



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



• Statement of International Student Responsibilities

The following is an outline of some of the responsibilities you have as an international student attending Dakota State University.

This is provided to assist you in meeting your goals for an education at DSU.

General Responsibilities

1. You are responsible for informing the International Programs Office (IPO) of any change of address and telephone number within 10 days of moving.
2. You are responsible for informing the IPO sufficiently in advance of your need for travel forms (I-20, full-time student letter, etc.), letters for application of driver's license, social security card, or employment. Please give **at least three business days advance** notice to the IPO when requesting any of the above mentioned documents.
3. You are responsible for maintaining your status as outlined on your I-20 and I-94. If your passport has expired or will expire shortly, it is your responsibility to have it revalidated. Please visit the IPO to discuss appropriate procedures.
4. You and your F-2 dependents are required to purchase health insurance. You must enroll in the ISO health insurance plan mandated by the South Dakota Board of Regents. Your F-2 dependent(s) must find proper insurance.

Financial Responsibilities

You are responsible for knowing your government's requirements for foreign currency exchange permission and for requesting or completing and submitting appropriate documents which are required to enable the transfer of funds from your country to the U.S.

If the annual (or bi-annual) certification of enrollment and expenses are required for the granting of foreign currency exchange permission from your government, you are responsible for requesting such certification from the IPO one week prior to the date this documentation will be needed.

Your student bill must be paid by the third day of classes each semester. You may request a payment plan and/or extension of initial payment by visiting the Cashier's Office on the first floor of Heston Hall. Payments can be made online using the SDePay in WebAdvisor, by mail sending a check or bank draft paid to the order of "DSU", in person or by wire: <https://www.peertransfer.com/select-institution>

• Basic Laws for International Students

Statutory Criminal Law

This law is decreed by the legislative branch of the government (federal, state or local) and enforced by an executive officer (usually the United States Attorney) acting through the courts. There must be a judicial determination that the law was violated before any criminal penalty may be imposed.

Examples:

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 alcoholic beverages. No one may furnish alcohol to a person under 21 years of age. 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. The charges for using, selling, or distributing these drugs will negatively affect your immigration record.

Taxes

Federal income tax must be paid by all employed persons. Income tax returns must be filed each calendar year before April 15.

DSU has a free software program to assist international students with filing their taxes.

If you've had a presence in the US during the previous year, you are required to file something.

Judicial common law or civil law

This law is based upon decisions in past court cases involving a dispute between two or more private parties; the suit is brought by an individual, not the state.

Examples:

Breach of contract – one party claims the other did not fulfill promises under the agreement, or did something not authorized by the contract. Landlord-tenant and roommate disputes usually fall within this category.

Personal injury lawsuits – result from car accidents, etc. The injured party has to prove that the defendant was negligent, (i.e. that he acted unreasonably or without due care, and that the negligence caused the injury).

Sources of Legal Help

EAST RIVER LEGAL SERVICES
335 North Main Avenue, Suite 300
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57102
Phone: (605) 336-9230
Fax: (605) 336-6919
Toll free: (800) 952-3015

**if they are unable to assist you, they may refer you to someone who can.

Dakota State University | International Programs Office

820 N Washington Avenue – LEC, Madison, SD 57042 USA

(605) 256.5267 | international@dsu.edu | Skype:

dsu_international

• Immigration Guidelines

1. All students must maintain full-time status as defined by USCIS.
Undergraduate students must enroll in a minimum of 12 credits each semester & graduate students must enroll in 9 credits. All international students must be enrolled full time for nine months each year. The credit load must be carried throughout the entire term. Students are not allowed to drop a class if it will cause them to drop below the minimum credit load required even if they are failing a class.
2. Unauthorized off-campus employment is strictly prohibited. International students may be eligible to apply for practical training permission (employment related to the major and required by the program) after they are in F-1 status for 9 months. However, practical training **must** be authorized on immigration documents prior to working. Work without authorization is considered illegal and is a serious offense.
3. On-campus employment for F-1 students is possible for no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year or 40 hours per week during the summer, winter and spring breaks providing they are have maintained their full-time status.
4. F-2 dependents are prohibited from working but may engage in part-time study in any certified program at an SEVP-certified school.
5. Immigration and other identification documents should be carried at all times, especially when traveling outside the regional area—including travel within the US.
6. Your I-20 must be signed by the International Programs Office (IPO) once every 12 months. In order to leave the US and return, all students must have a valid passport, current visa, and an I-20 signed within the past year.
7. Any student who has a change of plans (transferring to another school, starting another degree program, change of major, etc.) after arriving in the US should consult with the IPO to determine what he or she must do to maintain immigration status.
8. All students must report any and all changes of address to the IPO within 10 days of the change.

• Adjusting to Life in a New Country

When students first leave home to study in a different country, they experience a period of adjustment. They have to find their way around, locate accommodation, become used to new foods, and understand the different customs and the way things are organized.

This process of adjusting to a new place and society is often called “culture shock”. It is a perfectly natural experience that just about everyone has when they move to a new country.

In fact, rather than being a shock it can also be an exciting adventure, as we slowly explore our new surroundings and gain understanding and confidence.

We come to realize that things aren’t always what they seem, that our own culture and upbringing lead us to make a host of assumptions that affect our experiences of other people and events. We also get a lot of satisfaction as we gradually develop new friendships and contacts, and cope more easily with our new environment.

Of course, many students experience considerable frustration because they lack confidence in their ability to express themselves adequately in English. They find they are reluctant to join in conversation, or they cannot comprehend what Americans are saying, because Americans speak too fast, have a different accent, or are using slang words.

Students who may study in a different country than the one they grew up within may also experience “learning shock”. Students and teachers in the United States may interact differently from the way you are used to. Most international students find that classroom relationships are more casual. You will be expected to analyze issues critically, discuss the issues and share your ideas with your instructors and other students; to question and learn to debate the view of instructors and other students

To help you prepare for the transition of living in the United States, we recommend that you read the book: *American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States* by Gary Althen, published by Intercultural Press.

• Tips for Getting Along in the United States

Here is a list of American customs that new students should be aware of in order to make their adjustment to campus a bit easier.

Although you may already be aware of some of these things, other students may not, and so we offer this list. Please feel free to suggest additions or changes.

In Regard to Time

It is important to be on time in the United States. This rule applies to classes, social activities, and appointments. If you are unable to keep an appointment or date you have scheduled with someone, be sure to call and reschedule it.

The English Language

Don't hesitate to speak English. It may be difficult for you in the beginning but your English will improve with time. Ask questions and accept help with the language. Speak English whenever Americans are present. Although speaking your native language is much easier for you, the best way to grasp a language is to practice and practice with English native speakers. You do not need to apologize for your English ability—after all, how many Americans speak or know your language?

Be Careful When Providing Your Signature

When a salesperson or anyone offers to give you a good deal or something for nothing, be careful. Read everything thoroughly, especially if you have to sign a document or contract to get the gift or merchandise.

Expressions of Appreciation

It is proper etiquette to express your appreciation to individuals who have invited you to a dinner or to their home for the weekend. A simple, sincere “thank you” note is sufficient. If you are invited to spend a weekend with a family (perhaps your roommate's) and would like to take the host a gift, a small souvenir from your country, flowers, or a small box of candy are appropriate ideas.

Male-Female Relationships

To avoid embarrassment to yourself and your American friends, you should be aware of an important point: When a female/male talks to you or invites you to parties as her/his date or guest, you should not interpret her/his friendliness as necessarily indicating that she/he is interested or in love with you.

Dating

It may seem a baffling and intriguing custom and it may help to know that international students are not alone in being confused. The purpose of dating is to become better acquainted with someone you find attractive or to have someone to accompany you to social events. It is a most likely assurance that one, two or three “dates” will not lead to a permanent relationship.

Take the Initiative

Be the first one to get to know your roommate, the students on your floor or in your hall, and your classmates. Also, get to know your instructors and seek their help when you are having problems in their courses. Unlike professors in many countries, the professors here want to know you and are eager to help. In your residence hall, your Resident Assistant (RA) and Hall Director are also available for assistance.

Bargaining

In the US there is no custom of bargaining for items you wish to purchase, except in a very few cases (such as buying a car or items at a garage sale). Fixed prices are usually marked on items displayed in stores.

Personal Hygiene

Americans are generally obsessed with personal hygiene, and it is not unusual for them to bathe once or twice every day, change their clothes every day, and wash their hair several times a week, if not daily. Americans tend to find natural body odors very unpleasant, and, in addition to frequent bathing, they use perfume, cologne, and underarm deodorant on a regular basis. Occasionally a person has found himself shunned by other Americans and not understood why he/she could not make American friends, yet they were embarrassed to tell him that they found his body odor offensive. The clothes you wear soak up perspiration odor, so it is important to keep your clothes clean, as well. Frequent bathing and the use of chemical deodorants, perfumes, and soaps are not necessarily healthy, but they may have an effect on a person's social relationships.

• Health and Medical Information

Student Health Services

Dakota State University has an agreement with the Madison Regional Health System to provide Student Health Services in their facility. The facility is located on the south side of Madison at **323 10th St SW**.



You must identify yourself as a DSU student and request a “student health visit” when calling to make an appointment. Please be prepared to present your student ID and an insurance card for proper insurance billing. Each student is allowed up to three visits per academic year.

You may visit the Student Health Office, located in the lower level of the Trojan Center, as often as you’d like and does not count toward the three office visits.

The Student Health Office can assist you with the following:

- Treat minor illnesses, injuries and routine allergy shots.
- Screen and refer those requiring further diagnosis and care to the physician.

- Provide educational material and information to the student as needed.
- Utilize the STD program in providing available testing and treatment.
- Provide examination in conjunction with the Community Health Family Planning Project.

Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) Immunization Proof

Students born after 1957 must provide proof of immunity by submitting medical documentation of one of the following: official copy of dates of two MMR immunizations or official copy of laboratory test results (titers) showing MMR immunity.

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ISO Insurance

South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) requires all international students and their dependents to have health insurance as a condition of enrollment at Dakota State University. The SDBOR identified ISO (www.isoa.org) as the preferred carrier. You are required to have insurance the entire time you are in the U.S. - even if you are not enrolled in classes during the summer, you are still required to be insured. A lapse in coverage will affect your eligibility for future coverage.

- The insurance helps pay for doctor and hospital visits that are medically necessary, like accidents and sicknesses.
- Dental work is not covered, unless you accidentally hurt a healthy tooth.
- Vision care is not covered, unless you accidentally hurt your eye.
- Pregnancy is only covered if you become pregnant while you are insured. Pregnancy coverage is limited.

Deductible The dollar amount of covered expenses you are responsible to pay the physician or hospital before the policy will pay any benefits. Deductible per event means you are responsible to pay the deductible once for each sickness or accident. If you return to the physician or hospital for the same sickness or accident, you do not have to pay the deductible again.

Co-pay The fee you pay for certain medical services. For example, you may pay \$30 to fill a prescription and the health plan covers the balance of the charges.

Dependent Health Insurance

ISO does not provide dependent care. You may find insurance for your dependents on www.healthcare.gov

• Off-Campus Housing

Students under the age of 21 or within two years of graduating from high school are required to live on-campus.

Depending on the lifestyle you are able to afford, off-campus housing can be more or less expensive than living in the residence halls.

You should check the Madison Daily Leader for available apartments and homes to rent (www.dailyleaderextra.com).

Be careful when searching for an apartment. Make sure you look at the apartment. Do not send your friends. When looking at apartments pay close attention and consider the following:

Electricity

1. How many electrical outlets are in each room? Where are they located?
2. Are there any overhead lights in each room? If not, you may need to purchase table or desk lamps.
3. How much is the electricity bill per month? Ask the landlord and potential neighbors.

Heat

1. Is the heat paid by the landlord? If not, how much is the monthly heating bill? Check with potential neighbors or current tenants.
2. If you are responsible for paying the heat, are there storm windows and doors, and good insulation in the building? It will make a difference on the cost of heat.

Furniture

1. Is the apartment furnished? If so, ask the landlord what pieces come with the apartment.
2. If it is furnished, inspect the furniture for cigarette burns, holes, etc.
3. If the apartment is not furnished, some good sources of inexpensive furniture are the thrift shops in town, garage sales, and friends.
4. Verify that the apartment comes with at least one of each of the following: sink, stove, refrigerator, and bathroom facilities.

Miscellaneous

The majority of landlords ask for a security deposit, usually one month's rent. Do not pay the deposit until you are absolutely sure you want the apartment. Even if you never move in, landlords will not give the deposit back to you. The deposit will however be returned to you when you move out of the apartment, providing you have done no damage to the apartment.

A lease, either oral or written, is binding for both the tenant and the landlord. It is recommended that you get it in writing. Be sure to read the lease carefully. If there is something you don't understand, ask before you sign the lease.

Please see this website if you have more questions.

<http://www.hud.gov/local/sd/renting/tenantrights.cfm>

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Electric

City of Madison.....(605) 256-7521

Water

City of Madison.....(605) 256-7517
401 S. Highland (for billing questions)

Telephone/Cable/Internet

Midcontinent.....(800) 888-1300
Vast Broadband.....(888) 745-2888

Renter's Insurance

It is important that you consider purchasing renter's insurance while renting an apartment. Renter's insurance will cover damage to or loss of your personal property. Landlords only cover physical damage to the property itself, but not for occupants' personal items. Renter's insurance can also protect against medical bills of guests injured in your apartment.

Utilities

After you choose an apartment, you may be responsible for having the electricity and water turned on in your apartment, and the phone connected. You can request new service by calling the following companies. You should be aware that a deposit is often required

Madison Local Banks

East River Federal Credit Union.....256-8145
121 SE 1st Street

First Bank & Trust.....256-9191
120 N. Egan Avenue

Great Western Bank.....256-6532
301 N. Egan Avenue

Interlakes Federal Credit Union.....256-6511
1004 S. Washington Avenue

Wells Fargo Bank.....256-4551
200 N. Egan Avenue

Some things to look for when deciding on a bank are:

- Minimum balance requirements
- Location
- Interest rates on checking accounts
- Banking hours: weekends or drive through service for evenings
- ATM access/fees
- Finance charges

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Checking Accounts

Use of a Checking Account

Many times you will want to write a check to pay for various items or services. Although use of a checking account is not a complicated matter, it is important that you are careful with such an account. Failure to keep an accurate, up-to-date record of your money could result in an unexpected problem for you. Be sure to keep the following in mind.

Most Americans use checking accounts for paying bills and to avoid carrying large sums of money. The canceled check (a check that has been written, processed and returned to you) that you receive in your bank statement almost always serves as a receipt. The canceled checks should be kept as a record of what you have paid, since you may need proof for tax purposes or to show you have paid for something.

sample check:

The image shows a sample check form with the following fields and labels:

- check #** _____
- Your name** _____
- Your Address** _____
- Pay to the order of:** _____ (B)
- (A)** _____, 20 _____
- \$ (C)** _____
- (D)** _____ Dollars
- (E)** _____
- MEMO (F)** _____

Writing a Check

1. Write the month, day, and year in the blank space in the upper right corner (see sample check on sample check below, line A.)
2. Write the name of the person, company, or organization to whom you are paying the money in the blank space on the first line in the left corner (line B).
3. Write the amount of the check in figures as close as possible to the dollar sign (line C). On the next line write the amount of the check in words (line D).
4. Sign your name in the blank space in the lower right corner (line E). Always use the same name for your signatures.
5. Write a brief description of the item or fee for which you are paying in the blank space on the left side of the check (line F).
6. Record the check on the “transaction register” (provided by the bank together with your checks) and calculate your new balance.
7. Many times you will need to show a form of picture identification (such as a driver’s license). Be sure to carry identification with you at all times.

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Keeping Your Checkbook Register

1. Record all the information about any deposit made to your checking account. Immediately add the deposited amount to your balance.
2. Record all the information about any check that you write. Immediately subtract that amount from your balance.
3. Be sure to add or subtract any deposits or withdrawals made with your debit card.
4. Verify your monthly bank statement. Once a month the bank will mail or email you a statement regarding your current balance. Be sure to examine the statement so that you and the bank agree about how much money you have in your account.

“Cash” Checks

If you need cash, you can write a check made out to “cash”. This check, which has your signature, requests that you be given the amount indicated. The money is taken from your checking account. You can get these checks cashed at your bank.

Overdraft

Do not “overdraw” or write checks for more money that you have in your account. The bank will charge you a penalty for this (about \$30), and the store to which you write the overdrawn check will charge an additional fee (from \$20-\$35). Also, you may lose your check-cashing privilege at your bank and the place where you wrote the check.

“Bad” Checks

“Bad Checks” is the term used to describe a check that is written when you do not have enough money in the bank to cover it. It is against the law to write a check like this. It is considered theft. Theft over \$100 is a felony crime for which the penalty is a jail sentence of three to five years.

“Post-Dated” Checks

A post-dated check is one that is written for some period of time in the future, such as writing a check in September but dating it October. Post-dating checks is illegal and should not be done. These checks could be processed without having the appropriate funds in your checking account, thereby overdrawing your account.

Using a Debit/ATM Card

Many banks offer a debit/ATM card to customers with a checking account. This card can be used at retail stores and restaurants in place of a check. This card can also be used at Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) for withdrawals and deposits. If you use an ATM of a bank other than your own, you may be charged a nominal fee for the use of that ATM.

Remember to note any transaction in your checkbook register.

Make sure to check with your bank concerning any possible fee associated with having and using the card.

Using a Credit Card

Please be aware that any purchases made using a credit card must be paid back. Many credit cards that are available to students have a high interest rate. Credit cards can be dangerous, for often it is easy to use a credit card for purchases but difficult to pay the credit card bill when it arrives. Use good judgement if you choose to have a credit card.

• Notarizing Documents

A notary public is an official who is authorized to certify or attest documents, such as affidavits. When the notary puts his or her seal on the document, he or she is only verifying that the signature on the document is yours. The notary's seal does not certify that the document is authentic. Nothing with a government seal can be notarized, such as birth or death certificates.

When you need a document notarized, it is important that you do not sign it before you meet with the notary public. You must sign it in front of this official. You must also show a picture ID, and may need to pay a small fee. An appointment is not necessary.

• Social Security Card

In order to work in this country or to earn interest on a savings or checking account, it is necessary to have a social security card. No appointment is necessary and no fee is charged. The office is located at 5021 S Nevada Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57108 phone number # 877-274-5421.

You must bring the following:

- Passport
- Visa
- I-20
- Letter showing job offer or employment
- Letter from IPO
- I-94 information
- Social Security Card application

You must meet with the International Programs Office at least 48 hours prior to applying for the Social Security Number. You must be in the US for no less than ten days before applying.

• South Dakota Identification Card

If you need a form of identification (normally necessary for check cashing) and do not have a driver's license, you can obtain a South Dakota State ID Card. The Driver's License Office in Madison is located at 202 1st Street NE, Public Safety Building and open on Tuesdays from 9:00am-3:45pm (accepting applications until 2:45pm). Cost: \$20.

Documents needed to apply for ID card:

- unexpired passport, visa, I-94 info, I-20
- social security card *or* letter from IPO indicating you do not need a SSN
- 2 pieces of mail verifying your address

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• Tax Information

Foreign nationals who are studying, teaching, or engaged in research activities in the United States are subject to federal and state income taxation on any income earned in the US from teaching and research assistantships. All international students and scholars are required to file federal and state income tax forms regardless of whether they earned income. Interest earned on checking and savings accounts are also subject to taxation. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publications are available for more information. For additional information, refer to:

1. [Form 1040NR](#) – US Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return
2. [Form 1040NR Instructions](#)
3. [Form 1040NREZ](#) – US Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return
4. [Form 1040NREZ Instructions](#)
5. [Form 8843](#) - Statement for Exempt Individuals
6. [Publication 519](#) – US Tax Guide for Aliens
7. [Publication 520](#) – Scholarships and Fellowships
8. [Publication 901](#) – US Tax Treaties

The International Program Office sponsors a tax training session each year to assist international students. Look for announcements at the beginning of each spring semester regarding the tax training session.

• Owning and Operating an Automobile

Driver's License

You are allowed to drive vehicles in the state of South Dakota as long as you possess a current license in your home country or an international driver's license. If you wish to purchase or rent a vehicle, you will find it easier with a license from South Dakota.

To obtain a South Dakota driver's license, you must visit The Driver's License Office in Madison is located at 202 1st Street NE, Public Safety Building and open on Tuesdays from 9:00am-3:45pm (accepting applications until 2:45pm). You must pass a written test, an eyesight test, and a driving text (also called road test). Please stop by their office to arrange an appointment—they do not have a phone.

Documents needed to apply for driver's license card:

- unexpired passport, visa, I-94 card, I-20
- social security card *or* letter from IPO indicating you do not need a SSN
- 2 pieces of mail verifying your address

It is highly advisable to study for your written test and to practice for the road test. You will need to obtain an instruction permit in order to practice for your road test if you do not possess an international driver's license or a driver's license from your home country.

[South Dakota Driver License Manual](#)

Automobile Registration

If you buy a car, you must register it at the Department of Motor Vehicles at 200 E Center Street, Madison, SD. Requirements for registering a car vary depending on whether the car is new or used, if it is used, how old it is. To find out what you would have to do to register a particular car, call Linda at 256-7618. Once you have registered your car, you will receive a registration card. You must keep this card in your vehicle at all times.

Automobile Insurance

South Dakota Law requires that any person who licenses and/or operates a motor vehicle must show proof of financial responsibility. Most people comply through the purchase of personal automobile insurance.

There are many local insurance companies you can request quotes from to compare and select the right coverage for you. Insurance rates vary from company to company, and they depend on the value of the car, the amount it is driven, the age of the drivers, and the past driving records of the drivers. You must carry proof of insurance (insurance card) in your car at all times in case of an accident.

Seat Belt Law and Child Restraint Systems

South Dakota law requires all front seat occupants to wear safety belts at all times. In addition, children under age five must be properly secured in an approved child restraint in motor vehicles. All passengers between the ages of five and 18 must wear a safety belt.

Student Parking Permit

Vehicle on campus during the hours of 6:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, must display an appropriate DSU permit. Permits are available at the Physical Plant, 256-5222.

• Winter Weather

Students are reminded to check weather forecasts on the radio or television before leaving home during the winter season. It is also important to protect all exposed skin, including the face, when regular temperatures are below freezing. Severe weather can continue in this area into April.

Remember, weather can change very suddenly. Several layers of clothing are recommended for adequate protection when walking in freezing temperatures.

Cars should always have an emergency winter survival kit in them in case the car should stall. The kit should include a candle, strike anywhere matches, a thermal blanket, water, peanut butter, crackers, chocolate bars, a transistor radio with extra batteries, and flares.

It is important to pay attention to weather reports and any notification of interstates closing due to poor weather conditions.

If you become stranded, never turn on the car and heater. By doing this, you risk asphyxiation because of exhaust fumes. Always remain in the car and use the candle for warmth.

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• Public School for Children

Madison Central School District

Madison Elementary (K-5)
700 NW 9th Street.....605-256-7721

Madison Middle School (6-8)
830 NE 9th Street605-256-7717

Madison High School (9-12)
800 NE 9th Street605-256-7706

• General Academic Information

Course Numbers

Courses numbered in the 100s are intended primarily for freshman, 200s for sophomores, 300s for juniors, 400s for seniors, 500s for courses in professional degree areas, and 600s and 700s for graduates.

Credit

All academic units are expressed in terms of the credit which represents one class period for each of the weeks that constitute a semester.

Prerequisites

Prerequisites are listed for a large number of courses. These are provided to give students information on background they are expected to know. However, in any specific instance a student may have completed an equivalent course or may have had other experiences which could substitute for the prerequisite. Thus, lack of completion of a given

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prerequisite does not necessarily exclude the student from a course. In all instances of doubt, the student should consult the instructor of the course.

• Departure Information

This information is intended to help people with some of the questions they have when leaving Madison, or even moving to a different residence in the area.

Housing

If you signed a lease for 12 months, you are bound to that lease, even if you notify your landlord of your desires to vacate. You may request an early release from your agreement, but as mentioned previously, the lease is an agreement you signed. You are responsible for leaving the apartment in the same condition it was in at the beginning of occupancy, allowing for normal wear and tear. Otherwise, you might forfeit your security deposit. The apartment should be ready for the next resident to move in.

Utilities/Telephone

All utility companies should be contacted several days before you move. Do not wait until the day before you leave. The companies will need a forwarding address to send a final billing to you.

Post Office

Notify the post office of change of address by filling out the form they provide for that purpose. You can access this [form online](#), too. Even when you are moving to another address in Madison, you should use these

forms. If you don't, you might not receive some of the mail that is sent to you.

Banks

Make arrangements with your bank to close out bank accounts, allowing enough time for all checks to clear.

Automobiles

If you plan to sell your car before you leave, allow sufficient time for transferring the title. You will also need to notify your car insurance company of your plans.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Parents should go to the school and sign an authorization to release each child's school records. The school will photocopy the records, and the principal will certify them and put them into a sealed envelope. If the records will need to be translated or notarized, please have this done.

Selling Unwanted Goods

You may have accumulated possessions that you will not want to take with you. Garage sales are a good way to rid yourself of unwanted items. You can also email the International Program Office with a list of items for sale/give-away and this announcement can be sent to the international student listserv.

International Program Office

Please notify us of your forwarding address so we may contact you if necessary.

• A Final Word

Most international students look back on the time they spent studying and living in the United States as one of their most challenging rewarding adventures. Remember that anything new or different takes a while to get used to, so try to suspend judgment and get involved in the new experiences of the Madison area. Be active and participate as much as you can. As you know, your studies are very important, but studying abroad provides many opportunities for you to expand yourself, taking the best of both worlds.

In particular, be ready to make a special effort to meet other international and local students starting at DSU.

Remember, everyone is probably feeling a little lost and anxious during their first weeks at a new place, so take advantage of this fact and speak to as many people as you can..