

Preparing for Travel to Bemidji State University

OBTAINING YOUR VISA:

Take the USCIS Form I-20 to the nearest U.S. consulate to obtain your student visa. (J-1 students follow the same basic directions as F-1 students, but substitute “DS-2019” for “I-20”.) Only bring the USCIS Form I-20 from the school you plan on attending for visa processing at the U.S. consulate. You must also provide verification to the consulate that you have the financial resources required for your education and stay in the United States. Please see the U.S. State Department website at www.state.gov/ for more information on U.S. Embassies and Consulates and visa processing.

- Apply for your visa early to provide ample time for visa processing.
- Visit the following website for complete information on applying for your visa from the U.S. Department of State: www.travel.state.gov/visa Detailed information is also available at www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/obtainingvisa/index.html
- **Be aware of the following requirements to apply for a visa:** (See the website for updates/changes.)
 - Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee. (See attached I-901 documents for further explanation).
 - A non-refundable visa application fee.
 - An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157.
 - A passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States.
 - One (1) 2x2 photograph. See photo specifications with visa application information.
 - The Form I-20.
 - Evidence of sufficient funds.
 - Student visa applicants must establish to the satisfaction of the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning, and that they will depart the United States when they have completed their studies. It is impossible to specify the exact form the evidence should take since applicants' circumstances vary greatly.

Canadian Students will need passports to enter the U.S. beginning 12/31/2006 for air/sea ports, and 12/31/2007 for land ports. Canadian Students do not currently require a student visa. You need to check your I-20 for accuracy and complete item #11. You will need proof of payment of the SEVIS fee (See attached documents for further explanation). Submit your I-20 to the U.S. Border Patrol when you come into the country to study. You may be required to show evidence of sufficient funds and additional identification and/or verification of admission.

F-1 Students in the U.S. who are transferring to Bemidji State University:

During orientation, present your I-20 to the Director of International Programs to validate your transfer. Your transfer will not be considered complete until this is done.

ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES:

The Directorate of Border and Transportation Security at the U.S. port of entry makes the final admission determination and for international students and exchange visitors, determines the period for which they are authorized to remain in the United States. At the port of entry, a Directorate of Border and Transportation Security official validates Form I-94, Record of Arrival-Departure, which notes the length of stay permitted.

Please access the following website for information on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP helps to secure our borders, facilitate the entry and exit process, and enhance the integrity of our immigration system while respecting the privacy of our visitors. www.cbp.gov/

GETTING TO BEMIDJI MINNESOTA, USA

If you are flying to the United States, we advise you to book your airline ticket through to Bemidji, Minnesota, USA, airport code BJI. Schedule your travel to go through customs at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport as your Port of Entry. Check with your travel agent or airline with questions concerning security procedures and baggage weight limits.

WEATHER

You will experience four seasons in Bemidji. Fall (5-20 C); Winter (below -20 C); Spring (5-30 C); and Summer (30-38 C) The changing seasons are truly enjoyable and each season has its own beauty. Students from warmer climates grow to enjoy the snow as well as many winter activities. BSU has an extensive indoor walkway system, so when it is cold outside, you can go from your dorm room to the cafeteria, to the Recreation Center, to the library and computer labs, or to your classes with minimal time outside.

CLOTHING

During travel, try to wear loose fitting clothing. If arriving in January, bring or wear a coat or warm outer clothing in the event you are not able to purchase appropriate clothing right away. Remember Minnesota's 4-season weather!

BANKING

Banking information will be provided to you prior to or during Orientation. If you arrive a few days ahead of the start of orientation, you should open a bank account upon arrival. Go to www.visitbemidji.com/bemidji/index.html#Banks for a listing. Please keep your money in a secure place prior to arranging your bank account. We recommend \$300 - \$500 be carried in traveler's checks as you will need to have access to some spending money for food, personal items, and unplanned events.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH HOME!

It is highly recommended that you purchase a phone card so that you will be able to call home easily. Be sure to notify your family and friends as soon as you have arrived so they don't worry.

Enrollment in Bemidji State University

ORIENTATION

Refer to your admission letter for the dates of orientation.

Listed below is a tentative orientation schedule outlining the activities and services provided prior to the start of classes. Attendance at the orientation program is mandatory; please make sure that your travel plans allow your arrival in time to attend all orientation activities.

The updated orientation schedule may be viewed on-line at <http://www.bemidjistate.edu/students/international/accpStu.html#>

If you wish to pre-register for your courses, you may access registration information at <http://portal.bemidjistate.edu/>. Your ID number is on your admission letter.

If you are transferring courses/credits to Bemidji State University, a degree audit will be provided to you, which will include those classes and/or credits that have been accepted in transfer. You will then need to meet with the chair of your major department for a discussion on how your transfer courses may apply to your major.

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	SUNDAY
Welcome	Registration for semester classes	Tour Campus
Review of legal documents and International Student Regulations	Student ID pictures	Responsible Men/Responsible Women
College Readiness assessment	Visit with Current Students	Time for banking, shopping, resting
Mantoux Testing	Information on:	Tour Residence Halls
Payment of Health Insurance	Academic Advising	Introduction to On-Campus Dining
Academic Advising and Pre-Registration Planning	Employment	
Family Friends – Dinner Provided	Payment Requirements	
	Meal Plans	
	Tax Filing Requirements	
	Emotional and Mental Health	
	Physical Health	

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HEALTH INSURANCE

As an international student, you are required to purchase health insurance through the MnSCU contracted student insurance provider, regardless of any other health insurance you may have. The United States does not have a national health care system available to non immigrant students. The cost of medical care is the responsibility of the individual; thus, health insurance coverage is mandatory for all international students. This mandate exists for the protection of international students and provides a health plan against financial hardship resulting from the need for medical attention.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has contracted with a Health Insurance Company to be the provider of our domestic and international student health insurance. Insurance coverage provided by the contracted company is on an annual basis, beginning in August of each year. You will be required to purchase the insurance plan offered before enrolling in classes, regardless of any other health coverage plan, excepting coverage that has been approved by the embassy representing your home country.

You must be prepared to pay for your health insurance during orientation. Bemidji State University bills for your insurance coverage annually and payment will be due before the first day of class.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT/MANTOUX TESTING

Minnesota State Law states that all students born after 1956 and attending Minnesota colleges and universities must be immunized for Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) and Diphtheria/Tetanus (DT). See enclosed letter for more details. Complete the enclosed Immunization Records form and return it to the BSU Student Health Services Office.

During Orientation, the Student Health Services Office will also assess all new international students regarding the requirement for a Mantoux (tuberculin) test.

TUITION AND FEE DATES

MnSCU Policy 5.12: Tuition and fees should be paid in full no later than the first day of the term or the student will be dropped from all classes. A student will not be dropped for non-payment if he/she has made a minimum down payment to tuition and fees of 15% or \$300 whichever is less, and has signed up for an active payment plan contract.

For more information, visit the BSU business office website at http://www.bemidjistate.edu/students/tuition_fees/

LIVING ON CAMPUS

You are encouraged to live on campus in one of our residence halls. The Department of Residential Life at BSU is committed to creating a caring environment that encourages academic success, individual respect, personal growth, and a sense of responsibility toward our community and a global society. Residence hall services are provided as a part of the residence hall living experience and are included in the living cost of each resident. Please visit the Residential Life webpage at www.bemidjistate.edu/students/reslife/ for more detailed information regarding our on-campus housing and meal options.

Housing is available in the BSU residence halls during all breaks. If you wish to stay at BSU during breaks you should discuss this option with your Residential Life staff.

Students living in the residence halls are assigned mailboxes. Postage stamps can be purchased at the Hobson Memorial Union's Information Desk and at the reception desk of most residence halls. The BSU Mailroom is available in the basement of Memorial Hall, room 001, where they sell stamps and accept personal UPS packages for shipment from all BSU Students.

Information for International Students

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

BSU offers two semesters per year, as well as a summer session. The fall semester (August-December) and spring semester (January-May) last approximately 15 weeks, a May intersession last 2 weeks, and the summer session (June-August) offers two 5-week sessions.

AIRPORT PICK-UP

When arriving in Bemidji for your first semester of enrollment, you may request to be met at the local regional airport or bus terminal for transportation to the BSU campus. You must notify the International Program Center for pick-up by mailing or faxing the enclosed Arrival Notification form, or by telephone or e-mail. We can't meet you if we don't know when you are arriving!

ON-CAMPUS ORIENTATION

You will receive an orientation to BSU prior to the start of classes. During the orientation, topics such as advising, registration, immigration policies and regulations, banking, and activities are discussed. We also try to have fun! See the tentative orientation schedule located in this document.

ACADEMIC ADVISORS

You will have the opportunity to meet with the department chair or designated faculty representative from your major area/program of study during the orientation program, for assistance with course selection for your first term. You will then be assigned a permanent academic advisor once you complete your course registration. Your assigned advisor will be a faculty member from your discipline or program of study. You are encouraged to schedule meetings with your academic advisor or course instructors during their office hours.

CAMPUS SAFETY ALERTS

University alerts will be made through the BSU website homepage. Announcements may also be made through e-mail, posted bulletins, verbal methods, television and radio bulletins. Students should always be alert for such announcements, especially during times of bad weather.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, AND MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENTS

During the international student orientation program at the beginning of a semester, non-native speakers of English will undergo assessment to determine placement levels for English as a Second Language (ESL). If your ESL assessment results indicate placement in the Intermediate ESL or Advanced ESL courses you will be required to enroll in the applicable course your first semester. Post-test results at the end of the semester will determine the need for subsequent enrollment in ESL courses your 2nd term. You may also be assessed for proper placement in mathematics courses.

E-MAIL

You will be assigned a BSU e-mail account. Students are required to use their BSU e-mail account for all transmission or exchange of academic information and other official information from BSU. You should check your e-mail often.

BANKING

You are encouraged to establish bank accounts upon arrival in Bemidji. The reason for this is to keep your money safe. Most people in the U.S. have checking accounts, saving accounts, or both. Most students pay for school and other expenses using checks, credit cards, or bankcards. Students also frequently use ATM cards when shopping. It is never a good idea to carry large amounts of cash.

HEALTH SERVICES

BSU has a Student Health Services office to attend to your healthcare needs. You are encouraged to use this facility. You will find that the Student Health Services Office is convenient and helpful. Medicines and treatments are available at low cost.

STUDENT ID CARDS

You will be issued a student ID card during orientation.

U.S. Social Customs and Suggestions

USE ENGLISH

Use English as much as possible while studying at BSU. Frequent usage of English will make the adjustment to living in the U.S. easier and will greatly increase the likelihood of academic success.

TRY THE FOOD

If you are from overseas, American food might be quite different from the food in your home country. Take the time to try a variety of foods to find what you like. Part of the fun of being in a new country is discovering the food and culture of the country.

BE ON TIME

In general, Americans value punctuality. When specific times are given for events, it is expected that everyone involved will be on time or maybe a little early.

ADDRESSING OTHERS

Use "Dr." when addressing your instructors if they have an earned doctorate degree; otherwise, you can safely address them with the title of "Professor." "Mr." or "Ms.", or "Mrs." if you know she is married, may be used when you speak to people, especially in more formal settings. If someone tells you to call them by their first name, then you can do that.

Where To Go For Help

For questions about classes, registration, textbooks, major requirements, degree completion, academic progress—

- Refer to the 'Student Guide to Academics and Registration' provided to you during orientation or available on-line at www.bemidjistate.edu/students/records/advising/studentguide/SGIndex.html
- Talk to your instructors, your academic advisor, and/or your department chair. You can access the department and faculty directory on-line at www.bemidjistate.edu
- Refer to the current BSU catalog – available on-line or in hard copy from the Admissions Office in Deputy Hall. Graduate catalogs are available in the Graduate Studies Office in Decker Hall.

For questions about I-20s, DS2019s, staying in status, and immigration issues—

- Talk to the DSO in the IPC office, Deputy Hall 103 or e-mail studybemidji@bemidjistate.edu.
- Refer to the IPC webpage at www.bemidjistate.edu/students/international

For health issues or counseling about personal/emotional issues—

- Contact Student Health and Counseling Center in Birch Hall, 755-2053.

For information on student life, clubs and organizations, student services, university policy and procedures—

- Consult the current BSU Student Guide and Planner, available at the Information Desk in the Student Union.
- Refer to the BSU website.

International Program Center
Bemidji State University
Deputy Hall 103, #13
1500 Birchmont Dr. NE
Bemidji, MN 56601

studybemidji@bemidjistate.edu or
lritchie@bemidjistate.edu
Fax: 218-755-2074
Tel.: 218-755-4096
www.bemidjistate.edu/students/international

LaMae Ritchie, Director
Pam Janssen, Office Manager
Meredith Kehoe, ESL Instructor

International Program Center Bemidji State University Admitted International Student Handbook

WELCOME!

On behalf of Bemidji State University (BSU), the International Program Center warmly welcomes you to our campus. Bemidji, the first city on the Mississippi River, offers ample opportunities for shopping, education, medical care, technology, lodging, and government services, as well as the finest in outdoor recreation in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. We hope you agree that Bemidji is a beautiful place to visit and a great place to live and study.

You will have many occasions to interact with American students, faculty and staff, as well as Bemidji community members—

- The BSU International Student Organization
- Open Borders, a residential learning community focusing on opportunities to appreciate and experience new cultures
- The Bemidji community Family Friends Organization
- the Diversity Awareness committee of our Student Senate
- Other academic and/or social clubs and organizations

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR TIME AT BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY!

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- Preparing for Travel
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Enclosed

- I-20 (or DS-2019)
- SEVIS Fee form
- Arrival Notice
- Immunization Form
- Housing Application

CHECKLIST FOR ADMITTED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Sign your I-20 (Enclosed)
- Apply for passport, if you don't have one.
- Pay your SEVIS fee. To access on-line I-901 SEVIS Fee application and information -- <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>. (Also, see enclosed printed instruction and application.)
- Contact the nearest U.S. consulate to apply for a U.S. visa. Helpful information may be found at: www.travel.state.gov/visa www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/obtainingvisa/index.html
- Make flight arrangements for travel to Bemidji, MN, to arrive before the orientation program date.
- Send in your Arrival Notification form or e-mail our office at studybemidji@bemidjistate.edu (Form enclosed)
- Mail the immunization form to the BSU Health Services Office (Form enclosed)
- Mail in your Residential Life application/contract with deposit. (Form enclosed)
- Review the BSU website to learn about your major and to prepare to register for your first semester's courses.
- Review the Bemidji website to familiarize yourself with the city: www.ci.bemidji.mn.us

