



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELCOME GUIDE

2021/22



University of Missouri

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International Center

The International Center is located in N52 Memorial Union on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, Mo. The center houses International Programs, Mizzou Study Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services. We work together to coordinate, support and promote the internationalization of MU, which includes providing support services to international students coming to MU.

International Student and Scholar Services

If you have questions about your immigration status, you should speak with an international student adviser. [Advising](#) is available through in-person walk-ins or online appointments.

Contact information

N52 Memorial Union
Columbia, MO 65211

phone: +1 573-882-6007
email: iss@missouri.edu
international.missouri.edu/iss

Academic calendar

Fall 2021 semester

Classes begin	Monday, Aug. 23
Labor Day holiday (no classes)	Monday, Sept. 6
Thanksgiving recess	Nov. 20-28
Classwork ends	Thursday, Dec. 9
Reading day	Friday, Dec. 10
Final examinations	Dec. 13-17
Commencement	Dec. 17-19

Spring 2022 semester

Classes begin	Tuesday, Jan. 18
Spring recess	March 26-April 3
Classwork ends	Thursday, May 5
Reading day	Friday, May 6
Final examinations	May 9-13
Commencement	May 13-15

More info: provost.missouri.edu/academic-calendar

ABOUT US

Useful contacts

International Admissions	+1 573-882-7786 admissions.missouri.edu
Graduate School	+1 573-882-6311 gradstudies.missouri.edu
Residential Life	+1 573-882-7275 reslife.missouri.edu
Office of Cashiers	+1 573-882-3097 cashiers.missouri.edu
Office of Registrar	+1 573-882-7881 registrar.missouri.edu
University directory assistance	+1 573-882-2121 missouri.edu/directories

Emergency numbers

Police/fire/ambulance emergencies	911
Poison Control Center	+1 800-222-1222
MU Police Department	+1 573-882-7201
Columbia Police Department	+1 573-442-6131
Mid-Missouri crisis line	+1 888-761-4357
University Hospital and Clinics	+1 573-882-4141
MU Student Health Center	+1 573-882-7481
MU Counseling Center	+1 573-882-6601

About Missouri

The state of Missouri is located in a region of the United States known as the Midwest. The Gateway Arch, located in St. Louis on the state's eastern border, is often referred to as the "Gateway to the West." Eight states border Missouri, making it the second-most neighborly state in the U.S. behind Tennessee.

Missouri is home to two professional baseball teams and a professional football team, as well as the famous Anheuser-Busch Brewery, which is the largest in the country.

Missouri quick facts

- Nickname: The Show-Me State
- Capital: Jefferson City
- Population: 6,113,532
- Size: 69,700 square miles (180,500 square kilometers)
- Population density: 33.13 inhabitants per square kilometer
- Largest cities: Kansas City (488,943), St. Louis (308,626), Springfield (167,376), Independence (117,306), Columbia (121,717)
- Climate information: climate.missouri.edu



GENERAL INFORMATION

About Columbia

Columbia is located halfway between St. Louis and Kansas City (about 125 miles from each). For more information about Columbia, go to:

- City of Columbia: gocolumbiamo.com
- Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau: visitcolumbiamo.com

How to get to Columbia

You must arrive at MU before orientation. **Please notify International Student and Scholar Services if you will not arrive in Columbia before orientation.**

As a student on an F or J visa, you can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date on your certificate of eligibility (I-20/DS-2019). When you arrive in Columbia, please keep in mind that most offices at MU (and some off-campus apartment offices) are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, and after 5 p.m. on weekdays.

Airport shuttle services

You can use an airport shuttle (van service) to get to Columbia from St. Louis. MO-X is a shuttle service based in Columbia that serves the St. Louis airport. Check the MO-X website for schedules and prices (moexpress.com).

MO-X offers door-to-door service for an additional fee. This can simplify your arrival by dropping you off at your desired location. Simply provide the address of your residence hall or apartment in Columbia when you make your reservation.

Connecting flights

You can arrange for a connecting flight directly to the Columbia Regional Airport. For details on flight schedules and prices, go to flycou.com. The airport is about a 20-minute drive from campus and taxi service is available, though you may need to call one from the airport upon arrival. Tiger Taxi is a reputable taxi service, and can be reached at +1 573-445-2551.

Hotels

If, for any reason, you need to book a hotel in St. Louis or Kansas City, you are responsible for making the arrangements.

St. Louis hotels

The following hotels are within 5 km of the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport and offer airport shuttle service:

- Ramada Inn +1 314-731-7700
- Hilton +1 314-426-5500
- Drury Inn +1 314-423-7700

Kansas City hotels

The following hotels are within 4 km of the Kansas City International Airport and offer airport shuttle service:

- Marriott +1 816-464-2200
- Microtel +1 816-270-1200
- Plaza Hotel +1 816-464-2423

Columbia hotels

Go to the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau website for complete hotel listings: visitcolumbiamo.com.

- Tiger Hotel +1 573-875-8888
23 S. 8th St. (3 blocks to campus)
- The Broadway Hotel +1 573-875-7000
1111 E. Broadway (1 km to campus)
- Hampton Inn and Suites +1 573-214-2222
1225 Fellows Place (2.1 km to campus)
- Holiday Inn Express +1 573-442-8034
1402 Cinnamon Hill Lane (4.8 km to campus)
- Stoney Creek Inn +1 573-442-6400
2601 S. Providence Road (3.5 km to campus)

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

Pre-departure checklist

- Review your certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) for accuracy.
- Pay any necessary visa and SEVIS fees.
- Check that your passport is valid at least six months into the future.
- Apply for a student visa at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Degree-seeking undergraduate students:** Complete International Student Registration and Orientation.
- Make travel arrangements so that you arrive before orientation.
- Make your housing arrangements.
 - Arrange for temporary housing, if necessary.
 - If living on campus, submit the online housing contract to MU Residential Life.
- Review the information for international students on the [International Student and Scholar Services website](#).
- Obtain your immunization records and bring them with you to MU.
- Learn more about [living in Columbia](#).

Certificate of eligibility

Your certificate of eligibility will be either an I-20 or DS-2019, depending on whether you are coming to the U.S. on an F or J student visa. The F and J refer to different types of visas the U.S. government provides to international students.

An I-20 document is used to apply for a student visa in the F category. A DS-2019 is used to apply for a student visa in the J category. Look in the top right corner of your document to determine if you have an I-20 or DS-2019.

Please review your certificate of eligibility to ensure that the information is correct and complete by using the guidelines below. If information needs to be changed or added, please contact the MU office that issued your document.

- Undergraduate students:
iss@missouri.edu or +1 573-882-6007
- Graduate students with an I-20:
gradadmissions@missouri.edu or +1 573-882-6311
- Graduate students with a DS-2019:
iss@missouri.edu or +1 573-882-6007

If you have an I-20

Please review the following fields:

- Personal information (should match your passport)
 - > Name: Last/family, first/given, middle
 - > Country of birth
 - > Country of citizenship
 - > Date of birth
- Level of education
 - > The degree you plan to earn while at MU (e.g., bachelor's, master's or doctorate)
- Course of study
 - > Field of study
 - > Date when you should arrive at MU (you may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to this date)
- Source of funding
 - > Should be the same source as indicated in your MU admissions materials

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

If you have a DS-2019

Please review the following fields:

- Personal information (should match your passport)
 - > Name: Last/family, first/given, middle
 - > Country of birth
 - > Country of citizenship
 - > Date of birth
- Time period
 - > Start date (you may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to this date)
- Exchange visa category
 - > Should say “student” followed by the degree you plan to earn while at MU (e.g., bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate)
 - > Your field of study should be listed under “subject”
- Source of funding
 - > Should be the same as indicated in your MU admissions materials

Dependents

A dependent is a spouse or child who will accompany you to the United States. If you have dependents who will be coming with you, each of those dependents should have their own certificate of eligibility. You do not need to pay an additional SEVIS fee for your dependents.

Please contact the International Student and Scholar Services immediately if you need a certificate for a dependent who will accompany you. You will be required to show that you have an additional \$4,000 USD to financially support each dependent.

If you decide that you want your dependent(s) to join you after you arrive at MU, ISSS can give you documents for them at that time.

For more information, go to the [ISSS website](#).

U.S. student visa*

After you check that the information on your I-20/DS-2019 is correct, immediately make an appointment with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for your student visa. In some countries, it may take several months to receive a decision on your student visa application. Therefore, you should start this application process as soon as possible. Know that you may apply for your visa at any time, but in some countries you will not receive the visa in your passport until four months prior to your program start date.

You should apply at the U.S. embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. Although you may apply at any U.S. consular office, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside of your country of permanent residence. For a list of locations of U.S. embassies and consulates, go to usembassy.gov.

Required documentation

You should visit the website of the embassy/consulate where you will be applying to get a list of required documents for student visa applicants. You must pay a nonrefundable fee and submit the following:

- Online application form DS-160 (some applicants will also be required to submit a form DS-157). All forms must be completed and signed, and can be found at eforms.state.gov.

A separate form is needed for children, even if they are included in a parent's passport. Blank forms are available without charge at all U.S. consular offices and on the visa services website listed above.

- Passport valid for travel to the U.S. and with a validity date at least six months beyond your intended period of stay in the United States. If more than one person is included in your passport, each person desiring a visa must complete an application.
- One 2x2 inch photograph for each applicant, showing the full face and against a light background.
- Your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Receipts showing payment of visa application and SEVIS fee.
- Evidence of sufficient funding to cover your period of intended study.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Other documentation

You must establish to the satisfaction of the consular office that you have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country, which you have no intention of abandoning, and that you will depart the U.S. when you have completed your studies. It is impossible to specify the exact form of that evidence because applicants' circumstances vary greatly.

You are also advised to think about and articulate how your chosen program of study in the U.S. fits into your academic and career plans in your home country.

SEVIS fee

In addition to a visa processing fee, you will be charged a SEVIS fee. SEVIS stands for Student Exchange Visitor Information System and is the system that creates your I-20 or DS-2019. A fee is required by this system, and fee procedures may vary by country. For more information about the SEVIS fee, go to ice.gov/sevis/i901.

*Note: The visa application processes may vary by country. Contact your local U.S. embassy or consulate for specific instructions on applying for a visa in your home country. For a list of U.S. embassies and consulates, go to usembassy.gov.

Department of State information

The U.S. Department of State has a great website with a lot of useful information for international students. Go to educationusa.state.gov to find out more about:

- Applying for the student visa
- Financial aid resources
- Definitions and helpful terms
- Living in the U.S. (social customs and more)

U.S. entry procedures

F and J student visa holders may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the program start date listed on their certificates of eligibility. All students must arrive prior to the mandatory International Student Welcome. Please notify International Student and Scholar Services at iss@missouri.edu as soon as possible if you will not be able to enter the U.S. in time to attend because of visa processing delays.

When you arrive in the U.S., an officer from Customs and Border Protection will review your documents at the port of entry before you are admitted to the country. Please have the following documents ready for the CBP officer to review:

- **Passport** — biographical booklet issued by a national government to its citizens to allow for travel to other countries and return to their home countries. It is important that you make sure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your intended period of stay.
 - > The CBP officer in the U.S. will review your passport and student visa. The officer will then stamp your passport to indicate the date and place you arrived in the United States.
- **Certificate of eligibility** (I-20 or DS-2019)
 - > The CBP officer will stamp and make a notation on this document as well.
 - > You must show the certificate of eligibility for the school you plan to attend. If you applied to multiple schools in the U.S., you must show the I-20/DS-2019 that lists the school you will actually attend.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the authority to deny admission into the United States. If you have difficulties crossing the U.S. border, please call the International Center and ask to speak to an adviser.

- 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday: +1 573-882-6007
- All other times: +1 573-882-7201
(MU police will connect you with an adviser)

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

I-94

Your I-94 is your arrival and departure record, which tracks when you enter and leave the United States. If you entered or re-entered the U.S. after May 2013, your I-94 will be saved as an electronic record. This record can be accessed at cbp.gov/i94.

This record proves your current immigration status, as well as your legal entry into the United States. It should say F-1 or J-1, depending on your student status. For both F-1 and J-1 students, the record will also say D/S, which stands for duration of status. This means you are permitted to remain in the U.S. until you complete your program as long as you are legally maintaining your status. Every time you exit and re-enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status, you will receive a new I-94 record.

For more information about what to expect at the border, go to cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors.

Transferring to MU

Note: This information applies only to students currently attending another U.S. institution.

You must notify your current school that you have decided to attend MU. Your immigration record will then be transferred electronically via SEVIS to MU. When you check in with International Student and Scholar Services, please inform the international student adviser that you are a transfer student.

You must check in with ISSS within 15 days of orientation to complete the transfer process. After you check in, ISSS will print a new continued-attendance I-20 or DS-2019 for you noting that your transfer has been completed.

International Student and Scholar Services will not issue a transfer-pending I-20 for you unless you are traveling.

MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

Attendance and registration

You must initially attend the school whose I-20/DS-2019 you used in applying for your student visa. You must register full time for the fall and spring semesters. Undergraduate students must register for a minimum of 12 credit hours; graduate students must register for a minimum of nine credit hours. Enrollment guidelines will be reviewed in more detail during orientation.

Employment

You will need a Social Security number to work in the United States. Watch for more information during orientation.

On-campus employment: International students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week on campus while school is in session. During official school breaks, students are allowed to work more than 20 hours per week on campus. J-1 students must report their on-campus employment to International Student and Scholar Services.

Off-campus employment: Under certain circumstances, off-campus employment may be authorized. You must talk with an international student adviser to find out if you qualify.

Completion of studies

Upon completion of studies, choose one of the following options:

- Continue your studies at MU or a different school for another degree or program. You will need to have your I-20/DS-2019 updated to reflect these changes.
- Apply for employment authorization through optional practical training (F-1 students) or academic training (J-1 students).
- Take up to 30 days (J-1 students) or 60 days (F-1 students) to leave the U.S.

Travel

Within the U.S.: You may travel within the U.S. as long as you maintain lawful F or J status and have a valid passport, I-20/DS-2019 and I-94 in your possession.

Outside the U.S.: You may re-enter the U.S. as long as you have a valid passport, F or J visa, financial documents and I-20/DS-2019 that is endorsed for travel by an international student adviser.

AFTER ARRIVAL

Finances

It is recommended that you carry a limited amount of cash in U.S. dollars with you when you arrive. Most students find that carrying a combination of cash (about \$300) and a credit card (mostly for emergencies) is most helpful. A representative from a local bank will be at International Student Welcome to help you set up a bank account in Columbia, if necessary. If you are planning to receive funding from a graduate assistantship, your first check may not be available for a month or so. Read more information about [expenses and banking options](#).

Check-in and International Student Welcome

International Student and Scholar Services provides an orientation to give new international students essential information regarding their stay at MU. You are required to attend an immigration check-in session and attend International Student Welcome.

Check-in

If you arrive in Columbia before International Student Welcome, you may check in with International Student and Scholar Services early. Check-in sessions are typically offered two weeks before and one week after the semester begins. All students should [sign up for their check-in session online](#).

When you check in, you will need the following documents:

- Passport
- Visa
- I-20/DS-2019
- I-94 (can be printed at cbp.gov/i94)
- Admission letter

During your session, you will complete a check-in form. You will be asked to provide the name, address and phone number of someone in your home country or the U.S. whom we may contact in case of an emergency.

International Student Welcome

- Fall 2021 semester Aug. 16–18
- Spring 2022 semester Jan. 10–11

A detailed schedule will be posted on the [International Student and Scholar Services website](#) when it is available. If you are unable to attend International Student Welcome because of visa delays, please contact ISSS about late check-in and the make-up orientation.

Please note that International Student Welcome is mandatory for all new students.

English language exam

All new, degree-seeking international undergraduate students are required to take the MU English language exam before registering for classes. This is a placement test for English courses only and has no effect on your admission or grades. You must sign up for the exam as part of ISRO, during International Student Welcome or at the ELSP office in 208 McReynolds Hall. For more information, please contact ELSP at +1 573-882-7523 or by email at iepmu@missouri.edu.

MyMathTest Assessment

In order to take a Department of Math course, you must meet certain criteria prior to enrollment. You can determine whether or not you need to complete the MyMathTest assessment by going to mathplacement.missouri.edu. There is no fee or registration required to take the assessment, and you will be given an unlimited number of attempts to complete it. Free online study and review packets are also available on the math placement website.

AFTER ARRIVAL

International teaching assistant program

New international graduate students who have a teaching assistantship in their first semester at MU are required to attend the orientation for new international teaching assistants. For more information about the program, go to gradstudies.missouri.edu/itap.

Graduate School orientation

The Graduate School may offer orientation events in the week before the semester begins. Many departments also offer departmental orientations for graduate students. You are encouraged to attend both departmental and Graduate School orientations. For more information, check with your department and go to gradstudies.missouri.edu.

Student organizations

Sometimes, international student organizations help to coordinate transportation from the airport for new students. Consider contacting one of MU's student organizations directly for more information. A list of some of MU's student and cultural organizations on campus can be found on [MU Engage](#).

On-campus housing

If you would like to live on campus, you must apply as soon as possible — the residence halls fill up quickly. For more information about on-campus housing options, go to housing.missouri.edu.

On-campus apartments are available for students who are married, 21 years of age or older, pursuing a graduate degree or have children. For more information or to submit an application, go to housing.missouri.edu/graduate-students.

Off-campus housing

It is your responsibility to make housing arrangements either before or after you arrive in Columbia. For information and resources for off-campus living, go to offcampus.missouri.edu.

Rental prices vary widely in Columbia (approximately \$300–\$500 per month for shared housing). Apartments closer to campus are typically more expensive. Off-campus housing arrangements require cash deposits for rent and utilities, as well as the purchase of some furnishings, linens and cooking utensils. Begin looking prior to arrival, the most desirable apartments or roommate situations will go quickly.

MU student ID

After you arrive on campus and register for courses, you will need to obtain an MU student ID card. You should go to the ID office, located in the lower level of the Mizzou Store in the Student Center. Be sure to take your passport and any other photo ID with you.

Once you receive your MU ID, keep it with you at all times. You can use your ID for a number of services on campus:

- Borrow books from the library
- Access campus computing facilities
- Pay bills on campus
- Access student health services
- Use the Mizzou Recreation Center
- Purchase student tickets for athletic events
- Participate in university-sponsored events and activities
- Access your residence hall and meal plan
- Purchase materials from the Mizzou Store
- Do laundry in a residence hall



If you lose your ID card, a replacement costs \$15. For more information about the MU student ID, go to doit.missouri.edu/services/id-card/id-cards.

AFTER ARRIVAL

Health insurance

In order to comply with U.S. immigration regulations, **all international students at MU are required to purchase insurance** that will provide sufficient medical coverage for hospitalization, surgery or other medical treatments, as well as coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation. **Failure to purchase and maintain adequate insurance coverage is a violation of your legal immigration status** and can result in the termination of your student visa. In order to ensure that students comply with this regulation, MU requires all incoming international students to purchase a mandatory health insurance policy.

One charge for health insurance will be billed directly to your MU student account each semester you enroll in classes. Regardless of the date you arrive in the U.S., coverage will begin Aug. 1 (fall semester) or Jan. 1 (spring semester). You will receive a brochure with detailed information about the policy and what it covers; please read it carefully.

For more details about your health insurance, please contact the student health insurance representatives at the Student Health Center (studenthealth.missouri.edu).

For more information about health insurance in general, as well as information about insurance for dependents and health insurance waivers, see the [ISSS website](#).

Mandatory health requirements

MU requires all newly enrolled or readmitted students to comply with mandatory health requirements. If not completed, your registration will be affected. For more information on the MU mandatory health requirements, go to studenthealth.missouri.edu.

Tuberculosis testing

All students are screened for TB risk factors. A TB blood test (Quantiferon-GIT) will be done on students who meet high-risk criteria. Please note that your TB test must be done at MU and you should not receive live-type vaccines at least one month prior to your arrival on campus (including MMR, varicella and yellow fever) as this will delay the ability to do the TB blood test.

Meningococcal vaccine

Students in all on-campus housing must either:

1. Show documentation of receiving the meningococcal vaccine, either MenACWY (Menactra, Menveo) or MPSV4 (Menomune). Students who received their first dose before age 16 require a booster (on or after 16th birthday) with a minimal interval of at least eight weeks from the preceding dose.
2. Obtain approval for exemption by submitting Form UM55 for approval (umsystem.edu/media/fa/management/records/forms/other/um55.pdf).

Measles, mumps and rubella

You must show proof of receiving two doses of MMR vaccine. The first dose must have been received at 12 months of age or later. The second dose must have been received at least one month after the first. If you are going to get your second dose, please have it done at least six weeks prior to your arrival at MU, or the Student Health Center may not be able to give you the other immunization tests.

Alternatively, you can provide written documentation of previous blood test results showing immunity.

Health screening

Attend a health screening during International Student Welcome. Bring copies of all your immunization records and any written documentation of prior TB test or past treatment for TB infection.

Health tips

- At the beginning of your stay, avoid consuming excessive amounts of fatty, rich or spicy foods.
- Eat balanced meals, drink lots of water and get lots of rest so you will have the energy you need to stay healthy.
- Always limit your alcohol consumption and know your limits. Excessive consumption can impair your judgment and compromise your health and safety. Remember that the legal age to consume alcohol in the U.S. is 21.
- Set up an appointment with the Student Health Center or a local physician to discuss any questions or concerns about your health, including how to obtain medications or prescriptions.

Paying your MU bill

MU will bill expenses to your student account. Check your email for monthly billing statements. You can pay your MU bill with any of the methods listed below. For more information about payment options, go to cashiers.missouri.edu/billing-and-payments/payment-options/international-payments.

Personal Check

Only write checks for the exact amount that is due. A \$20 service fee is charged for any returned checks.

Credit card

Only MasterCard, American Express, VISA and Discover are accepted. Charged amount may not exceed the amount due and must be made through MU's third-party vendor, accessible through myZou. A 2.75 percent service charge will apply.

International wire transfer

MU has partnered with Flywire to streamline the tuition payment process for international students. Payments can be made from any country or bank. Payments are almost always accepted in foreign currency, with excellent exchange rates, allowing you to save a significant amount of money. The transfer process can be tracked via a student dashboard, and email confirmation will be sent when a payment is received.

E-check

Payment via direct debit of a U.S.-based bank account.

Cash

Pay at the Office of Cashiers, 325 Jesse Hall.

Mail

Submit payment (do not mail cash) in the return envelope that accompanies your hard-copy statement or send it to:

Office of Cashiers
University of Missouri
15 Jesse Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Class enrollment

Once you arrive in Columbia, you should meet one-on-one with an academic adviser from your department. Undergraduates will take both English and math placement assessments to help determine which classes to enroll in for the first semester.

After meeting with your academic adviser, you can register for classes through myZou, the online student information system. You should have received a PawPrint (a username usually consisting of your initials and three random characters) and temporary password in an email from the MU Office of Admissions. When accessing your myZou account for the first time, go to registrar.missouri.edu/registration/myzou-first-time.php for more information. Using your PawPrint and password, you can access the myZou system at myzou.missouri.edu.

If you have problems with your PawPrint or password, contact the MU Division of IT at +1 573-882-5000. For more detailed information about the registration process, go to registrar.missouri.edu.

STAY CONNECTED

Cell phones

Most U.S. students do not use landline phones. Cell phones are available through a number of carriers in the United States:

- AT&T | att.com
- Sprint | sprint.com
- T-Mobile | t-mobile.com
- U.S. Cellular | uscellular.com
- Verizon Wireless | verizonwireless.com

Depending on the length of your term of study, avoid long-term contracts and look for carriers with pay-as-you-go options that let you choose a price point that will reflect your phone usage. There are also several pre-paid options where you just purchase minutes and data as you go.

Online services

There are many online services that allow you to make phone or video calls over the Internet at little or no cost to your family and friends back home. The Internet service on campus allows you to make use of these services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The International Center provides limited fax service for international students free of charge for correspondence directly concerning students' academic issues or visa status.

Personal faxes cannot be sent from the International Center; but domestic and international fax services can be found on campus at the Memorial Union information desk and Digiprint centers in Ellis Library and the Student Center. Fax services are also available at the FedEx Office store in downtown Columbia (25 S. 6th St.), but are usually more expensive than on-campus services.

Greetings

People in the U.S. often greet each other by asking, “How are you?” This is part of the general greeting routine, and they are not expecting an elaborate answer. With new or casual acquaintances, provide a short answer (e.g., “I’m good”) and reciprocate by asking the same question.

Banking

When choosing a local bank, look for free checking options that are often available to students. A check or debit card is a convenient way to make purchases in the United States. With this kind of card, purchases are deducted from your account balance as they are made. Visa and MasterCard check or debit cards are accepted in most stores and restaurants.

You should monitor your account balance via online banking to avoid overdraft charges. Also be cautious of ATM fees — many banks will charge you a fee if you withdraw cash from an ATM belonging to another bank. If you plan to travel within the U.S., look for a bank that has ATMs nationwide. You can also ask your home bank if it has any U.S. affiliates.

Public transportation

If you live on campus, you will be within walking distance of downtown Columbia and all campus facilities. MU offers a free student shuttle — Tiger Line — around campus and to a limited selection of shopping areas. If you live off campus, several apartment complexes offer a free shuttle service to and from campus.

Go COMO Transit, Columbia’s public bus system, has multiple stops around campus and the city. You can buy a student semester pass for \$100 that is good for unlimited rides during that semester. For more information about bus schedules and rates, go to gocomotransit.com.

Post office

Domestic and international mail can be sent via the U.S. Postal Service from the MU Student Center or the downtown post office (511 E. Walnut St.). Other carriers (e.g., FedEx or UPS) are also available and sometimes offer better rates or faster service if you are mailing a package that is time-sensitive.

Religious centers

There are many religious centers and places of worship in Columbia for followers of faiths including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and more. Some places of worship offer services in different languages, including Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, Swahili and more. For information about student-focused resources, go to getinvolved.missouri.edu/find-an-org. For information about places of worship in Columbia, go to visitcolumbiamo.com/section/places-of-worship.

Shopping

On campus

Mizzou Market has three locations around campus and offers a variety of snack foods and toiletry items.

The Mizzou Store, located in the Student Center, has a wide variety of items for sale, including textbooks and school supplies, Mizzou-themed clothing and some dorm room basics.

Off campus

There are many shops within walking distance of campus that sell food, household items and toiletries. For a list, go to the [ISSS website](#). Several large grocery store, super-centers and the mall are available by bus.

Restaurants and tipping

There are several restaurants, cafes and bars within walking distance of campus. In restaurants or bars, you should leave a tip for your server. The suggested rate is 15 percent for standard service and 20 percent or more for exceptional service.

Be sure to check your bill to see whether or not a tip has already been included — look for the word “gratuity.” In most restaurants, larger parties (usually eight or more people), are automatically charged a standard gratuity. In this case, it is up to you whether to leave an additional tip. If you are using cash, leave the tip on your table in plain sight with some kind of weight to prevent it from falling off the table. If you are paying your bill with a debit or credit card, you may be able to add a tip to the receipt you sign, and it will be added to your payment.

Parks and recreation

There are several city and state parks in or near Columbia. The city also has a wide network of trails for walking, running or biking. For more information, go to gocolumbiamo.com/parksandrec or mostateparks.com.

Driver's license

To obtain a U.S. driver's license, you must pass several tests. You should seriously consider if it will be necessary for you to have a driver's license, and, in some cases, an international driver's license may be sufficient. For more information, go to the [ISSS website](#).

Travel

We encourage you to explore other parts of Missouri and the U.S. during weekends or academic breaks. Be sure to research your intended destination and figure out the best means of transportation to get there. Aside from flying, you might consider taking a bus or train to see more of the American landscape (amtrak.com; greyhound.com).

If you are going to travel outside the U.S., you must have a travel signature from an international student adviser. Travel signatures are valid for six months and necessary to re-enter the U.S. on your current visa. You can get a travel signature by making an appointment with an adviser or coming to walk-in advising (international.missouri.edu/iss/advising/walkin-advising). International Student and Scholar Services hosts expedited travel signature sessions near the end of each semester for students who are planning to travel outside the United States.

RESOURCES

Useful websites

Columbia

City of Columbia	gocolumbiamo.com
Public transportation	gocomotransit.com
MU campus virtual tour	admissions.missouri.edu/visit
Wellness Resource Center	wellness.missouri.edu

Entertainment

Campus events	stufftodo.missouri.edu
Cinemas	ragtagcinema.org regmovies.com
Theater	theatre.missouri.edu
Arts and culture	como.gov/arts

Museums

Arts and Archaeology	maa.missouri.edu
Enns Entomology	museum.insecta.missouri.edu
Anthropology	anthromuseum.missouri.edu

Shopping

Downtown District	discoverthedistrict.com
Columbia Mall	visitcolumbimall.com

Specialty grocery stores

Clover's Natural Market	cloversmarket.com
The Root Cellar	facebook.com/RootCellarMO
International food stores	international.missouri.edu/stores

Art galleries and studios

P.S. Gallery	perlow-stevensgallery.com
Artlandish Gallery	artlandishgallery.com
Columbia Art League	columbiaartleague.org
Orr Street Studios	orrstreetstudios.com
The Mud Room	mudroomstudio.com