to study at NDSU. Most students come to the United States on the F-1 visa, for which the form I-20 is required. The website of the U.S. Department of State provides valuable information for foreign students applying for visas. [http://travel.state.gov/foreign\\_student\\_visas\\_handout.html](http://travel.state.gov/foreign_student_visas_handout.html).

Before applying for a visa, the U.S. government requires that you pay a US \$200 SEVIS fee (for F-1 students holding an I-20 document) or a US \$180 SEVIS fee (for J-1 students holding a DS-2019 document) by completing and submitting form I-901. **You must bring proof of payment of that fee with you to the Consulate when you apply for the visa.** Information on paying the fee and obtaining a receipt can be found at [www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm). Please follow the directions on page two of the I-20 and apply for a visa at the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy as soon as possible. **Remember: It is critical that you keep the receipt showing payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee as that can help you avoid having to pay the fee again in the future.** It is important to remember that the consular officer is required to question you about your finances, program of study, and your expected date of return to your home country in order to decide whether or not you will be issued a student visa. It is up to you to persuade the officer that you intend to return home upon completion of your studies. If the consular officer denies you a visa, he/she must return all of your documents to you and give you written reasons for the denial upon your request.

## IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED:

### *Passport*

This is a document issued by your government to permit you to leave and re-enter your country. All non-U.S. citizens, except Canadians, must have a valid passport to enter the United States. Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond your stay in the USA. Generally, it takes a minimum of two months to renew a passport, which can be done by contacting your country's consulate or embassy.

### *SEVIS Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility)*

This is issued by the school that has accepted you. This document allows you to file an application for a Student (F-1) Visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Once the consular officer has granted you the student visa, the I-20 will be returned to you. When you enter the U.S. you must present the I-20 and your passport to the immigration authorities. The immigration officer will return your passport, pages 1, 2, and 3 of your I-20 and the I-94 (stapled in your passport). After your initial entry, all other I-20 forms are provided and issued by the NDSU Office of International Programs.

### *Form DS-2019*

This form is issued by the sponsoring agency of the student. This document enables you to file an application for the Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. When you enter the U.S. you must present to the immigration authorities your passport and the DS-2019. The immigration officer will return the passport, the DS-2019 and the Form I-94 to you. Any time you need a new DS-2019, you must contact your sponsor.

### *Visa to enter the U.S.*

This is a multicolored page placed in your passport by the consular officer at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The U.S. visa states your status (F-1, J-1, etc.) and the number of entries permitted (single, multiple, etc.). This particular type of visa can only be issued at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate upon the presentation of an I-20 or DS-2019. Please note that as long as the Form I-94, I-20 or DS-2019 and your passport are valid, and **you do not leave the United States**, you do not need to renew your visa.

### *Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record)*

This form is issued by the U.S. immigration officer at the port of entry and stapled into your passport. The immigration officer notes on this paper the date and port of your entry, your visa status (F or J), the admission number, and the expiration date of your stay, which should be D/S. D/S designation means that students are in lawful status as long as they are enrolled full time in the particular program for which the Certificate of Eligibility, Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 was issued and do not work illegally. Using the wrong form may have serious and costly consequences. It is also important to remember that the Form I-94 must be kept valid. If it is lost, see an adviser in the Office of International Programs.

### *Important Reminder:*

Please do not make the mistake of entering the U.S. on a Tourist (B-2) visa **if you are here to study**. Changing to a student visa after your admittance as a tourist is not permitted.

### **Maintaining status once in the United States.**

Upon your admission to the F-1 or J-1 student status you have agreed to, and are obliged to follow these rules:

1. You will remain a full time student for the entire period of your stay, which is a **minimum** of twelve credit hours for undergraduates and nine hours for graduate students. Please note that only one online course (3 credits) per semester can count towards the full-time requirement.
2. You will not continue studying after you have finished your program of study (i.e., once you have graduated) at the same school, or another school, without obtaining a new I-20 from the school you wish to attend.
3. You will not engage in any unauthorized employment.
4. You are expected to complete your program in the shortest period possible. Failing courses may jeopardize your student status.

## **Dependents**

Dependents (spouse and minor unmarried children only) can be admitted to the U.S. on F-2 or J-2 status by presenting a valid dependent Form I-20 or DS-2019 and valid F-2 or J-2 visa. Each dependent is issued a dependent Form I-20 or DS-2019 bearing one's name, country of birth and citizenship, and date of birth. The F-1 student's information also appears on the dependent I-20. The school must have on file all the information for each dependent: full name, place and date of birth, country of residence, country of citizenship, and relation to the student. F-2 visa holders are not allowed to work or enroll in college or university courses in the United States under any circumstances. J-2 dependents may apply for permission to work to assist with their own well-being.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA AND NDSU**

Located in the north central region of the United States, Fargo, North Dakota has the Great Plains to its west and the state of Minnesota's wooded lake country to its east. Adjacent to Fargo is the city of Moorhead, Minnesota. The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area has a population of approximately 175,000 people. The nearest large cities are only a four-hour drive away. Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Winnipeg, Canada.

The Fargo-Moorhead community serves as a medical, educational, and retail distribution center for the upper Midwestern farming region. The metropolitan area also offers a wealth of opportunities for pursuing cultural, athletic, and other leisure-time interests.

In addition to the programs and attractions sponsored by the three postsecondary institutions, a variety of arts-related events are presented throughout the year by organizations such as the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra, the Fargo-Moorhead Community Theater, and the Red River Dance and Performing Company.

There are many lakes and forests within 50 miles (80 km) for year-round recreational activities. Students can play golf in the summer, ski in the winter, and play soccer in fall and spring. Residents of Fargo-Moorhead are hardworking and they take pride in their peaceful, clean, and safe environment.

## NDSU

North Dakota State University enrolls over 13,000 students in more than 100 undergraduate programs, 51 master's degree programs, and 40 doctoral programs. 55 percent of the school is made up of male students with females accounting for the other 45 percent. The university hosts more than 900 international students from more than 80 nations. NDSU is a comprehensive, career-oriented university with a long-standing reputation for excellence in scientific research and the professional schools. The university is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and the academic programs by many other accrediting agencies.

To further enhance students' academic options, NDSU participates in the Tri-College University consortium with neighboring Minnesota State University-Moorhead and Concordia College. Thus, students enrolled at NDSU may also take classes at Minnesota State University-Moorhead and Concordia College. There are approximately 22,000 students enrolled between the three schools.

## WEATHER AND CLOTHING

North Dakota experiences variable weather – cold days in the winter, hot days in the summer, as well as many mild, pleasant days in between. The temperature often drops to below 0°F (-18°C) during the winter and rises to as high as 90°F (33°C) during the summer. You will need a warm jacket, hat, mittens/gloves, scarf, and warm boots. If you are from a warmer climate, it is usually much less expensive (and easier to pack) if you purchase your warm clothing upon arriving in Fargo.

In the United States, students dress casually for classes. Men usually wear pants or jeans and shirts or sweaters. Women generally wear pants or jeans and blouses or sweaters. Both men and women wear shorts or cut-off jeans when the weather is warm. Almost anything is acceptable.

## ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Fargo is served by two major airlines: Northwest and United Airlines, at Hector International Airport (FAR), which is only five minutes from the university. You will need to transfer flights to Fargo from airports in Minneapolis, Chicago, or Denver. Greyhound Bus Lines maintains a bus station in Fargo. Amtrak railroad provides inter-city rail passenger service and has a station in Fargo.

Please plan to arrive in Fargo at least one day prior to orientation. Once you know your travel itinerary, please complete the Arrival and Airport Pick-up Information Form and return it to us. Every attempt will be made to have someone meet you. Should you be unable to contact us in advance, please call 231-7895 when you arrive, if it is during regular office hours. If your plane is delayed so that no one meets you at the airport, you can use the lobby telephone which will connect you to a taxi service. The taxi will take you to a hotel. Remember to bring enough money for the cost of the hotel. If you are at the bus or train station, you can call for a taxi at 235-5535.

You should go to the Office of International Programs during regular office hours soon after your arrival. The office is located in Ceres Hall, Room 338, and is open between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (June, July, and August office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). Please bring your passport, I-94 (white card), and I-20 or DS-2019 with you at this time as well as any documents that we may have requested from you in a letter of admission or other correspondence. You will be unable to register until you provide us with the necessary information.



Graduate students should also see their academic adviser as soon as possible after arrival. This person should be named in your official letter of admission.

**To call NDSU from  
outside the Fargo-  
Moorhead Area:  
1-701-231-7895**

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Places to stay if you arrive early (before the residence halls open). You should expect that the rooms will cost between \$60.00 - \$120.00. There is usually a charge for extra people so be sure to ask.

| <b>Homewood Suites by Hilton</b> | <b>Select Inn</b>          | <b>Days Inn</b>             |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2021 16 <sup>th</sup> St N       | 1025 38 <sup>th</sup> St S | 1507 19 <sup>th</sup> Ave N |
| Fargo, ND 58102                  | Fargo, ND 58102            | Fargo, ND 58102             |
| (701)235-3150                    | (701)282-6300              | (701)232-0000               |
| 2 miles from airport             | 5 miles from airport       | 2 miles from airport        |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Econo Lodge</b><br>1401 35 <sup>th</sup> St S<br>Fargo, ND 58102<br>(701)232-3412<br>6 miles from airport | <b>Candlewood Suites</b><br>1831 Research Park Dr.<br>Fargo, ND 58102<br>(701)235-8200<br>2 miles from airport | <b>Super 8</b><br>1101 38 <sup>th</sup> St. NW<br>Fargo, ND 58102<br>(701)281-2109<br>3 miles from airport |
|--|--|--|

### ADVICE FOR TRAVELING

If you happen to encounter any difficulties or confusion during your travels in the USA, feel free to ask people in official looking uniforms or travel staff (i.e., airline, train, or bus line officials) for help. A help desk of some sort is located at most airports, and is usually a free service. If you are unable to locate one of these desks, find the nearest airport desk and they can direct you to your destination.

It is important to remember that you should NOT carry large amounts of money with you to the United States. You should have some money in U.S. dollars and coins (not more than \$200) for meals, transportation, phone calls, and other things that you may need along the way. There are money exchange banks located in nearly all the U.S. ports of entry.

#### Important Travel Tips for Students and Exchange Visitors

1. Hand carry (do not check) the following documents: your passport, your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, evidence of financial resources, evidence of student or exchange visitor status such as tuition receipts, transcripts or letter of acceptance, paper receipt of the SEVIS fee, and the name and contact information of your designated school official or sponsor. **Important note: If you are a new student, remember to carry with you the sealed envelope given to you by the U.S. Department of State’s Consular Officer attached to your passport. It is important that you do not open this envelope.**
2. Inform the CBP Officer at the port of entry as soon as possible that you will be a new or returning student or exchange visitor in the United States.
3. Report to your school or program upon arrival so that your school official can validate your participation in SEVIS.
4. Maintain contact with your designated school or sponsor official throughout your stay to ensure your SEVIS data is updated and accurate.

### HOW TO USE TELEPHONES IN THE U.S.

There are eleven numbers in phone numbers; for example: 1-701-231-7895. When calling long distance, it is necessary to include all eleven numbers. There are public phones everywhere, especially in public buildings. For a local phone call from these telephones, the cost is \$.50 (or 50 cents). Phone cards can also be used and can be purchased at most stores including the Asian American Market, Wal-Mart, or Sam’s Club. In fact, using phone cards can be very inexpensive, especially when making international phone calls.

If you call from an on-campus phone number to another on-campus phone number, you need only to dial 1 and the last four digits. For example: If you want to call the Office of International Programs from your residence hall room, or other on-campus buildings, you would dial 1-7895.

### ORIENTATION

Orientation is **required** for all international students who are new to NDSU. The program is designed to help you understand the requirements of your non-immigrant student status, health insurance registration process, the university, and the differences between social life in the U.S. and that of your own country. You will be informed of the time, date, and place of orientation at a later date. Not only is this a great way to introduce yourself to new things about your new environment, but it is also a wonderful way to meet a lot of really great people who will make your time here spectacular! **Scholarship recipients must attend all orientation sessions or they will lose their scholarships.**

### REGISTRATION

#### *Drop or add classes after registration*

If you decide you need to drop or add a course after the semester has begun, or change your schedule in any way, meet with your academic advisor for the proper forms and signatures. It is important for all international students to remember that as non-immigrant visa holders (F-1 or J-1) you are expected to maintain **full-time** study each semester (12 credits for undergraduates, 9 credits for graduates, or 6 credits for graduates with assistantship). Make sure that you make an appointment with an advisor at the Office of International Programs **before** you make any changes to your registration if it will drop you below the above-mentioned credit requirements.

#### *Closed Classes*

A class becomes closed if the maximum amount of students have enrolled in it. If a class that you are interested in is closed when you are trying to register for it, there is still a possibility of enrolling in that class if you talk with the instructor. Usually students will either try to contact the instructor before the semester begins, or they go to the first class of the semester and speak to the instructor at that time.

**Listed below are the grades assigned at the university and the number of grade points earned from each.**

**A** Excellent ... 4.0  
**B** Good..... 3.0  
**C** Average..... 2.0  
**D** Poor..... 1.0  
**F** Failure..... 0.0

**I Incomplete:** Student has been doing satisfactory work, but is not able to finish the course work on time.

**Satisfactory:** In some courses no other grade will be given.

**U Unsatisfactory**

**W Withdraw:** A student has been given permission to drop the course and no grade has been given.

## PAYMENT INFORMATION

All fees including tuition, student fees, health services charges, health insurance or any additional fees should be paid at the NDSU Bison Connection located in the Memorial Union. The deadline for payment is the first day of classes. Please note that NDSU will accept many forms of payment including credit cards, money orders, checks or wire transfers. **However, please note that NDSU does not accept Visa credit card.** NDSU only accepts Mastercard, Discover or American Express credit cards. In addition, all bills paid by credit card will be assessed a non-refundable fee of 2.75%.

**For students on assistantships, you will not be able to receive a paycheck from NDSU until you have received the Social Security Number.** The average length of time it takes to receive a Social Security Number is four to six weeks. Therefore, students should bring with them enough funds to cover any tuition, fees and living costs during that time. For more information on obtaining a Social Security Number, please see page 17.

## EMPLOYMENT

### *On-Campus Employment*

Students in F-1 status are allowed to work on-campus, but they should not expect the employment to pay for their education. Students may work up to 20 hours a week on-campus while school is in session, and full-time (up to 40 hours a week) during winter, spring and summer breaks.

### *Off-Campus Employment*

Federal law **does not permit** F-1 students to work outside of the university. Working off-campus is considered illegal employment. Practical training such as internship employment and work after graduation can be granted **ONLY** with immigration authorization. For more information contact the Office of International Programs.

### *J-1 Visa Holder (Exchange Visitor) Employment*

Students in J-1 status should talk with an international student advisor about employment eligibility. Some sponsoring agencies do not allow for J-1 students to work. However, if a student is under a sponsored exchange program, such as International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), the student must obtain approval to work from their specific program.

## STATEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As an international student in the USA, you have accepted more obligations and responsibilities than your U.S. counterparts. It is very important to understand all of your government's regulations, as well as USCIS regulations here in the United States.

### **You are expected to:**

- Notify the Office of International Programs, Registrar's office, and your sponsor of your correct address. USCIS requires that addresses be current with all of the above named offices. You must update your address within 10 days of moving.
- Maintain valid student status in the United States. Your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, and your form I-94 must always remain up-to-date, and not expire. You must be enrolled as a full-time student at all times.
- Request all documents you may need early enough so that they will be prepared for you to use at the time you need them. This time period could vary between one week to six months. If you are a sponsored student please allow enough time to contact your sponsor ahead of time.
- Notify the Office of International Programs of any and all changes to your scholarship, assistantship or funding, including I-20 expiration date changes and approvals for change of field, study, or school.

## UNIVERSITY POLICY

### *Course Load*

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services requires that all international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa maintain full-time student status. This means that undergraduate international students must enroll and successfully complete 12 credit hours per semester, for a minimum of two semesters per year. Graduate students without an assistantship must enroll and successfully complete 9 credit hours per semester, for a minimum of two semesters per year. Graduate students with an assistantship must enroll and successfully complete 6 credit hours per semester, for a minimum of two semesters per year. In addition to immigration requirements, please also note that the Graduate School has a continued registration policy which means registration is required through the completion of your final thesis/dissertation. Some graduate programs also require summer registration, so we recommend you consult with your department regarding that.

### *Grading System*

Quizzes, exams, papers, essays, projects, and final examinations are all given grades A, B, C, D, or F. Grades A through D are passing. However, the grade D means "barely passing" and is the lowest passing grade. It is not uncommon that international students may experience some problems with their studies the first few semesters. Thus, it is very important that you keep close contact with your academic adviser who can assist you in developing a program of study to best suit your needs and abilities. If difficulties should arise, contact your academic adviser or an international student advisor.

### *Class Attendance*

North Dakota State University considers class attendance a personal responsibility of each student. Class attendance is an important part of academic success as well as understanding course material and participating in class discussions. If you are having problems in a class, do not hesitate to talk with your professor about the problem.

## **ON-CAMPUS HOUSING**

All first year students are required to live in a university residence hall during their first academic year. Other students are encouraged to stay in the residence hall, commonly referred to as “dorms” or dormitories, for the first semester. Not only is this much more convenient for most students, but it provides unlimited opportunities to practice your English, and get to know other students. Students are allowed to stay in the residence halls during holidays, but there will be an additional cost.

A housing contract must be submitted to the Residence Life office to reserve a space in a residence hall. You can access the housing contract from the Residence Life website at: [www.ndsu.edu/reslife](http://www.ndsu.edu/reslife) or email them at [NDSU.Residence.Life@ndsu.edu](mailto:NDSU.Residence.Life@ndsu.edu). **Please note: Housing contracts must be received by July 1 for an August entry date.**

There are twelve residence halls on the NDSU campus. Four halls are called high rises and are coeducational (men and women living on alternate floors). High rises have suites which consist of two or three rooms with bathroom. Four to five people live in each suite. The four co-ed halls are Pavek, Thompson, Sevrinson, and Seim. The high rises require all students to have be on a meal plan. Different meal plans are available ranging from 20 meals per week, 15 meals per week, or 10 meals per week.

The all-female and all-male residence halls are called low rises. The low rises have rooms in which two people live in each room. There is one large bathroom on each floor which has individual shower and bathroom stalls. The names of the halls for women are Burgum, Dinan, North Weible, and South Weible. The names of the halls for men are Churchill, Stockbridge, Reed, and Johnson. Students living in Burgum, Dinan, Churchill, and Stockbridge are not required to be on a meal plan. There are kitchens available in each hall for your convenience. Microwaves and refrigerator units are available to rent.

The Living/Learning Center is coeducational and is designed for students at least 20 years old. Rooms are either single studio apartments or a limited number of four bedroom apartments. Each unit comes equipped with a kitchenette and a bathroom.

A room in the residence hall is equipped with a single bed, mattress, pillow, dresser, closet space, and a desk. **There are no sheets, blankets, pillows, or towels provided with your room assignment. These items are available for purchase from a resident**

**advisor when you arrive. Other personal items such as a telephone can be purchased in Fargo.**

University food contracts (meal plans) are available and should be requested on your housing applications. There are several dining service centers as noted above for the residence halls. The dining centers include: Residence Dining Center, West Dining

*Banks convenient to campus:*

### **US Bank (2 locations)**

On-campus in the Memorial Union  
and  
1900 N University Dr., Fargo, ND 58102  
Phone: (701) 280-3500

### **Northland Educators Federal Credit Union**

1404 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. N, Fargo, ND 58102  
Phone: (701) 293-6132

Center, and the Union Dining Center.

Students that have a meal plan can eat at any of the three dining centers.

**If your meal plan is optional and you decide to cancel it, you must do so before the first day of classes.**

There are also single

student, family, and graduate student apartments located near or on campus. The apartments are two bedroom, fully furnished, and are suitable for two to four students. The single student apartments are located just east of the campus, and are open to any student who has at least 27 credits and is 20 years of age.

For students that are married, or have children, there are one- and two-bedroom unfurnished apartments. These apartments are in two different locations, and both are on or near campus. All of these apartments require an application fee of \$200. If you are interested in living in one of the apartment complexes you must contact the Residence Life Office at [NDSU.Residence.Life@ndsu.edu](mailto:NDSU.Residence.Life@ndsu.edu). There are often waiting lists for these apartments so getting your application in early is advisable.

## **OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING - APARTMENTS**

Apartments are complete living units, with private bath and kitchen. They come both furnished and unfurnished. Most have a refrigerator, stove, sink, and window coverings. There is usually no other furniture provided in these apartments. An “efficiency apartment” is a very small apartment that usually consists of two rooms: a bathroom, and one other room that makes up the bedroom, kitchen, and living space. It can be occupied by one, and sometimes two people. Efficiency apartments vary in rent prices, but are some of the less expensive apartments on the market. A renter or “tenant” usually has to pay the utilities (i.e. electricity, water, cable, telephone), although the monthly rent will sometimes include these costs. Some factors to consider when looking at housing are: availability, convenience of location, furnishings, cooking, cost, condition of housing, and privacy. **It is highly recommended that you purchase renter’s insurance. The**

cost is minimal, but will cover the cost of your valuable items in case of a fire or harm to your apartment.

## MONEY INFORMATION

The Financial Aid office at NDSU is restricted by U.S. law to disperse financial aid money only to U.S. citizens or permanent residents. There are a few scholarships that are available to international undergraduate students through the Office of International Programs, but these are competitive and therefore cannot be guaranteed for each person.

Before leaving your home country, you will want to arrange for funds to be sent to you while you are in the United States in order to cover your costs of living. Do not rely on earning money while you are a student in the U.S. because this is often not a realistic option. On-campus work is only permitted for a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during holidays. Students should be aware that on-campus employment will not provide enough funds to cover their educational costs.

### Advice on Handling Money

*Transfer of funds from your home country*

**Foreign Draft.** You can tell your bank in your home country to issue a foreign bank draft in U.S. dollars on a United States bank. Clearance of a draft between banks in different parts of the United States involves a delay in making funds available. Since there are expenses which must be met upon your arrival in Fargo, travelers checks may be needed for a period of time.

**Travelers Checks or Money Orders.** Either of these can be bought overseas and presented to a local bank in Fargo as cash to open a bank account.

**Travelers Checks.** These are the same as cash but if they are lost or stolen they are replaced without charge. Traveler's checks are bought at banks in denominations of \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 for a minimal fee. You sign your name on each check when you purchase them, and then again when you cash them. Traveler's checks are accepted virtually anywhere – at banks, hotels, gas stations, restaurants, stores, etc. Keep a copy of your check numbers in a safe place, as a record in case one of them gets lost or misplaced. To obtain a refund in case of loss, report the check numbers promptly.

**Money Orders.** Money orders are a way to pay funds if you do not have a checking account. They are also safe to send through the mail. They can be purchased at banks, post offices and many convenience and grocery stores.

**Wire Transfer of funds.** You are also able to wire funds to your account in Fargo from an account overseas. A receipt will be issued to you, or whomever the wire is for, and then you may take the receipt to the bank to collect your money.

### Important Reminders

- Don't carry a lot of cash with you while you're traveling (carry traveler's checks or money orders). If you carry cash, be sure to carry it in a secure place (i.e. money belt).
- Never send cash through the mail.

### United States Banking Services

For convenience and safety every person should have a savings and/or checking account in a nearby bank. It is unwise to leave money in your apartment. Many students find it a convenience to have a 24-hour banking identification card or a checking account in addition to a savings account. This solves the problem of carrying a great deal of cash when shopping or paying bills. This card varies from bank to bank, but may often be used as a credit card that is charged to your checking account. Note: You may not earn any interest on the money kept in a checking account and most banks require that you maintain a minimum balance in your account to avoid service charges. Be certain you understand the charges before you begin the account.

### Credit Cards

You will most likely be approached by the major department stores (Penney's, Sears, Target, etc.), gasoline companies (Standard, Amoco, etc.) or MasterCard and Visa to obtain their credit cards. Remember, purchasing anything on credit has the potential to ruin one's credit and budget. The interest rates are high (generally 18% or higher per year). If you must buy something on credit, talk it over with a counselor, faculty adviser, or friends. Do not be afraid to say NO to any salesperson who may try to persuade you to purchase items you do not need. American Express, MasterCard or Visa credit cards are honored throughout North America. If you can obtain one of these credit cards before you leave home, it could be very useful for you in emergency financial situations.

### Expenses Overlooked by Students

**Overnight lodging.** Hotel charges in big cities are very expensive – \$60 and higher per night. It is advisable that you budget for this, even though you may not need to use the money budgeted. You will also want to budget for taxi fares, meals, and tips.

**Clothing needs because of climate.** Many students are surprised by the sudden changes in temperature in Fargo, but it is very common. It is often much colder than many students are used to, and you will need to accommodate yourself accordingly. Students from tropical climates may spend from \$300 to \$500 for clothing to meet cooler weather needs.

### Currency restrictions and transfer to the United States

Students should become familiar with the banking regulations in his or her own home country before making final plans to study in the United States. Some countries have restrictions and/or regulations concerning the transfer of funds (i.e. amount transferred) outside the country. Some governments may restrict funds until a letter from the

admitting institution in the United States has been received confirming the student's enrollment. You need to find out what, if any, letters are needed from NDSU to complete transfers.

## U.S. CURRENCY

Before beginning your studies in the United States you should familiarize yourself with the U.S. monetary system and the requirements for exchange of money. It is also important to know the value of your own currency in comparison with the value of money in the United States.

The monetary unit in the U.S. is the dollar. Coins are issued in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25, and 1 dollar. Terms for these coins are:

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1 cent =   | penny   |
| 5 cents =  | nickel  |
| 10 cents = | dime    |
| 25 cents = | quarter |

The dollar coin has a slightly larger size than the quarter and is gold in color. Paper notes are all the same size and are all green in color. Denominations include 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 dollars. Larger denominations exist but are rarely used.

## Advice on Money Matters from students who are in the United States now:

- Ten percent should be added to the estimated expenses given by the university for unexpected expenses.
- If students are receiving fellowships or assistantship, they should not translate the dollar amount into their own currency and imagine that they are well off.
- If you are bringing your family, it is most important to have them covered by health insurance.
- Students should have medical, dental, and eye checkups at home and should correct any problems before leaving.
- Students should only come to the U.S. when they are certain that their first year's expenses are covered.

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

In order to work in the United States, it is necessary to have a social security number. According to current regulations, you must have a job offer letter or assistantship letter for employment in order to apply for a Social Security Number. There is no fee charged

for obtaining a Social Security Number. To obtain a number, you must bring the following items with you to the Social Security office: Passport, Visa, Form I-20 or DS-2019, a job offer letter or assistantship offer letter and a letter from the Office of International Programs. The Social Security office is located in downtown Fargo. It may be possible to apply for a Social Security Number during the orientation session. The average length of time it takes to receive the Social Security Number is four to six weeks. **Please note that you will not be able to receive a paycheck from NDSU until you have received the Social Security Number.** Your I-20 or DS-2019 record must be activated in SEVIS before you apply. Therefore, you should wait to apply until at least 10 days have passed after entry to the United States.

**Important Reminder:** Be careful when using your Social Security Number. Treat the number as a credit card number. Keep it safe and away from strangers.

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

### *Immunizations and Screenings*

Students coming to NDSU for the first time must have proof (usually a statement from a doctor, hospital, or clinic) of vaccination or of having had the following diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles). Students who have lived within the past 5 years in a country where Tuberculosis (TB) is endemic are required to undergo TB screening prior to the first day of classes. TB screening will be offered as part of the new international student orientation. Documentation of testing will be accepted only if performed in the United States or Canada within 6 months prior to registration. You will not be eligible to register for classes without documentation.

Receiving the MMR during the 6 weeks before you come to NDSU will complicate the TB testing process. **For this reason we urge you to either receive the injection prior to six weeks before your arrival or wait until after you come to NDSU.**

### *Student Health Service*

The Student Health Service, located in the Wellness Center, is a primary health care facility offering integrated professional services to NDSU students. Registered nurses, certified nurse practitioners, physician assistants and physicians staff the Student Health Service. Medical laboratory and pharmacy services are also available.

The primary health services of the Student Health Service include health promotion and disease prevention, health counseling, care during acute and chronic phases of illness, and referrals to outside providers when appropriate.

### *Health Insurance*

Health care in the United States is expensive and the individual is responsible for paying the medical costs. The government does not pay for it. For this reason, all international students studying in North Dakota are required to purchase the North Dakota State

mandated health insurance policy. **No other policy may be substituted.** Having health insurance protects the individual by helping pay the medical expenses if he/she should become ill or be involved in an accident. The fee for health insurance for one year must

be paid upon arrival and at the beginning of each subsequent year. Student health insurance coverage begins upon arrival after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to enrollment as long as the student pays the fee within two weeks after arrival.

North Dakota has a state-mandated health insurance policy for international students. It has a \$100 deductible per injury or illness. Each time a student goes to the clinic or hospital for a separate illness the student must first pay \$100 before the insurance will begin paying. However, the deductible is waived if the student first receives treatment at Student Health Services on campus.

For specific information on what the insurance policy covers or does not cover, refer to the brochure provided. Brochures are available from the Office of International Programs, Memorial Union, Room 116 and on the OIP website.

A claim form will need to be submitted to the insurance company by the student when receiving medical treatment. Many times clinics and hospitals will not send the claim form with the medical bill to the insurance company. Students will often have to submit a claim form separately to the insurance company before they will cover the student's medical costs. Claim forms are available in the Office of International Programs, Memorial Union 116 or on the OIP website

Prescription medicines are also covered by the policy. Most pharmacies will require the student to pay for the medicines in full. The student should then submit the receipt for medicines along with a claim form to the insurance company directly.

## **INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

An Intensive English Language Program is offered year round and is open to international visitors and graduate and undergraduate applicants who plan to enroll at North Dakota State University. The course is designed for individuals whose scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) do not meet minimum standards and who are required to participate as a condition of admission to the University or as a condition of being awarded a teaching assistantship. The full-time, intensive course is offered every summer for five weeks and fall and spring for 15 weeks. No college credit is given and students attend at their own expense.

For more information, contact the Office of International Programs, P.O. Box 6050, Department 2040, Fargo, ND 58108 U.S.A., Telephone: 701-231-7895, Fax: 701-231-1014, E-mail: [ndsui@ndsui.edu](mailto:ndsui@ndsui.edu)

## **UNIVERSITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Memorial Union**

The Memorial Union serves as a center of social, recreational, educational, and cultural activity for the NDSU campus community. Lounges and meeting rooms provide places where students, staff, faculty, and guests come together to exchange ideas and information and interact informally thereby adding to their educational experience in a way not available in the classroom. The Memorial Union includes an art gallery, several permanent art collections, a full season of performing arts events, outdoor adventure trips, bowling and billiards, a series of non-credit short courses in special interest and skill building topics, a community service program, a leadership and recognition program, Campus Attractions, different student organizations and a wide variety of events planned by the student program board.

### **Counseling and Disability Services**

Counseling and Disability Services professionals understand that students have times in their lives when they need assistance with their academic, personal, career, and social issues. These professional counselors and learning specialists help students who have difficulties that range from everyday concerns to those that are more serious in nature. The Counseling and Disability Services office is located in Ceres Hall room 212.

### **Center for Writers**

The Center for Writers is an across-the-curriculum writing support program designed to provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to improve the quality of their writing. In addition to offering guidance with writing, services include assisting writers with conducting library research and using reference services. The center is located in Room 6 in the lower level of the main library.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Participation in student activities is encouraged at NDSU because of the contribution it makes to the total educational experience of the student. Research has shown that involved students balance their courses while enjoying a greater level of satisfaction during their college years.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We know you are coming to NDSU to get an education. Much of that education will take place in the classroom, but there are endless other sources for your education while in the United States.

One good way to get more involved beyond your classes is to join one of many student organizations on campus. International organizations include the International Student Association, Bangladeshi Student Organization, Chinese Student Association,

Association of Students from India, Korean Student Association, HOLA, F/M College Chinese Christian Fellowship, Union of Chinese Students and Scholars, Asian Student Organization, Black Students Organization, Muslim Student Association and the International Women's Club.

There are more than 200 other student organizations which students can join. Special interest groups range from the Badminton Club to honor societies to choral and instrumental groups. Sometimes organizational activities take students far beyond the campus boundaries; for example, the Ski Club has made excursions to the Grand Tetons in Wyoming and Banff National Park in Canada.

The Office of International Programs coordinates a number of activities for international students attending NDSU. For example, the office administers a Student Speakers' Fair in the local schools, which gives international students an opportunity to talk about their cultures with school children. The Friendship Family Program matches international students with local families to share meals, special events, and companionship. Numerous other activities are offered to students each year.

### **Student Government and Organization**

Student participation in university affairs is coordinated by Student Government. This government coordinates student-faculty committee appointments, and officially recognizes 200 semi-autonomous student organizations in various categories: academic, governing and advisory, Greek, honorary, intercultural, leisure learning, military, performing and visual art, recreational/competitive, religious, service, special interest, and spirit. Student government also maintains a relationship with councils of independently governed groups.

### **Honor Societies**

Several honor societies are well established at North Dakota State University and encourage superior scholarship in various special fields. Some of the societies include Alpha Epsilon, Blue Key, Libra, Phi Kappa Phi, and Rho Lambda.

### **Fraternities and Sororities**

Fraternities and sororities, often called Greeks because of the use of Greek letters in their organizational names, contribute to the educational process at NDSU. Greeks encourage participation by members in academic, community service, leadership, and social-oriented activities on campus and in the community. Membership in these organizations provides opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership, communication, conflict resolution, organization, collaboration, and management skills which contribute to one's educational and career plans.

## **ATHLETICS**

North Dakota State University is proud to be a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Athletics. Varsity competition for men includes football, cross country running, golf, basketball, wrestling, indoor track, outdoor track, and baseball.

Opportunities for women's varsity competition include basketball, cross country running, golf, indoor track, soccer, softball, and volleyball.

### **Campus Recreation/Intramural Sports**

The Campus Recreation/Intramural Sports (CR/IM) Department organizes and promotes formal and informal recreational activities for the enjoyment of all NDSU students, faculty, and staff. The goal of the department is to provide a wide array of opportunities utilizing University recreational facilities. In addition to the informal open recreation program with facilities open over 20 hours per week, a comprehensive intramural sports program is provided.

## **CULTURAL ORIENTATION**

If you are able, talk with people in your home country who have studied or traveled in the United States. You can also get information about U.S. customs, manners, etiquette, and cultures at the nearest U.S. Embassy or information service. Following are some very basic guidelines concerning getting along with Americans.

Americans generally refer to each other by first (or given) name, rather than last (or family) name. It is also appropriate to ask a person if they prefer to be called by first name if you are unsure. A person older than yourself is often addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms and the last name. Ms., pronounced "mizz," is used for both married and unmarried females. If anyone asks you to address him or her by first name, you should feel free to do so.

The most common way Americans greet each other is by shaking hands. This is especially true among people with whom they are not familiar. Once a relationship has been established it is common for people to hug each other. This hugging is typically reserved for women to women and women to men greetings. Hugging between men is not common.

When dining in a restaurant, it is usually expected that each person will pay for his or her own meal. A tip of 15% is customary in restaurants where your food is served to you. It is also very common to tip other professionals such as cab drivers and hair stylists, but you should never feel pressured to tip someone, especially if you receive bad service.

## BASIC LAWS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### Driving

All resident drivers must be licensed with the state. All cars must be registered with the state. All drivers must be able to show proof of financial responsibility (such as insurance) in case of an accident. All traffic laws must be obeyed.

### Drinking

People under 21 years of age cannot possess or drink alcohol. No one may furnish alcohol to a person under 21 years. Alcoholic beverage containers which have been opened may not be carried in a car.

### Drugs

No narcotic drugs or marijuana may be possessed or sold without a prescription.

## Conversions

The United States uses a measurement system known as Standard. The Standard system is different from the Metric system. Here are some conversions and equations to convert one system to the other.

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 inch = 2.54 centimeters  | 1 centimeter = 0.39 inches |
| 1 foot = 30.48 centimeters | 1 meter = 3.28 feet        |
| 1 yard = 0.91 meters       | 1 meter = 1.09 yards       |
| 1 mile = 1.61 kilometers   | 1 kilometer = 0.62 miles   |
| 1 pound = 0.45 kilograms   | 1 kilogram = 2.20 pounds   |
| 1 gallon = 3.78 liters     | 1 liter = 0.26 gallons     |

The United States uses the Fahrenheit scale when determining temperature. To convert temperature, use the following equations.

To convert Centigrade into Fahrenheit multiply Centigrade degrees by 9, divide by 5, and add 32. To convert Fahrenheit into Centigrade subtract 32 from degrees of Fahrenheit and multiply by 5, then divide by 9.

|                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| -10 Fahrenheit = -23 Centigrade | -10 Centigrade = 14 Fahrenheit |
| 0 Fahrenheit = -18 Centigrade   | 0 Centigrade = 32 Fahrenheit   |
| 20 Fahrenheit = -7 Centigrade   | 10 Centigrade = 50 Fahrenheit  |
| 50 Fahrenheit = 10 Centigrade   | 20 Centigrade = 68 Fahrenheit  |
| 80 Fahrenheit = 27 Centigrade   | 30 Centigrade = 86 Fahrenheit  |
| 100 Fahrenheit = 37 Centigrade  | 40 Centigrade = 104 Fahrenheit |

## HOW TO CONTACT US

We know you will have many more questions and concerns about your individual situation, as you prepare to leave home and come to the U.S. Please feel free to contact us with your questions.

Office of International Programs  
North Dakota State University  
P.O. Box 6050, Department 2040  
Fargo, ND 58108 USA

### Physical Address (for use when utilizing any express mailing service)

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Fargo, ND 58102 USA

Phone: 1-701-231-7895  
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Web: [www.ndsu.edu/International](http://www.ndsu.edu/International)