

Welcome! We are glad that you have chosen to attend the University of Dubuque. We wish you the very best as you commence your studies with us. This handbook is designed to inform you about your **rights** and **responsibilities** as an International Student at the University of Dubuque.

If you have any questions, please ask us!

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University Mission and Values:

The University of Dubuque is a small, private university affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) offering undergraduate, graduate, and theological seminary programs. The University is comprised of individuals from the region, the nation, and the world. As a community, the University practices its Christian faith by educating students and pursuing excellence in scholarship. Therefore, the University of Dubuque is committed to:

- The Presbyterian tradition;
- Excellence in academic inquiry and professional preparation;
- Relationships which encourage intellectual, spiritual, and moral development;
- Community where diversity is appreciated and Christian love is practiced;
- Stewardship of all God's human and natural resources;
- Zeal for lifelong learning and service

University Policies and Procedures

As a student at the University of Dubuque, you are responsible for adhering to all University policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook. The

University policies and procedures are on the University website:

<http://www.dbq.edu/media/campuslife/vpofstudentlife/2013-14-Handbook.pdf>

OFF-CAMPUS CO-CURRICULAR DISCLAIMER

Students and faculty at the University of Dubuque are encouraged to take advantage of the diversity of educational opportunities and experiences available within the vicinity of the University. Students will be encouraged to attend campus events and, from time to time, to engage in off-campus activities that supplement on-campus instruction and activities. Students will often be required to provide their own transportation to and from off-campus activities and events that occur in the tri-state area. The University of Dubuque will generally provide assistance with transportation upon request by a student, but assumes no obligation to do so.

Students are required, as a condition of their enrollment, to assume all risk and liability associated with their transportation to and from, and attendance at, off-campus experiences whether for required or voluntary activities.

(UD Student Handbook)

As an International Student at the University of Dubuque, you have some additional responsibilities. This International Student Handbook is intended to supplement, not replace, the University of Dubuque Student Handbook.

Visa Requirements:

The University of Dubuque is authorized to issue documents (I-20) in support of F-1 visa applications. Students holding other visas may also be qualified to study under certain circumstances.

Defining Terms:

Both the United States Government and the University of Dubuque use abbreviations that can be confusing to the newcomer! Here are a few definitions:

USCIS: United States Customs and Immigration Service

DHS: Department of Homeland Security (oversees USCIS)

SEVIS: Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (database for registering all J and F visa holders studying or working in the United States)

OPT: Optional Practical Training

CPT: Curricular Practical Training

DSO: Designated SEVIS Officer (on-campus person who has access to the SEVIS database).

D/S: Duration of Status

Immigration Documents:

As an international student in the U.S., you have in your possession certain very important papers. You should always keep these documents safe. As a precaution, you should keep photocopies of these documents in a separate location. The International

Studies Office will also take copies of these documents to keep in your file. Your F-1 Student Documents include:

- **Current passport**
- **F-1 student visa** - this document in your passport allows you to enter the U.S. for the primary purpose of study. (Canadian citizens note: You are exempt from the visa requirement although you must still carry an I-20 and an I-94 number.) It does not matter if your visa expires while you are in the U.S., but if you leave the country with an expired visa, you must get a new one before you return to the U.S. The visa is only used to enter the U.S. - it does not have anything to do with permission to remain in the U.S.
- **I-94 number...NEW This Year!** Until this year, a card was attached to your passport as you entered the US. This card had a number, the "I-94" or admission number. Beginning in April of this year, the card is no longer attached to your passport but the number is entered into the USCIS computer. Your passport will still be stamped with an entry stamp (D/S endorsement). You can print out a copy of your I-94 number by going to this website: www.cbp.gov/I94 You should do this! Many documents in the US will ask for your "I-94 number". This is actually a great improvement...if you were to lose your I-94 printout, you can just print a new one. When we had the paper cards, it cost \$320 to replace one! When you leave the US, the USCIS computer will now automatically note your departure.
- **I-20** - this is the form issued to you by the University of Dubuque to allow you to apply for an F-1 student visa. It allows you to enter and remain in the U.S. for as long as you maintain good F-1 student status (see below). When you sign the I-20 form before applying for your visa, you are swearing to the U.S. government that you have read and understood all the information on the back of the form. Before leaving the country for a vacation or holiday, you must receive a travel endorsement. See the International Studies Office for details.
- **D/S endorsement**: When you come through customs, the immigration officer should inspect all your documents and endorse your passport visa page with "F-1; D/S". This means that you may remain in the U.S. for the "Duration of your Status" - for as long as you are maintaining legal student status, and you have a valid I-20. You should always check that your endorsement reads "D/S". If it does not, please contact the International Studies Office immediately.

Please safeguard all of these documents. Contact the International Studies Office if you have any questions.

Maintaining F-1 Student Status:

Although the International Studies Office will make every effort to keep you informed of USCIS regulations, **you are responsible for maintaining your legal F-1 status**. The results of falling out of legal status, since the passage of recent new immigration laws, can affect your career and your life for years to come. Please be careful in all matters concerning your legal status here as international students.

- You must report to the International Student Advisor (International Studies Office, Heritage Center, Suite 306) as soon as possible (within 7 days) of your arrival in Dubuque. (You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days BEFORE the reporting date printed on your I-20.)
- You must thereafter report to the International Studies Office at the beginning of every semester as the office is required to certify your enrollment within 15 days of the beginning of classes.
- You must have a valid (not expired) passport.
- You must have a valid (not expired) I-20.
- You must be enrolled fulltime every semester (except summer). This means 9 hours of graduate credit per semester.
- You must follow correct procedures (contact the International Studies Office) if transferring, changing academic goals, or extending your program of study.
- You are limited to 20 hours per week of on-campus employment (except for school holiday breaks).
- **You may NOT work off-campus! If you are caught you may lose your visa.**
- Keep all your immigration documents in a safe place. Keep ALL of your old I-20 forms...do NOT throw them away! You may need them in the future to prove that you have remained in status.
- Please contact the International Studies Office with any questions or concerns you have about your immigration status.
- **Note:** Your F-1 Visa is required only for entry to the US. It may expire without consequence while you are here. If you travel outside the US you will need to get it renewed before you will be allowed to return. For more visa information, see: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html

Employment:

A student in F-1 status at the University of Dubuque has limited opportunity for employment:

1. **On-Campus Employment:** You may work part-time (up to 20 hours per week) during the fall and spring semesters and full-time (up to 40 hours per week) during winter break and in the summer if your I-20 is valid, you are in good academic standing, and you are enrolled full time. To find what jobs are available, contact Amy Gaffney in Student Financial Planning, x3169. (Before you can be paid by the University of Dubuque, you will need a Social Security card.)

Social Security Card: To apply for a social security card, you must bring your I-20, Passport, printed copy of I-94, a letter from your employer stating that you are employed, and proof of employment (our local office accepts a letter from the International Studies Office) to the local Social Security Office, located at 1635 Associates Drive, Suite 101, Dubuque, IA 52002-2279. There is no charge for the card, and if your I-94 number is registered, you should receive the card in about two weeks. You can download the social security card application form

from this website: <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf> Remember, to get a Social Security Card you must prove that you have employment.

2. **Optional Practical Training:** After you complete your studies at UD, you may apply to the USCIS for up to 12 months of Optional Practical Training authorization to accept employment related to your field of study. Your application must be received by USCIS within 60 days of the end-of-program date shown on your I-20. You may apply no more than 90 days before your end of program. There is a fee of \$380 to apply for OPT. Detailed information about how to apply for OPT is available from the International Studies Office.
3. **“Employment” versus “Volunteering”:** US Immigration defines “employment” as any undertaking that would normally be a paid position. This means that even if you are not being reimbursed, you may be considered to be employed by USCIS. Volunteering means performing tasks that are not only uncompensated (by anything, including non-monetary compensation) BUT are normally performed by volunteers. Remember that an international F-1 student CANNOT be employed except under very specific circumstances.

F-1 Travel Guidelines:

Travel in the United States: You are free to travel within the United States while in F-1 status. However, you must be enrolled full time during the fall and spring semesters in order to stay in status. You do not need to be enrolled for the summer session in order to stay in the US, provided there is less than five months between the end of your spring term and the beginning of the next fall term.

Travel outside the United States: If you plan to travel outside the US during your school breaks, you should be sure to have the third page of your I-20 endorsed for travel by the International Student Advisor at UD. If you find it necessary to leave the US during the school term, be sure to request a letter of explanation before you go, explaining that you have University permission to leave school for the specified time. (USCIS officials may question your re-entry when your I-20 shows that your classes are already in session.)

****Important for Cohort Students:** You MUST have Graduate Program Coordinator Carol Knockle sign your I-20 AND give you a travel letter. The travel letter will not be issued until you have informed all of your professors of your absence and made arrangements to make up your missed coursework. The International Student Advisor does not sign for travel during a school term by cohort students.

Be sure to check your F-1 visa expiration date before your travel. You are free to remain in the US on an expired visa, but as soon as you leave the country you must renew it before you will be allowed to re-enter the US.

Remember that travel in some situations, such as while you are awaiting a change of status, while your application for OPT is “pending”, and after your application for OPT is approved (but you do not yet have employment) can be risky. If you have questions, please contact the International Studies Office.

If you plan to travel to neighboring countries such as Canada or Mexico, remember that you may need additional visas from these countries. You will need to check with their embassies to find their regulations:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp> (Canada)

<http://www.inm.gob.mx> (Mexico)

If you plan to travel to US territories such as Puerto Rico, you should take the precaution of bringing all of your documents.

Travel Resources: Here are some suggested resources:

- a. **Christmas International House** arranges home stays over the Christmas holidays all over the US: www.christmasIH.org
- b. **International Student Identity Card** offers you discounts on hotels, travel, theaters, museums, shopping, and restaurants all over the world, including the USA! You can purchase the ISIC card online for \$25 per year. For more information about ISIC, see www.myisic.com or contact the International Studies Office.
- c. **Use the Web!** www.studentuniverse.com offers reduced airfare and travel packages to students.
- d. **Contiki Tours offers UD students a discount on many of their travel packages** (www.contikivacations.com)

A Reminder About Travel from Dubuque, Iowa: Dubuque is a beautiful town, but it lacks good public transportation! There are no trains and just one bus a day to Chicago. The Internet is a great resource for inexpensive airfare. However, as you are planning, remember that you will need to consider transportation to the airport. If you decide to book flights out of Cedar Rapids, Moline, Madison, or Chicago, be sure you have arranged for your own transportation to these airports. If you have any questions, contact the International Studies Office.

Health Services and Health Insurance:

As you may have heard, health care in America can be very expensive, and it is important for you to have adequate health insurance. **The University of Dubuque requires that international students purchase university-approved health insurance.** The cost is currently about \$99 per month and you will be billed for this when you arrive on campus. Our health insurance is provided through the Lewer Agency, www.lewermark.com. The Lewer Agency specializes in international student insurance and has been very helpful to our students.

Please understand that health care in the U.S. may be different than health care in your home country. Health care in the U.S. is primarily private and can be very costly if you

do not have adequate health insurance. Learning how to manage your health care in the U.S. will save you time and money. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- In the U.S., hospital emergency rooms are for emergencies only! Using the emergency room will always cost more---usually a lot more!
- If you are feeling ill and feel you need to see a doctor, follow these procedures to insure the lowest cost health care:
 - First, call **Debra Runkle, University Medical Coordinator** (phone 589.3244). As a UD student, you can be evaluated by medical personnel with no charge depending upon the illness or injury. (If you need medications, tests, or other procedures, your insurance will cover these as described in your policy.) For the best rates and care, ALWAYS start with the University Medical Coordinator's office whenever possible.
 - If you need care after business hours, you can go to **Finley Convenient Care** (350 North Grandview, ER Entrance) but BE SURE to say that you are a UD student and show your student ID and your insurance card. Hours are Monday through Friday 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM and weekends and holidays 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM.
 - If you really cannot wait for one of these options, you can go to the emergency room at Finley Hospital, but expect to pay significantly more for this. In addition, your insurance will require a higher co payment than at the clinic.
 - Your insurance does not cover dental work or eyeglasses, unless you have an accident that injures your teeth or eyes. You can purchase dental insurance or you can simply pay for your dental care on a per-visit basis. If you need more information come to the International Studies Office.
- Finley Hospital and most doctors and clinics in the Dubuque area will file your insurance claim for you, and will wait until your insurance company has paid to bill you the balance. They will usually send you an initial bill showing that they have filed with your insurance company---don't pay this bill until it shows that the insurance company has paid their part. It is difficult to get a refund if you overpay! Don't be surprised to get more than one bill for the same visit. Sometimes everyone you see during one visit---the radiology department, the lab, and the doctor---will send separate bills. Be sure you keep all bills and documents, and wait for the claims letter from The Lewer Agency, showing what they will cover, before you pay the final balance.
- If the doctor prescribes medication, you will need to pay for this and then file a claim to be reimbursed. You can download a claims form from this website: www.lewermark.com You may also need to file claims for other medical treatment---for example, if you become ill while you are out of town. (Your Lewer insurance will cover you anywhere in the world EXCEPT in your home country. So if you go to Florida over winter break and get sick, your Lewer insurance will cover you!)
- If you have any questions, it is always good to call your insurance company and ask if a procedure is covered before authorizing that procedure. (This is called Pre-Approval.) Many Americans do this. Health care is definitely more expensive in the U.S. than in other countries.

- The International Studies Office can help you to make medical or dental appointments and can help you arrange transportation if you need it. Feel free to contact the International Studies Office with any questions!
- A final note: The University of Dubuque works mainly with Finley Hospital as it is very close to campus, but your Lower Insurance will be accepted at other health clinics in Dubuque, including Acute Care at Mercy Hospital. However, the co-pay amount may be higher. As always, you may contact the International Studies Office with any questions.

Immunization Requirements:

The University of Dubuque requires you to show proof that you have been immunized against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). Other immunizations are suggested, but this is the **ONLY** immunization that is required. It will be much less expensive AND more convenient for you to be sure you have this required immunization before you arrive in the United States. Your Lower insurance does NOT cover immunizations! **You are required to have two (2) doses of MMR immunization.**

All students must complete an Immunization Form and file it with the Medical Coordinator's Office (Stoltz Hall). You must include an official record, provided by your physician, clinic, or school to show that you have received the MMR vaccine. (You cannot just fill this in yourself! You must either have the form stamped and signed by your doctor, or you must attach a copy of your medical record.) If you do not have the MMR, it is strongly suggested that you get it BEFORE you come to the US...the immunizations will cost you about \$150-\$200 if you get them here, and insurance does not cover them. If you do come to the US without the required immunizations, contact Debra Runkle, University Medical Coordinator (589-3244) for help in scheduling the required immunizations immediately

Although medical and immunization issues are handled through the Medical Coordinator's Office, the International Studies Office is always available to help you connect with this office or to help you connect with any medical or insurance information you need.

IRS Regulations for International Students:

Although the International Studies Office and the University of Dubuque are responsible only for reporting your immigration status, we want to make the following information available to you to use as you choose. **The International Studies Office sponsors a tax information workshop annually. More information will be available on the UD International Student Moodle Page.**

All international students are encouraged to file taxes in compliance with federal tax regulations.

- If you earn more than \$3,800 in 2013, you are required by the IRS to file an income tax return. You may be entitled to a tax refund.

- In addition, ALL international students, whether you have earned income or not, are required to file Form 8843. This will be especially important if you decide in the future to file for another immigration status.

You can download, fill, print out, and mail form 8843 from the following link:

<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf>

You can get more information about IRS regulations from this link:

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international>

Grace Periods:

A grace period is the amount of time you have to leave the country after your I-20 expires or is terminated. You have 60 days after your end of program date (or the final date of your OPT) to leave the country. If your record is terminated for authorized early withdrawal, you have 15 days to leave the country. If you are suspended from UD for any reason you must leave the country immediately.

Extension of Study:

If you find you will need more time to complete your degree than your “end of program” date on your I-20, you must request that your program be extended. This must be done BEFORE your end of program date. You must present a written request to the International Studies Office along with a written authorization from your academic advisor stating that your extension is approved. In general, failed coursework (failure to make satisfactory academic progress) is NOT considered to be a valid reason for extension.

Transfer To or From Another School:

In order to transfer from one school to another, you must request that your current institution transfer your I-20 to the new school. It is the student’s responsibility to request this transfer. For more information contact the International Studies Office.

UD Graduation Ceremony (Commencement):

UD holds its graduation ceremony in early May each year. You must apply for graduation; Carol Knockle in the Graduate Office will send you information about this. Be sure to observe all deadlines for submitting applications!

****Remember to write your name on the graduation application EXACTLY as it appears on your passport! This is how your name will appear on your diploma.****

Order your personal academic apparel (the cap and gown) in March at the Babka Book Store, Peters Commons. (Telephone: 589-3131)

Graduation Pictures

A few days before the graduation ceremony, the UD MBA program will arrange for professional, group photos (in caps and gowns), and students will have the opportunity to order copies. You will receive more information closer to graduation.

On the day of graduation: You may purchase the graduation picture taken by a professional photographer of you shaking hands with the president of UD on the platform during the graduation ceremony. There is an area near the platform for your families and friends to take pictures also.

Academic Support at the University of Dubuque:

The **Academic Success Center** provides help for University of Dubuque students and Seminary students needing one-on-one assistance with coursework, writing, study skills, and other academic matters. Students can improve their grades and study habits with the assistance of tutors, who help with a variety of subjects. The Academic Support Center's Professional Tutors and Peer Tutors have expertise in almost all academic areas taught at the University of Dubuque. The Academic Support Center is located on the second floor of the Charles C. Myers Library. (Remember to plan ahead! Do not plan to bring them a paper to review on the day that it is due!) You can always contact the International Studies office for help in contacting the Academic Success Center.

There are other opportunities in the Dubuque community for ESL support. These include the **Presentation Lantern Center** and the **Northeast Iowa Community College** free ESL courses. For more information please contact the International Studies Office.

International Student Organizations and Host Families:

As an international student at the University of Dubuque, you are a valuable asset to us! You can enrich our campus culture by sharing your experience with your fellow students. You are welcome and encouraged to participate in any of our student organizations (you will find a complete listing in your UD Student Handbook or on the UD Website).

International Friendship Club (IFC) is a student organization whose mission is hospitality to international students at UD and raising global awareness on the UD campus.

Asian Student Union (ASU) was founded several years ago by MBA Cohort students to provide hospitality and support to students from Asia and to promote and educate about Asian culture.

Intramural Sports at UD have benefited from the participation of many international students in recent years! Over 20 sports activities are scheduled throughout the year. You can form a team with your classmates or just sign up and be placed on a team. Play is at every level of skill, from beginner to expert! For more information contact Vic Popp, Director of Recreation and Wellness, x 3449, vpopp@dbq.edu, or visit the website: <http://www.dbq.edu/recwellness/>

The University of Dubuque International Hospitality Program is a voluntary friendship exchange between international students and local Dubuque residents. If you choose to participate, you will be paired with a local family or individual. Your hosts can provide you with an informal introduction to “American” life and you will have the opportunity to share your culture with your hosts. You will not live with your hosts but will probably get together monthly for some activity. There will also be group events organized for all the host families and students. For more information, contact the International Studies Office.

Helpful Local Information:

Driving License: <http://www.dot.state.ia.us/mvd/ods/dlmanual.htm>

According to the Iowa Department of Transportation, you do not need a driving license if you are a student or visitor and have a current driving license from your home country. However, if you wish to get an Iowa Driving License, you are able to do so after residing in Iowa for 30 days. You must bring your I-20, passport, I-94, and visa along with proof that you have been living in Iowa for more than 30 days (such as a bank statement with your Iowa address). You will need to take both the written and the driving test. There is more information on the DOT website.

Note: If you purchase and insure a car in Iowa, your insurance agent will probably require that you get an Iowa Driving License.

The local address is:

Dubuque Driver's License Station

2460 Gateway Drive

Dubuque, IA 52003

Telephone: 563-583-9844

Hours: Tuesday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Saturday 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM; closed Mondays.

Public Transportation In and Around Dubuque:

Dubuque City Buses: The Dubuque City Bus system is called “The Jule”....you will see their bright green buses on all major routes in Dubuque. UD students can ride the bus FREE simply by showing their UD student ID. There is a special route called the “Nightrider” that runs Friday through Sunday and connects all of the local colleges to popular student destinations such as the Mall, the movie theaters, and downtown Dubuque restaurant district. For more information contact Student Life or International Studies Office.

Buses stop in front of UD on University Avenue:

- Westbound Bus Stop (in front of the Discovery Shop and at the corner of Algona and University)
- Eastbound Bus Stop (in front of Hardee’s and in front of Goldthorp)

- More information is available on the International Students Moodle page!

For more schedule information, go to the city website (<http://www.cityofdubuque.org>), or contact The Jule Bus Company:
Address: 2401 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA52001,
Telephone: 563-589-4196

Mail and Postal Service:

University of Dubuque Campus Post Office, Mailboxes, and Print Room (Heritage Center):

Service Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Holiday Hours will be posted at the Post Office Window
Telephone: (563) 589-3141

- Two UD students share a post box. Your mail will be delivered daily (M-F) to this box. If there is anything too large for your mail box, you will receive a note telling you that you have a package to pick up.
- To retrieve a package sent to you, bring this note to the post office window in the Heritage Center and show the note along with your UD photo identification card (ID card). You **must** show your UD ID to get your package.

There is a \$5.00 key deposit for your mail box. You must pay this at the Campus Post Office before you pick up your key. You will get your \$5.00 back when you return the key.

United States Postal Service:

1. There is a **US Postal box (mailbox)** on the UD campus - at the intersection of Grace and Algona Streets. Mail is picked up daily at 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM.
2. **Hartig Pharmacies** offer postal service of letters and small packages. There is a Hartig Pharmacy near the University, at the corner of Grandview and University Streets (1600 University Avenue, phone: 563-588-8708).
Store Hours: Monday - Friday: 7:00 AM -9:00 PM
Saturday: 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
3. The **United States Postal Service Main Post Office** is downtown.
Address: 350 West Sixth Street, Dubuque, Iowa
Telephone: (563) 582-3674
Service Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Saturday: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Sunday: No service

Banking Service:

The bank nearest the campus is **Dubuque Bank & Trust**, Grandview Branch (2 blocks east of the campus, corner of Grandview and Delhi Streets, across from Finley Hospital). There is a Dubuque Bank & Trust ATM machine in the lower level of Peters Commons. This is a local bank with good customer service.

Telephone: 563-589-2160 Web site: www.dubuquebank.com

Service Hours: Monday - Friday:.....8:00am – 5:30pm

 Saturday:9:00am – 12:30pm

 Sunday Closed

To find other banks in Dubuque, consult the telephone book or the Dubuque Visitors Guide.

Remember, if you have any questions about the material in this handbook or any other questions about living, working, and studying in the United States, please contact the International Studies Office. Again, welcome to the University of Dubuque!