

PRE - DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Immigration Documents:

- Passport valid at least six months from the date you plan to enter the U.S.
- Valid visa for the school you will attend
- I-20 or DS-2019 with a report date for the semester you plan to enroll
- Copy all documents prior to departure
- Hand carry all originals and put copies in a separate place



Educational:

- Final Transcripts
- Course Descriptions (If you are seeking transfer credits)

Financial:

- Bring enough accessible money in cash, debit cards or travelers' checks (approximately US \$900) for initial living expenses such as housing and food. Please note that while travelers' checks are a safer way to bring in money, they are hard to cash in shops and need to be cashed at a bank
- Bring enough money to cover all university expenses, including tuition, fees, housing, health insurance, meals, and other personal expenses

Sharing (optional):

- Music, crafts, videos, picture books, recipes and clothing from your home country
- Traditional dress from your country

Health Documents:

- Travel insurance to cover you until the first day of orientation
- Immunization records in English
- Other health records
- Prescription medication for chronic medical conditions

Health Care:

- Visit your eye doctor and get an extra pair of prescription glasses
- Visit your dentist
- Visit your medical doctor for a check-up

Transportation:

- Schedule your travel plans so that you arrive on our scheduled arrival day
- Fill out the online arrival form at www.uwlax.edu/oie/arrivals

Phone Cards:

- Students wishing to call home upon their arrival to La Crosse are encouraged to purchase a phone card before they arrive. OIE recommends www.pingo.com which allows you to print out the access number for the United States and carry it with you.

ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- Valid Passport
- Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Form I-94
- \$100 Registration Deposit
- Current U.S. address and phone number
- Name and address of an emergency contact in the U.S. and in your home country
- Upon arrival you will receive a folder of information including a campus map, a detailed orientation schedule and a resource guide.

You will need to complete the mandatory check-in process during OIE's New International Student Orientation. This is the first step in maintaining your Immigration status.

GLOBAL CONNECTION

UW-L INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ARRIVAL INFORMATION GUIDE

Helping you get connected to the UW-L campus

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, UW-L

WELCOME TO UW-LA CROSSE!



Congratulations on your acceptance to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse! We are excited you will be joining our institution.

This booklet will provide you with an array of information, all designed to help aid in your transition and arrival to the United States and UW-L. We strongly encourage you to take the time to read and understand the information presented in this booklet. Also, please contact our office with any questions you may have!

We look forward to meeting you at our New International Student Orientation!

Warmest Regards,

The OIE Staff

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STAFF

Jay Lokken, Director
 Sandy Sieber, Assistant Director
 Michelle Tyvoll, ESL Institute Director
 Ryan Hemmesch, Assistant Director of Recruitment
 Diane Sasaki, International Programs & Advising
For J-1 & F-1 Sponsored, Contract & Exchange Students
 David Gardner, International Student Advisor
For F-1 Students
 Robert Packard, International Admissions Specialist

SPRING 2012 SEMESTER DATES

- **Mandatory Orientation:**
January 17-20
 - **Classes Begin:**
Monday, January 23
 - **Spring Break:**
March 9-18
- **ESL Program Ends:**
Friday, May 4
- **ESL Graduation:**
Friday, May 4
- **University Classes End:** Friday, May 4
- **University Final Exams:** May 7-11
- **Commencement:**
Saturday, May 12

CONTACT INFORMATION

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| Office of International Education Room 1209 Centennial Hall 308 N. 16th Street La Crosse, WI 54601 USA | E-mail address: oiestudents@uwlax.edu Phone number: +001 (608) 785.8016 Fax number: +001 (608) 785.8923 Website: www.uwlax.edu/oie Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:00 - 4:30 Emergency Phone: +001 (608) 386.3716 |
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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

■ **Arrival Days:** January 15th & January 16th, 2012 – Please plan on arriving in La Crosse on the above dates if you would like the Office of International Education to arrange a pick-up for you. If you arrive before or after these dates, you will need to take a taxi to campus. All new students must fill out their arrival information at: www.uwlax.edu/oie/arrivals.

■ **La Crosse Battery of Exams:** January 17th, 2012 – If you are required to take the La Crosse Battery of Exams (ESL), as noted on your admission letter from the university, you will need to report to the Office of International Education at 8:00 am on January 17th. This will be your **only** opportunity to take the exam.

■ **Mandatory Orientation:** January 17th–20th, 2012 – All new international students are required to participate in orientation. Activities are designed for your personal benefit, academic success, and will help you maintain your immigration status.

■ **Classes Begin:** Monday, January 23rd, 2012 – All students need to be present in their classes from this day forward.

■ **Mandatory OIE Health Insurance:** All students are required to participate in the OIE group health insurance policy. Please refer to page five for more information.

■ **Sufficient Funds:** Students must have enough funds to meet all of their expenses. This includes tuition and fees, housing, meals, health insurance, travel and any other personal living expenses. Please use your I-20 or DS-2019 as a guide on how much money you will need each year.

MANDATORY ORIENTATION FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Coming to a new country can be an exciting opportunity, but also a difficult experience. To assist you with the transition from your home country to UW-L, the Office of International Education **requires** all new international students to attend International Student Orientation January 17th – 20th, 2012.

International Student Orientation will provide you with information about campus life and the La Crosse community. Life as an international student means balancing the requirements of U.S. immigration regulations and maintaining high academics. American culture requires you take personal responsibility for learning, understanding, and following all regulations. The International Student Orientation will introduce you to upcoming challenges, provide resources and help answer your questions.

International Student Orientation offers a campus tour, a shopping trip, information about maintaining immigration status, a banking session, and evening social events to help you become acquainted with fellow students. You will be assigned a peer advisor, who is a current student and will be available to help you find your way around campus, answer your questions and be a friendly face throughout orientation week.

**As a new UW-L international student, you must attend
New International Student Orientation!**

HOW DO I GET TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE ?

Your final destination must be La Crosse, Wisconsin. You may travel to La Crosse by plane, Amtrak, bus or car. The arrival days are January 15th and 16th, 2012. As long as students have submitted their arrival information at www.uwlax.edu/oie/arrivals, OIE will arrange a pick-up to UW-L from the airport or train station. Students who arrive before or after these dates will need to take a taxi to the UW-L campus.

ONLY STUDENTS WHO HAVE SUBMITTED ARRIVAL INFORMATION TO OUR OFFICE AT LEAST 5 DAYS BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL AND ARE ARRIVING DURING THE OFFICIAL ARRIVAL DATES WILL BE PICKED UP BY OIE.

Upon Arrival: Arrival folders will be available at the front desk of each Residence Hall or at the Office of International Education.

For more information about travel options and arriving to La Crosse, WI, please see our website at http://www.uwlax.edu/oie/International_Students/Arrival.htm.



HOTEL & TAXI INFORMATION FOR EARLY ARRIVALS AND VISITING FAMILY MEMBERS

Hotels

Guest House:
810 S 4th St.
(608) 784.8840

Radisson Hotel:
200 Harborview Plaza
(608) 784.6680

Courtyard by Marriott:
500 Front St.
(608) 782.1000

Grandstay Residential Suites:
525 Front St. North
(608) 796.1615

Holiday Inn Suites:
200 Pearl St.
(608) 784.4444

Taxis

Metro (608) 784.1900
A-Cab: (608) 781.5333
CTS: (608) 784.7700

If you have not made housing arrangements prior to your arrival to La Crosse, you will need to stay in a hotel until you make permanent housing arrangements. If you arrive before or after the listed arrival days, you will need to take a taxi to UW-L.

Phoning a taxi and/or hotel from the La Crosse airport is free.

WEATHER IN WISCONSIN

Wisconsin weather has extreme variations in temperature and precipitation in short periods of time as well as the four distinct seasons of fall, winter, spring and summer. Wisconsin weather ranges from hot and muggy conditions in the summer (70–90 degrees F or 21–32 degrees C) to cold, freezing and snowy weather in the winter (below 0–35 degrees F or -18 to 0 degrees C). Summer conditions require constant hydration while winter weather conditions require appropriate warm clothing to prevent frost bite.

COURSE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

**Mandatory Orientation will begin
on January 17th, 2012!**

Please visit the UW-L website at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/records/catalogs.htm> to find both the Undergraduate and Graduate course catalogs. These catalogs will give all course descriptions of classes offered at UW-L. At <http://www.uwlax.edu/records/timetable/> you will find the timetable to search for current UW-L classes and times offered for each term.

Students will receive an e-mail from UW-L Admissions with information on how to access their WINGS account. Look out for this e-mail and please follow the instructions provided. Once this account has been activated, students will need to register online for their courses. Feel free to e-mail the assigned advisor if you need assistance with course selection. Advisors are not able to register you for courses.

Graduate Study: Graduate students may contact their program advisor for registration information or they may wait until they arrive at UW-L to meet with their advisor to register for classes.

Undergraduate Study: There will be an academic advising session during orientation week. At this time, students will have a chance to register for academic courses. If students prefer to register early, they must pay the \$100 registration deposit before registering for courses. Students can pay the deposit and register for courses in WINGS at www.uwlax.edu. WINGS log-in information will be sent to the e-mail address that you provided when you applied to UW-L.

Students with "CONDITIONAL (RESTRICTED)" admission status or ESL study: Students will be registered for class by the ESL Institute after completing the La Crosse Battery of Exams after their arrival to UW-L.

- UW-L has a textbook rental system for undergraduate courses and for the ESL Institute. This means that most textbooks are provided at no cost, although some courses may require you to purchase additional materials at the UW-L Bookstore. Most textbooks for graduate courses must be purchased by the student.

- All students must pay the \$100 registration deposit before they can register for academic courses each semester. Students will have an opportunity during new student orientation to make this payment at the Cashier's Office.

Exchange Students: Exchange students do not pay the \$100 registration deposit—the exchange program will cover this fee. Exchange students should register for their classes prior to arriving at UW-L.

In order to register online for courses, Exchange students will need to first look for an e-mail from UW-L Admissions with information on how to access their WINGS account. Follow the instructions provided in this e-mail. Once this account has been activated, students can then register online for their own courses. Feel free to e-mail the assigned advisor if you need assistance with course selection, but advisors are not able to register you for courses. For additional information, including a list of advisors, refer to the following website: <http://www.uwlax.edu/oie/Exchange/ExchangeProgramInfo.htm>. If you have difficulty registering, please contact Diane Sasaki at sasaki.dian@uwlax.edu.

Please Note: If students wish to wait and choose courses after they arrive at UW-L, they will need to make an appointment with an advisor during orientation week. Students will need to arrange the appointment around mandatory orientation activities/sessions. Additionally, if students wait to register until this time, many courses, including several higher level ones, will already be filled and available courses will be limited. **Advanced registration is highly recommended.**

GETTING YOUR FINANCES IN ORDER

■ **Preparing a Budget & Sufficient Funds:** Before arriving at UW-L, make sure your finances are in order and that you possess enough money for your entire stay in the United States. Students must have enough funds to meet all of their expenses. This includes tuition and fees, housing, meals, health insurance, travel, and any other personal living expenses. Please use your I-20 or DS-2019 as a guide on how much money to bring. Do not rely on UW-L for financial assistance unless you received a scholarship, assistantship or other financial aid upon admission.

For a list of current estimated expenses, please visit the OIE Admissions page at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/oie/IA/InternationalAdmissions.htm>.

Other expenses to consider when preparing a budget include: books & supplies, winter clothing, travel or shipping items to your home country.

Beyond these items, you should bring approximately US \$900 in addition to your regular monthly allowance for extra expenses you may experience during the first few weeks of the semester. Keep in mind that the cost of living, as well as university tuition and fees, will increase each year.

■ **Paying for Tuition and Fees:** Payment for school tuition and fees must arrive at the UW-L Cashier's Office by each payment deadline. If you plan to transfer tuition and fee funds by international wire, please contact UW-L's Cashier Office for more information. Wire transfer fees must be paid by you or your sponsor.

Personal living expense funds **should not** be sent to the Cashier's Office. Instead, these funds should be sent to your personal bank account. It is recommended that you open a bank account in the U.S. You will have an opportunity to open a bank account during orientation, if you choose to do so.

For information on payments, deadlines and tuition costs, visit:
<http://www.uwlax.edu/cashiers/faqs.htm>

■ **Taxes:** United States income tax laws are complicated and unavoidable. If you plan on earning an income in the U.S., staying in the U.S. more than two years as a teacher or researcher, or more than five years as a student, you should seriously consider checking with a tax consultant about your own situation. OIE is not able to assist you with tax questions or concerns.

ORGANIZATIONS FOR STUDENTS!

A new culture can be overwhelming! There are organizations on campus and in the community to help you adjust to a new culture and meet people from around the world!

L.F.I.S. (La Crosse Friends of International Students) - Students have the opportunity of having a family in order to experience the American lifestyle.

L.I.F.E. (La Crosse International Friendship Exchange) - A social club designed to build friendships between American and International students. www.uwlax.edu/life

I.S.O. (International Student Organization) - An organization helping International students better understand the American society and promote international awareness on our campus. www.uwlax.edu/iso

OBTAINING A VISA & ENTERING THE U.S.

Visa Interview: When preparing for your visa interview at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy, you will need to remember the following:

1. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee at least 3 days before your visa interview and bring the receipt with you to your appointment. You can pay the SEVIS fee online at www.fmjfee.com. Remember to print your receipt!
2. Complete the 'Online Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application, Form DS-160': <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
3. Pay the visa application fee. See your local embassy or consulate website for further information.
4. Prepare the following documents for your interview:
 - Valid Passport
 - Receipt of SEVIS I-901 Fee payment
 - I-20 or DS-2019
 - Evidence of Financial Support
 - UW-L Admission Letter
 - Two 2x2 passport sized photographs
 - Information showing ties to your home country
 - Check your local embassy or consulate website for any additional information they may require.

PORT OF ENTRY & CUSTOMS

International Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa can enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the program start date listed on their I-20 or DS-2019 document.

Port of Entry: When you arrive in the U.S. your first stop will be Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). Make sure to carry these items with you for inspection and do not pack them in your checked luggage.

1. **Passport:** Must be valid six months into the future
2. **F-1 or J-1 Student Visa:** Cannot be expired
3. **Evidence of Financial Support**
4. **I-20 or DS-2019:** Issued by UW-L
5. **UW-L Admission Letter**



I-94 card: Upon entry to the U.S., CBP will authorize your stay on the I-94 card. The I-94 card is usually completed during your flight to the U.S. This card permits your entry and stay in the U.S. For F-1 students, it should state: "Admitted in F-1 status for D/S". For J-1 students, it should have the phrase: "Admitted in J-1 status for D/S". The standard form of the I-94 will be a small, white card which is often stapled into your passport by CBP. Make sure to write your name on this form **exactly** as it appears in your passport.

Customs: After you complete the CBP immigration inspection, you must go through customs. At this time you will be asked to declare what you have brought into the U.S. There are prohibited and restricted items which may not be allowed in to the U.S. or items which are only allowed in limited quantities. This includes alcohol, cigarettes, food, and medicine. Please check the Customs and Border Patrol website for current restrictions and limitations www.cbp.gov.

If you are carrying over \$10,000 in any currency or traveler's checks with you, you must declare it on your customs declaration form!!!

CAMPUS HOUSING OPTIONS

Please arrange your living accommodations before your arrival to La Crosse. Be sure to apply as soon as possible, housing space is limited!

Campus Housing – Residence Hall Options (Meal Plans Required):

- **Eagle Hall:** Single and Double rooms are available in a shared suite style setting.
- **Reuter Hall:** Only single rooms are available in a shared apartment setting. This hall is generally for students older than 20.

Campus Housing – Apartment Style Option:

- **Gerrard Apartments (West Ave):** Double and single rooms are available in a shared apartment setting. Meal plan options are available but are not required. This furnished complex is a 5-10 minute walk from campus and is located between downtown La Crosse and the UW-L campus. University staff lives on site.

For more information on campus housing options or to apply please visit:

<http://reslife.uwlax.edu/roomsignup/incomingstudents/International.aspx>
Please note: International Students DO NOT pay the enrollment deposit when applying for campus housing. **Students who reserve on campus housing can move in beginning January 15, 2012.**

Off-Campus Housing:

- It is your responsibility to find your own off-campus housing. OIE is not able to help you find off campus housing. Living off-campus is not recommended for ESL students and first year students. If you prefer to live off-campus, you should make arrangements prior to your arrival in La Crosse. Finding off-campus housing may take time and fills up very quickly.

Meal Plans:

- There are four meal plan options for students. For information on these options please visit:
http://www.uwlax.edu/uc/resources/Chartwells.htm#residential_meal.

HEALTH INSURANCE

■Mandatory Health Insurance Requirement:

Participation in the UW-L group health insurance is REQUIRED for all international students. This includes Exchange students (with the exception of ISEP, IREX, HESSEN, Fulbright Scholars and some Government sponsored students from the Middle East).

■Bringing Dependents:

If you plan on bringing dependents with you to the U.S., you will need to meet with Diane Sasaki, to make arrangements to insure your dependents, immediately upon your arrival to UW-L.

■Exchange students from Germany, Denmark, Sweden and France **MAY** be able to use an extension of their home government's national medical insurance in place of OIE's health insurance. Refer to the following website for additional information:
http://www.uwlax.edu/oie/Exchange/Exchange_Program_Info.htm.

Private travel insurance is not accepted.

MAIL SERVICE

If you are living in campus housing, you will receive your room assignment upon arrival to UW-L. **Do not send packages or mail to UW-La Crosse until you know your campus address. DO NOT send packages to the Office of International Education (OIE).**

Students living off-campus are REQUIRED by law to provide OIE with their local address as soon as they arrive. If you move throughout your time here, make sure to update your address with OIE within 10 days.