

J-1 Exchange Visitor Immigration Orientation Handbook



International Student and Scholar Services (ISS)

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Welcome to WMU

Dear Scholar,

This immigration orientation handbook has been prepared by International Student and Scholar Services (I3S) in the Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE). All of us in I3S and HIGE join faculty, staff, and students in welcoming you to Western Michigan University (WMU). We hope your stay here will be of lasting value to you intellectually, academically, and socially.

We believe that this handbook will be an excellent reference throughout your stay. You will find valuable information about maintaining your immigration status, navigating the university and living in Kalamazoo.

I3S is open all year, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (except federal and university holidays). I3S staff members are professionally trained to advise students and scholars on a wide range of topics that include immigration matters, social and cultural differences, financial matters, and personal concerns. We provide programs designed to help students, scholars, and their families adjust quickly to life in the United States and minimize the difficulties they may experience both initially and throughout their stay.

Again, **welcome to Western Michigan University** and best wishes for a successful academic, career, and personal experience. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.



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Your Rights & Responsibilities

Department of State Welcome Brochure

This brochure will help you to understand the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program and inform you of some of the major requirements of the program regulations. This also includes information on contacting the Department of State.

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EVP-Welcome-Brochure-2022.pdf>



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Department of State
State Annex SA-5, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20522-0505
(202) 203-7131
JVisas@state.gov
www.j1visa.state.gov



Laws, Regulations and WMU Policies: It is your responsibility to be aware of all State and Federal laws during your stay in the United States. We advise you to review and become familiar with all policies, including policies related to your stay at WMU. <http://www.wmich.edu/equity/laws-regulations-wmu-policies>

William Wilberforce Act: The Department of State wants you to have a pleasant and rewarding stay while in the United States. If you should encounter any problems, however, know that you have rights and can get help. The pamphlet linked below informs you of your rights as a nonimmigrant visa holder in certain employment- and education-based categories. The U.S. government created this pamphlet at the prompting of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (Public Law 110-457), which reaffirms and strengthens the U.S. government's commitment to fight human trafficking and labor abuses in all their forms. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html>

International Exchange Alumni: The Department of State may contact you via the email you provided with SEVIS for updates and important notices. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is inviting J-1 Exchange Visitor Program alumni to join the Department of State's International Exchange Alumni website. The State Department states, "The International Exchange Alumni (<https://alumni.state.gov/>) is a dynamic and interactive networking website for past and current exchange visitors of U.S. government-sponsored and private sector exchange programs." To learn about this new and exciting initiative, visit <https://alumni.state.gov/about-international-exchange-alumni>.

If you attend as a J-1 scholar, you will be considered a J-1 Alumni and receive an email invitation to join the IEA website and activate your account! The email will be sent with this subject line below and is a legitimate email:

From: exchangealumni@state.gov

Subject: The U.S. Department of State welcomes you, International Exchange Alumni Member!

J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa Application Process

J-1 exchange visitors, except those from Canada, are required to have a valid visa to enter the U.S. The visa is obtained at the U.S. embassy/consulate.

The visa will show an expiration date and the number of entries it can be used for. It is not important if your visa expires while you are in the U.S. It is only important to have a valid visa if you want to reenter the U.S. after a trip abroad. If your visa has expired, you will need to apply for a new visa.

Information on the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa is available on the [U.S. Department of State website](#).

STEP 1: RECEIVE THE DS-2019 FORM FROM I3S

- After your completed J-1 Scholar Application and associated fees have been received, reviewed, and accepted by I3S, you will be issued a DS-2019 immigration form.
 - The DS-2019 document invites you as a J-1 exchange visitor and identifies your sponsor, your program number, your activities, the dates of your visit and other important information. This form will allow you to apply for the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa.
 - Please note that effective April 27, 2023, designated sponsors for the Exchange Visitor Program may now digitally sign and electronically transmit Form DS-2019. For further information, please visit the [Department of State DS-2019 Information Page](#).

STEP 2: PAY THE SEVIS I-901 FEE

- Visit the [SEVIS I-901 fee website](#) to pay the I-901 fee (print the receipt to take to your visa interview).

STEP 3: REVIEW EMBASSY/CONSULATE REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLETE THE DS-160 ONLINE NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION

- Review the requirements of the individual embassy or consulate at which you will be applying. A [complete list of consulates](#) can be found on the U.S. Department of State website.
- Complete the [DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#). For questions regarding the DS-160, visit the [question section of the U.S. Department of State website](#). *Note: the DS-160 replaces the DS-156, DS-157 and DS-158.*

STEP 4: PAY THE VISA APPLICATION FEE

- Pay the [visa application fee](#) and [visa issuance fee](#), if applicable.

STEP 5: SCHEDULE A VISA INTERVIEW WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY/CONSULATE

- Once you receive the DS-2019 form from WMU, you must follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate instructions to schedule an interview for the J-1 visa; it is important to apply for the visa early. Visa wait times vary from country to country. View a list of [visa wait times by country](#) on the U.S. Department of State website. Appointments are generally scheduled no sooner than 120 days before the program start date listed on the DS-2019.
- Please contact I3S if you would like to request an emergency appointment (the decision to grant an emergency appointment, is always made by the U.S. consulate).

STEP 6: ATTEND THE J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR INTERVIEW

- Attend the visa interview with the [necessary documents](#).

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENS

- While not requiring a visa, Canadian citizens must print and present Form DS-2019 and SEVIS fee payment proof with their passport at the port of entry to obtain J-1 Exchange Visitor status.

Immigration Regulations

The general purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program is to promote international educational and cultural exchange in order to develop mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and other countries.

Always consult I3S prior to traveling outside the U.S. as regulations constantly change
This is a brief overview only. Please consult with the I3S for further information.

IMPORTANT IMMIGRATION ACRONYMS & DOCUMENTS

- **USCIS:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
- **I3S:** International Student and Scholar Services at WMU
- **Passport:** Your passport must be valid throughout your time in the United States. This means your passport should be valid for six months into the future at all times. It is your responsibility to have it timely renewed by your embassy or consulate to maintain your status in the U.S.
- **Visa:** J-1 exchange visitors, except those from Canada, are required to have a valid visa to enter the U.S. The visa is obtained at the U.S. embassy/consulate by presenting Form DS-2019. The visa will show an expiration date and the number of entries it can be used for during that time. It is not important if your visa expires while you are in the U.S. It is only important to have a valid visa if you want to reenter the U.S. after a trip abroad. If your visa has expired you will need to apply for a new visa.
- **Electronic I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record):** After arriving in the U.S. you should go to www.cbp.gov/I94 to print out your electronic I-94 (and those of any dependents). This document will have your status and expiration date as well as your admission number to the U.S. I3S will also make a copy of your I-94 during your New Scholar Orientation.
- **SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System):** This is the Web-based system that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses to maintain information on Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified schools, F-1 and M-1 students who come to the United States to attend those schools.
- **DS-2019:** The DS-2019 document invites you as a J-1 exchange visitor and identifies your sponsor, your program number, your activities, and the dates of your visit among other things. This document is necessary to obtain a J-1 visa. When you first enter the U.S., carry your DS-2019 document with you. You must arrive in the U.S. no later than the program start date on your Form DS-2019. Please keep all copies of your DS-2019s during and after your stay for your records.

MAINTAINING LEGAL STATUS

It is essential to **carry PRINTED copies** of your DS-2019, passport, visa and I-94 with you at all times.

- Have a **valid DS-2019** (unexpired, up-to-date)
- Have a **valid Form I-94** (print from <http://www.cbp.gov/i94>)
- Have a **valid passport**. Your passport must be valid throughout your time in the United States. This means your passport should be valid for six months into the future at all times. It is your responsibility to have your passport timely renewed by your embassy or consulate to maintain your status in the U.S.
- **Conduct employment as indicated on the DS-2019 form**. The DS-2019 form approves a specific program at a specific location with a specific funding source. Any changes must be submitted to I3S and approved in SEVIS in advance. An updated DS-2019 will be issued upon approval.
- File **timely and appropriate transfer and extension** – at least 30 days in advance. Please work closely with I3S to ensure the timely filing of extensions.
- Maintain required **health insurance coverage** for you and your J-2 dependent(s)
- Submit a **Notice of Absence from the U.S.** to I3S prior to leaving the U.S in advance of trips outside the U.S. during your program.
- **Report a change of address/name within 10 days** to I3S
- **Report departure date and reason** to I3S when you complete your program.
- **Follow all U.S. laws**

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

Marijuana (Cannabis) Use

Marijuana use is illegal at the federal level, regardless of how states within the US interpret legality of marijuana use. This means that even if you're in a state that permits some marijuana use (like Michigan), you're still putting yourself at risk regarding your current and future visa, work, and immigration options. Arrests or convictions related to cannabis use could lead to the cancellation of a visa or removal from the United States, among other punishments.

Alcohol Consumption

The legal drinking age in the US is 21. Even individuals under the age of 21 can be arrested, charged, and convicted with possession of alcohol as a minor, even if you are not drinking it. Public drinking is illegal regardless of your age. Driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol and driving while intoxicated (DWI) can be detrimental to your immigration status. The Department of State has set precedent for revocation of visas for even being charged with a DUI or DWI. This applies even if the charge was dropped, expunged, or pleaded down to a lower charge.

EXCHANGE VISITOR CATEGORIES

- A J-1 **research scholar** is an individual primarily conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project. They may also teach or lecture. The minimum program duration is three weeks, with a maximum stay of five years. Subject to Two-Year bar.
- A J-1 **professor** is an individual primarily teaching, lecturing, observing, or consulting. They may also conduct research. The minimum program duration is three weeks, with a maximum stay of five years. Subject to Two-Year bar.
- A J-1 **short-term scholar** is an individual whose program does not exceed six months (no extension is possible). They may lecture, observe, consult, as well as participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, study tours, professional meetings, or similar types of educational and professional activities.
- A J-1 **specialist** is an expert in a field of specialized knowledge or skill coming to the United States for observing, consulting, or demonstrating special skills.
- **J-1 Student-intern***: an individual that is participating in a structured and guided work-based internship program in a specific academic field. Program duration is limited to one year. WMU departments which would like to sponsor a J-1 intern to work on campus for WMU should schedule a consultation with the immigration officer to review eligibility. The US State Department prohibits universities from placing J-1 interns in certain fields.

***J-1 Student Intern Program exclusions:** sponsors designated by the department to administer training and internship programs must not place trainees or interns in unskilled or casual labor positions, in positions that require or involved child care or elder care; or in clinical or any other kind of work that involves patient care or patient contact, including any work that would require trainees or interns to provide therapy, medication, or other clinical or medical care (e.g., sports or physical therapy, psychological counseling, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, social work, speech therapy, early childhood education) (22 CFR 62.22).

J-2 DEPENDENTS

Dependent spouses and children of J-1 students enter on J-2 visas. Children must be unmarried and under the age of 21. If your dependents will be accompanying you, they will need separate J-2 visas, and you should take their passports and J-2 DS-2019s with you to the embassy/consulate and be prepared to show proof of marriage or parenthood.

Dependent children over the age of 21 are no longer eligible for J-2 status and will need to change to another status such as F-1 (for full time students) if they wish to stay in the U.S.

- **J-2 Work Authorization:** Having J-2 status does not give the J-2 the permission to work, but it gives the person the **right to apply for work authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**. Earnings of the J-2 must not be used to support the J-1. Please consult I3S for instructions and forms needed for the application. The application processing time may take 1 - 4 months or longer. The J-2 does not have legal permission to work until the approval is given in the form of Employment Authorization Document.
- **Study:** J-2 dependents may enroll in a program of study part-time or full-time.

TWO-YEAR RULES

- **12-Month Bar:** Individuals who have been in the U.S. for more than six months in the previous year (12 months) in any J visa status are not eligible to enter the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for a 12-month period. Time spent in the J-1 Short-term Scholar category does not count towards the 12-month bar. The 12-month bar applies to both the J-1 principal and any J-2 dependents. The 12-month bar does not prevent individuals from returning to the U.S. in any other visa status or in some other J categories such as Short-Term Scholar or Student.
- **Two-Year Bar (Applicable to J-1 Professors and Research Scholars):** This immigration regulation prohibits foreign nationals from engaging in repeat participation in the J-1 professor/research scholar exchange program category for a period of two years immediately following the completion of his/her J-1 professor/research scholar program participation although a total of his/her stay as a J-1 professor or research scholar was less than the five years allowed.
- **Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement (212(e)):** Under specific circumstances, an EV may incur a two-year home country physical presence requirement. This means that when an EV completes his/her J-1 program, he/she may not change immigration status within the U.S. (e.g., to H-1B or F-1, etc.) or to apply for Permanent Residency without first returning to his/her country for 2 years, or obtaining a waiver of this requirement. The J-2 dependents are subject to the 212(e) if the J-1 principal participant is subject to that requirement.

GRACE PERIOD

- **Grace Period:** All exchange visitors are allowed to stay 30 days longer than the DS-2019 indicates. This is called a "grace period" and is to allow you to prepare to return home, sightsee, etc. You may not be employed or conduct research during this period.

ARRIVAL

- **Timeline:** You must arrive in the U.S. no later than the program start date on your Form DS-2019. The law allows you to arrive early, up to 30 days in advance of your program start date. Should your arrival be delayed for any reason, please contact I3S immediately so that we can inform your delay to the DHS and possibly issue you a new DS-2019 with a new program start date.
- **Immigration Orientation:** The scholar must make an appointment to visit WMU International Student and Scholar Services (I3S) for Immigration Orientation, including check-in, upon arriving in the U.S. This includes all J-1 Scholars (paid or unpaid by the University). If the scholar's SEVIS record is not activated within 30 days of the program start date, the scholar will be out of status. The start date can be found on the DS-2019 issued by WMU.
 - During orientation, the scholar must provide I3S with a U.S. address. This address must be a local residence. It cannot be a P.O. Box or an office address. It can be a "care of" address.
 - Bring the DS-2019, arrival/departure record (I-94), passport with visa, emergency contact information, and proof of health insurance for the scholar and any J-2 Dependents to the orientation.

MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

As an exchange visitor, you are **required to have medical insurance coverage** for yourself and any dependents in J-visa status for the entire duration of your program and stay in the U.S. Your SEVIS record **will not be validated** until I3S has reviewed proof of your health insurance.

U.S. Department of State Insurance Requirements

Minimum Coverage:

- Medical insurance must cover the entire period of participation in the Exchange Visitor program.
- Medical benefits must provide a minimum of \$100,000 per accident or illness.
- Medical evacuation must be covered in the amount of \$50,000 minimum (medical evacuation is emergency medical transportation to the home country.)
- Repatriation must be covered in the amount of \$25,000 minimum (in the unfortunate event of death, repatriation is the transportation of remains back to the home country.)
- The deductible must not exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

Additional Terms:

Insurance must have an A rating under Fitch Ratings (<https://www.fitchratings.com>), or AAA rating under Moody Investor Service (<https://www.moody.com>)

- **Maintenance of Insurance:** Willful failure on your part to maintain the required insurance will result in the termination of your exchange program.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition, please review policies for exclusions.

WMU Employees: If you are employed by WMU and are receiving WMU insurance, it will not meet your minimum coverage requirements. **WMU employee insurance does not cover repatriation and medical evacuation.** You will need to enroll in a supplemental insurance program to cover these requirements.

Health Insurance Resources: For health insurance information or questions about health insurance requirements and procedures for J-1 exchange visitors, please contact the I3S Insurance Coordinator.

Recommended Insurance Plan

WMU recommends J-1 exchange visitors enroll in and maintain coverage under the GeoBlue health insurance plan for the entire duration of their DS-2019 forms, as this plan is specifically designed to meet the required coverage levels. However, other insurance plans are also acceptable as long as they comply with all U.S. Department of State regulations outlined above.

To purchase GeoBlue insurance for a semester, visit:

<https://ogse.geobluestudents.com/?ac=VLN-59113>

To purchase GeoBlue insurance on a monthly basis, visit:

<https://ogse.geobluestudents.com/?ac=YBY-63333>

I3S Insurance Coordinator

Email: ias-insurance@wmich.edu | Phone: (269) 387-5887

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DURING YOUR J-1 PROGRAM

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S., you should check that your DS-2019 will not be expiring soon, and that the DS-2019 has a valid travel signature. You should also make sure your passport is valid for at least six months into the future at all times, and that your J-1 visa will still be valid for your re-entry. In addition, please submit the “J-1 Notice of Absence from the United States” form to the Coordinator of I3S prior to departing the United States.

Note: For non-program related travel, the absence from the U.S. cannot be more than 30 days. For J-1 program-related travel, typically the absence from the U.S. cannot be approved for more than six months.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS DURING YOUR J-1 PROGRAM

J-1 exchange visitors who have a change of address (move) during their J-1 program are required to report their new address to I3S within 10 days of the change by submitting the “Change of Address Notification” form to the Coordinator of I3S.

EXTENDING YOUR J-1 PROGRAM

You may be eligible for an extension of your Form DS-2019 if you have not reached the maximum duration of your J category and have not applied for and received a waiver of the Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement 212(e) rule. Your WMU host department should contact the Coordinator of I3S for instructions on how to submit an application for extension of your J program. Typically, updated forms and materials (I3S DS-2019 Request Form Part A, updated proof of funding, updated proof of insurance, \$150 WMU Service Fee for Extension) are required to be submitted to the Coordinator of I3S.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER J PROGRAM

J-1 Scholars who plan to transfer to another institution must inform I3S of their intent to do so prior to transferring so that this can be properly noted in SEVIS. The scholar will need to pick up and complete a transfer out form from I3S. Through SEVIS, the current J program and the transferring J program will work together to complete the transfer process.

END OF PROGRAM DEPARTURE

As your program end date approaches (1-3 weeks prior to departing), please contact WMU I3S to provide the following information:

1. **Date of departure** from the United States
2. **Personal email address** for future contact (your WMU email address will close)

Staying Connected After your Program

- **International Alumni Network:** This service will help you stay connected to WMU by sending quarterly email updates, an invitation to join the network on LinkedIn, and notifying you when there are opportunities to get involved with WMU. To join, please visit <https://wmich.edu/international/alumni>.
- **WMU Global Expertise Database:** This database connects faculty, staff, students and the community to the global knowledge of faculty members and professional staff at WMU. To join, please visit <https://wmich.edu/international/database>.

J-1 SCHOLAR INCIDENTAL EMPLOYMENT

J-1 Exchange Visitors are generally not allowed to work outside of WMU. However, in addition to employment at WMU related to your J-1 objective, J-1 scholars and professors may be eligible to be authorized for incidental employment directly related to their J-1 objective, such as providing occasional lectures or consulting. Incidental employment must be **approved by I3S and in SEVIS** in writing prior to the activity. Please contact I3S for more information.

Proposed incidental employment must meet the following criteria:

- Be **directly related** to the objectives of the exchange visitor's program.
- Be **incidental** to the exchange visitor's primary program activities.
- **Not delay the complete date** of the exchange visitor's program at WMU.

In order to receive written approval for J-1 Scholar's incidental employment, the scholar must present the following two documents to the immigration officer:

1. A **letter from the prospective employer or host** setting forth the terms and conditions of the offer to lecture or consult, including the duration, number of hours, field or subject, amount of compensation, and detailed description of such activity.
2. A **letter from the WMU host department chair or supervisor** recommending the incidental employment and explaining how it would enhance the scholar's program.

After receiving the above documents, the immigration officer will note the approval in SEVIS and issue an approval letter to the scholar prior to the start of activity. Please allow 10 business days for processing.

Note: If the J-1 visa is sponsored by an organization other than WMU, I3S cannot approve incidental employment. Please contact the sponsoring organization that issued the DS-2019 with questions concerning incidental employment authorization.

You are **not allowed** to work unless you have authorization in SEVIS and in writing from you Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) in SEVIS and in I3S. Contact your ARO for questions.

OTHER VISA TYPES AT WMU

- **H-1B Temporary Worker:** H-1B Temporary Worker nonimmigrant status may be granted to a non-U.S. resident who has been offered a professional-level position from a U.S. employer and has a bachelor's or a higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.
- **TN NAFTA Professional:** In accordance with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a designated group of Canadian professionals is admissible for temporary employment in the U.S. possibly without the requirement of a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) petition approval. The individual seeking TN classification must be coming to the U.S. to engage in business activities in one of the 63 NAFTA-specified occupations listed in Appendix 1603.D.1 of Annex 1603 of the NAFTA.
- **O-1 Person of Extraordinary Ability:** The O-1 nonimmigrant category is for the employment of foreign nationals who have achieved and sustained national or international acclaim for extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, athletics, motion picture, or television industries. The category permits an employer to petition the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a nonimmigrant to come to the United States on a temporary basis to work within his or her area of extraordinary ability or achievement. It also permits family members and, in certain cases, assistants to join the non-immigrant.

- **F-1 Student:** Most international students at WMU are under this immigration classification, which means they have been admitted to the U.S. for the purpose of full-time study, have demonstrated financial resources for the entire academic program, and have a permanent residence abroad which they have no intention of abandoning.
- **J-1 Student:** J-1 Student is reserved for individuals who participate in an academic exchange between WMU and a university abroad or who are funded by an international organization, the U.S. or a foreign government, or a private agency in support of international education. Some J-1 Students are subject to a two-year foreign residence requirement following completion of the academic program as a condition of the funding they received or based on the skills that are in demand in the home country.

Health & Safety

For medical, fire, or police emergencies; DIAL 911

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

All campus 911 calls will go to Kalamazoo County Dispatch, and be conveyed to WMU public safety officers.

Calls from campus “blue light” emergency call boxes will go directly to the dispatch center and be conveyed to WMU public safety officers.



FOR A MINOR EMERGENCY VISIT SINDECUSE OR AN URGENT CARE CENTER

- **Sindecuse Health Center** (WMU Campus): <http://www.wmich.edu/healthcenter/>
- **Bronson Quick Care Plus:** 940 John St., Kalamazoo (269) 552-4266
- **Beacon Kalamazoo Immediate Care:** 7901 Angling Road, Portage (269) 324-8405
- **Hometown Urgent Care:** 1634 Gull Road, Kalamazoo (269) 903-2835

FOR A MAJOR EMERGENCY VISIT A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM CENTERS

- **Beacon Kalamazoo Hospital:** 1521 Gull Road, Kalamazoo (269) 226-7000
- **Bronson Hospital** (Downtown Kalamazoo): 601 John Street, Kalamazoo (269) 341-6386

For more information about when to seek emergency care, please visit:

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000593.htm>

REPORT INCIDENTS TO YOUR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The purpose of the program is a cultural and educational exchange and a positive experience. In the event that you encounter any serious situation or difficulty such as the below, please notify your Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO).

Tara Severino - RO	tara.severino@wmich.edu	(269) 387-5657
Raquel Garciano - ARO	raquel.garciano@wmich.edu	(269) 387-3959

NATURE OF INCIDENTS

- **Program difficulties** (e.g., substance abuse, bullying or harassment)
- **Serious Medical Issues - Including Mental Health** (hospitalization of 48 hours or more)
- **Sexually Related Incident or Abuse** (e.g., incident or allegation involving sexual exploitation, harassment, assault, or misconduct)
- **Incident Involving the Criminal Justice System** (e.g., arrest, charges, incarceration, detention, or other law enforcement involvement)
- **Incidents Involving Child Protective Services**
- **Fraud** (e.g., visa, immigration, or financial fraud or scam)

- **Theft of Intellectual Property**
- **Lost or Stolen Immigration Documents** (e.g., lost or stolen passport/visa or stolen Form DS-2019)
- **Unsuitable Host/Work Conditions** (e.g., incident or allegation involving workplace bullying, harassment, discrimination, hostile work environment, or work hours and/or wage-related issues)
- **Actual or Potential Negative Press** (i.e., incident expected to bring DOS, the sponsor, or the Exchange Visitor Program into notoriety or disrepute)
- **Foreign Government Involvement** (including Foreign Embassy or Consulate Involvement)
- **Litigation (Lawsuits) or Other Legal Actions** (related to the Exchange Visitor Program, in which a sponsor, site of activity, or an exchange visitor may be a named party)
- **Public Security Incident or Natural disasters Directly Involving Exchange Visitor Safety** (e.g., bombing, shooting, other acts of violence, civil unrest, fire, tornado, flood, or hurricane)

WMU ALERTS

WMU Alert is designed to send mass text messages and/or phone calls to all registered people in the event of an immediate campus threat to health and safety. Such threats could include but are not limited to violent weather, terrorism, shootings and hazardous material incidents.

For more information, visit the WMU Department of Public Safety's website at www.wmudps.wmich.edu/safety-info-details.



**Register your
phone now**

Sign-up for WMU Alerts and Advisory Notifications via Text Messaging

- Opt-in by texting **WMUPublicSafety** to 226787 or 67283 (not case-sensitive)
- Opt-out by texting **STOP WMUPublicSafety** to 226787 or 67283
- Do not send a STOP ALL message as this may interfere with other message registrations you have signed up for

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESOURCES FOR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS

As a participant in a U.S. Department of State program, J-1 Exchange Visitors have access to resources that help ensure the health and safety of Exchange Visitors. As always, WMU I3S should be the first point of contact should any issues arise.

Emergency Hotline

Exchange visitors may contact the U.S. DOS by phone at +1(866) 283-9090, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Department of State "Exchange Visitor Program" Email

You may contact the U.S. Department of State via email at jvisa@state.gov.

Life at WMU

WMU IDENTIFICATION CARDS

The WMU Guest I.D. and WMU Bronco Card are the University's official identification cards. Please contact the Bronco Card Office for more information about how to obtain your card (\$30).

WMU Guest I.D. Card

The Guest I.D. Card is issued to scholars who are not employed by WMU.



WMU Bronco Card

The Bronco Card is issued to scholars who are employed by WMU



Bronco Card Office

Website: <https://wmudps.wmich.edu/bronco-card.php>

Phone: (269) 387-6278 | **Email:** dps-broncocard@wmich.edu.

Please reach out to WMU I3S if you are experiencing difficulties obtaining your card.

GOWMU & WMU EMAIL

GoWMU is WMU's portal which allows the WMU community to access secure online resources such as your WMU email account. Your Bronco NetID is the username (7 alphanumeric characters) that allows you to log in to the GoWMU portal. You will receive your Bronco NetID and temporary password information from the Coordinator of I3S.

Before you for the first time, you will be required to change your temporary password. You will not be able to log in using the temporary password.

To log in to your WMU email account, go to <https://go.wmich.edu>

If you are unable to activate your GoWMU account or have any concerns regarding your Bronco NetID, please contact the WMU Technology Help Desk

WMU Technology Help Desk

Website: <https://wmich.edu/helpdesk> | **Phone:** (269) 387-4357 | **Email:** helpdesk@wmich.edu

WMU SOCIAL MEDIA

“Like” or “follow” our social media pages for news, events, activities, and more!



Facebook

WMU: <https://www.facebook.com/westernmichu>

HIGE: <https://www.facebook.com/WMUInternational>



Instagram

WMU: @westernmichu

WMU International Activities: @wmuintl

USEFUL WMU RESOURCES

WMU Bronco Card Office

<https://wmudps.wmich.edu/bronco-card.php>

(269) 387-6278

WMU Department of Public Safety (DPS)

<http://wmudps.wmich.edu/police/index.htm>

(269) 387-5555

Calls to (269) 387-5555 will result in an automated answer that can route calls to an emergency line to speak to an officer during business hours or to make a facilities-related request.

International Student and Scholar Services (I3S)

<https://wmich.edu/internationaladmissions>

(269)-387-5865

WMU Human Resources (HR)

<http://www.wmich.edu/hr>

(269) 387-3620

Information about benefits, compensation, training, etc.

WMU Office of Information Technology (OIT)

<http://www.wmich.edu/oit>

(269) 387-5430

Information about WMU e-mail accounts, etc.

WMU Payroll

<http://www.wmich.edu/payroll>

(269) 387-2935

Information about taxes, timekeeping, direct deposit, etc. for employees of WMU

WMU Recreation Center

<https://wmich.edu/rec/facilities>

(269) 387-4732

The Student Recreation Center offers open recreation, personal training, multiple pools, sport leagues and group exercise, utilizing equipment and facilities to promote health and wellbeing. Please contact the recreation center if you wish to purchase a membership.



International Student and Scholar Services (I3S)

3110 Faunce Student Services

Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5246

Phone: (269) 387-5865

Fax: (269) 387-5899

<https://wmich.edu/immigration>



Faunce Student Services is also known as “the birdcage”

Life in Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo is a lively, affordable and diverse community offering big-city appeal and small-town charm. Learn more at [Discover Kalamazoo](#).

- **Population:** 74,200 (approximately)
- **Location:** midway between Chicago and Detroit, about 2.5 hours by car
- **Average temperatures:** Sept: 18° C, Jan: -4° C, May: 15° C, July: 23° C

HOUSING INFORMATION

At this time, WMU can offer on-campus housing for enrolled students only. Finding suitable housing can be a challenge, so **please plan in advance**.



Kalamazoo Apartment Guide

www.apartmentguide.com
www.apartmentfinder.com
www.apartments.com

TRANSPORTATION

Car: If you plan to drive a motor vehicle while attending Western Michigan University, you will need to obtain a driver's license. For more information, please see the "Obtaining a State of Michigan Driver's License" portion of this handbook.

Hertz Car Rental: 3621 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo (269) 372-0495

<https://www.hertz.com/rentacar/location/unitedstates/michigan/kalamazoo/azoc38/>

Bronco Transit Bus: (269) 337-8222; WMU's campus is serviced by Bronco Transit busses. For more information, visit <https://wmich.edu/busing>.

Kalamazoo Metro Transit Bus: Visit <http://kmetro.org> to plan your trip, review bus rates, and read tips on riding the Metro City Bus.

Amtrak Train: 459 North Burdick, Kalamazoo (269) 344-1841; <https://www.amtrak.com/stations/kal>

PARKING AT WMU

If you plan to park your car on campus, you will be required to **register your vehicle with Parking Services and obtain a WMU Parking Permit**. All vehicles operated by students, scholars, staff must be registered with Parking Services. Certain WMU staff may receive a parking pass without cost; visiting scholars and students must purchase their own parking pass (unless otherwise provided by your department). If you park on campus without a parking permit, you will receive a ticket. Always park in the designated areas as listed on your parking permit.

Parking Services

Website: <https://wmich.edu/parking> | **Phone:** (269) 387-4609

After hours, parking questions may be answered by the WMU Police Department at (269) 387-5555.

LIBRARIES

Public libraries are open to the public to use or check out books to use at home for a designated period of time. You must obtain a library card to check out books. There will be a fine if the book is returned late.

Kalamazoo Public Library: Call the Kalamazoo Public Library for information at (269) 553-7800 or <http://www.kpl.gov>

WMU Libraries: WMU has multiple libraries on campus, the largest being Dwight B. Waldo Library. Western Michigan University Libraries is the fourth largest university library system in Michigan and among the top 100 in the country.

RESTAURANTS

- **Campus Wok** (Chinese Cuisine)
2636 W Michigan, Kalamazoo (269) 552-9616
- **Hibachi Sushi Buffet** (Chinese/Japanese buffet)
4405 South Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo (269) 381-8889
- **Hunan Gardens** (Chinese Cuisine)
5059 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 373-1188
- **Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches**
1128 West Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo (269) 381-8400
- **Namsan Korean Restaurant**
1844 South Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo (269) 382-6515
- **Papa John's Pizza**
3322 Stadium Drive Ste C, Kalamazoo (269) 381-7272
- **Rasa Ria (Malaysian Cuisine)**
1921 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 381-0788
- **Saffron (Indian Cuisine)**
1710 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 381-9898
- **Shawarma King (has Halal Foods)**
1441 S. Drake, Kalamazoo (269) 375-3900
- **Zooroona Mediterranean Grill** (Middle Eastern)
1710 W Main St., Kalamazoo (269) 382-4444



For a larger list of local Kalamazoo restaurants, visit:
<https://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/eat/>

For a list of popular restaurants in Portage, visit:
<https://www.restaurantji.com/mi/portage/>

SHOPPING

- **Best Buy** (Electronics)
6900 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 327-2008
- **Crossroads Mall** (Clothing, Food Court, and More)
6650 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 327-6600
- **Kohl's Department Store** (Clothing & Household)
5159 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 345-1344
6100 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 323-2392
- **Marshall's** (Clothing & Household)
5072 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 342-6317
- **Meijer** (Grocery, Clothing, Household, and More)
6660 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 372-9100
5121 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 381-3465
- **Target** (Grocery, Clothing, Household, and More)
5350 West Main St, Kalamazoo (269) 349-6148
6839 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 327-3180
- **TJ MAXX (Clothing)**
6126 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 327-3080
- **Wal-Mart** (Grocery, Clothing, Household, and More)
501 North 9th Street, Kalamazoo (269) 544-0718

Specialty Stores

- **Hoffman's** (South Asian Cuisine)
5905 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 385-2675
- **International Gourmet Pantry** (Pakistan Cuisine; Halal)
1514 West Michigan, Kalamazoo (269) 383-4909
- **Pacific Rim**
229 West Kilgore Rd, Portage (269) 382-0888
- **World Market**
6601 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 329-1631

Farmer's Markets

- **Kalamazoo Farmer's Market** (Fresh produce & local goods)
1204 Bank St., Kalamazoo, MI 49001
Hours on website: <http://pfcmarkets.com/>



For a list of more places to shop in the Kalamazoo area, visit:

<https://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/play/shopping/>

ENTERTAINMENT

Arcades, Bowling, & Wall Climbing

- **Airway Lanes** (bowling, laser tag, arcade, rope course)
5626 Portage Road, Portage (269) 327-7061
- **Chuck E Cheese's** (pizza & arcade for young children)
6175 South Westnedge Ave, Portage (269) 321-2116
- **Climb Kalamazoo** (wall climbing)
136 South Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo (269) 385-9891
- **Revel & Roll** (bowling, billiards, laser tag, arcade)
4500 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo (269) 488-3800

Coffee Houses

- **Biggby Coffee**
3216 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo (269) 488-2600
- **Starbucks Coffee**
4612 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo (269) 353-4368
- **Water Street Coffee Joint**
315 East Water St, Kalamazoo (269) 373-2840
3037 Oakland Dr, Kalamazoo (269) 488-0018

Museums and Art Galleries

- **Air Zoo** (Airplane Museum, flight simulators, kid rides)
6151 Portage Rd, Portage (269) 524-7966
<http://www.airzoo.org/>
- **Gilmore Car Museum**
6865 Hickory Rd, Hickory Corners (269) 671-5843
<http://www.gilmorecarmuseum.org/>
- **Kalamazoo Valley Museum** (free)
230 North Rose St, Kalamazoo (269) 373-7990
<http://kvm.kvcc.edu/>
- **Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts (KIA)**
314 South Park St, Kalamazoo (269) 349-7775
<http://www.kiarts.org/>

Movie Theaters

- **Kalamazoo 10**
820 Maple Hill Drive (269) 345-7469
- **Celebration Cinema**
6600 Ring Road, Portage (269) 324-7469



Nightlife

- **Bell's Eccentric Café & Brewery**
355 East Kalamazoo Ave, Kalamazoo (269) 382-2332
- **One Well Brewing**
4213 Portage St, Kalamazoo (269) 459-9240
- **Shakespeare's Pub**
241 East Kalamazoo St, Kalamazoo (269) 488-3330
- **Skydeck – Rooftop Bar & Grill**
300 East Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo (269) 312-7412

Sporting Events (Kalamazoo Teams)

- **Kalamazoo Growlers (Baseball)**
Homer Stryker Field
<http://northwoodsleague.com/kalamazoo-growlers>
- **Kalamazoo K-Wings (Hockey)**
Wings Stadium
<http://www.wingsstadium.com>
- **WMU Bronco Sporting Events**
<http://www.wmubroncos.com>

To learn more about Kalamazoo and Michigan, visit:

<http://www.discoverkalamazoo.com> (Kalamazoo)

<http://www.downtownkalamazoo.org> (Kalamazoo)

<http://michigan.org> (Michigan)

<http://kzookids.com> (Events and activities for children and families)

Life in the United States

U.S. CULTURAL VALUES

Time Orientation: To Americans, time is valuable and must be used carefully and productively. Americans expect promptness or “being on time” in both academic and social settings.

Work Orientation: Americans place a high value on hard work; they judge people by how hard they work and how task oriented they are. Some believe that people achieve results on the basis of how hard they work.

Achievement Orientation: A very high value is placed on a person’s accomplishments and productivity. Individuals evaluate themselves and are evaluated by others in terms of their achievements and accomplishments.

Individualism: Americans view themselves first and foremost as individuals with both freedom and responsibility to manage their own lives, make their own decisions and accomplish their own goals. Families and friends are important, but individuals are expected to first consider their own needs, desires, and values. In this culture, people are not comfortable being obligated to or dependent on others.

Direct Communication and Problem Solving: A strong value is placed on direct and straightforward communication. When problems arise between individuals, Americans prefer to discuss them openly and solve them. Americans will say “yes” or “no” to questions even if the answer might hurt someone’s feelings.

Pragmatism: Americans are very practical and like ideas that are seen as “useful.” This goes together with the orientation toward work and achievement. You must be able to relate “theory” to “practice.”

FIRST NAMES AND TITLES

In general, people in the United States are very informal about titles and status.

It is best when dealing with professors and teacher assistants (TA’s), to use their titles – “Professor, Doctor, Mr., or Ms.” - unless they tell you otherwise.

Often people will tell you when you first meet what they would like to be called. You may also ask them how they would like to be addressed.

It is most important to remember that informality is not an indication of disrespect. It is more an indication of mutual respect, equality, and a willingness to engage in open dialogue.

POSTAL INFORMATION

The United States postal service is quite reliable and consistent for sending letters and packages. For locations of the U.S. Postal Service, visit www.usps.com All post offices are closed on Sundays and holidays. Postage stamps are also available at many grocery and convenience stores.

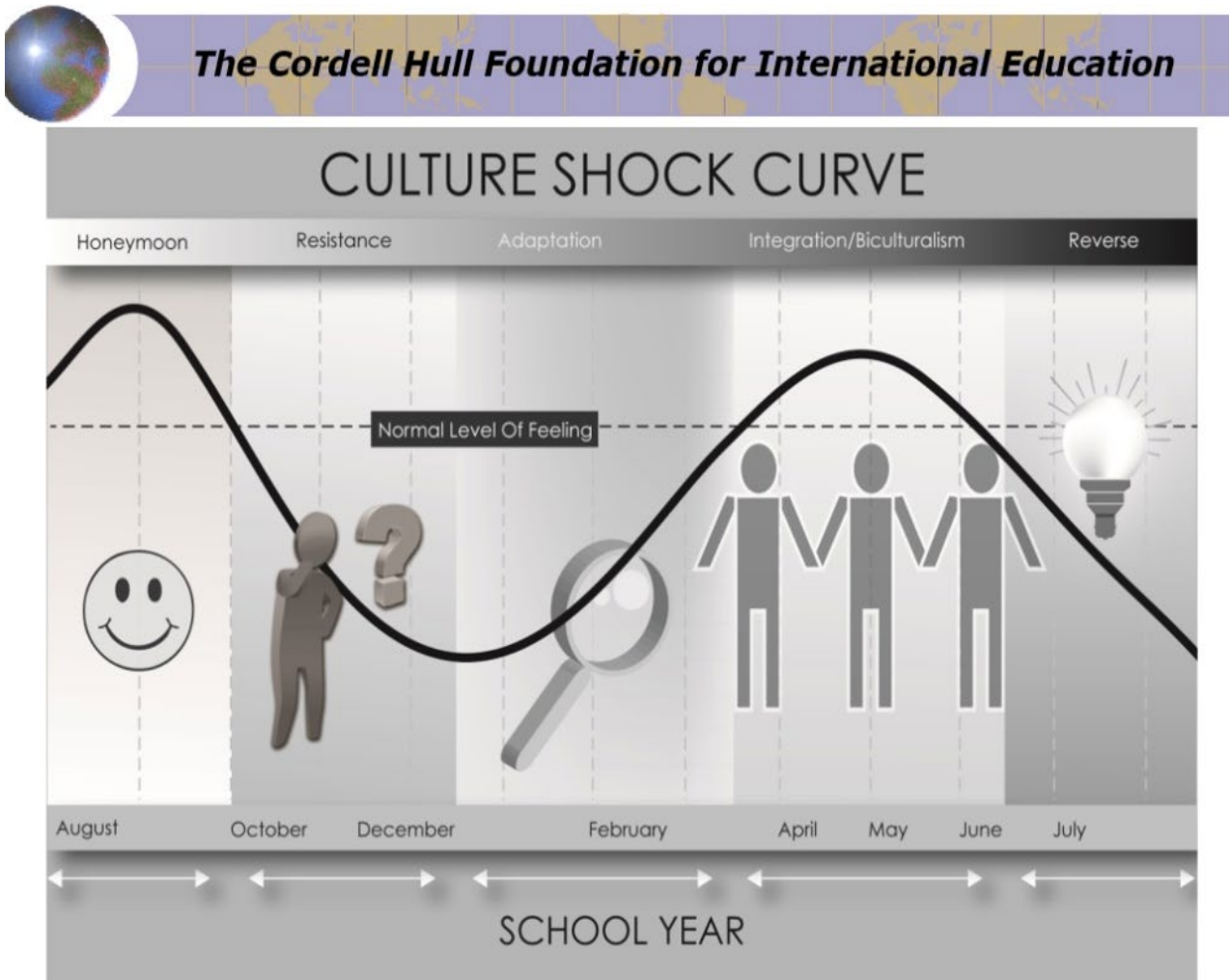


Culture Shock

Culture shock is a natural process experienced when individuals move from their home country to a foreign land with different customs and often a different language. This phenomenon typically unfolds in five distinct phases:

Phases of Culture Shock

1. **Honeymoon Phase:** The initial period of excitement and fascination with the new culture.
2. **Resistance Phase:** A stage where differences become more apparent and potentially frustrating.
3. **Adaptation Phase:** The gradual process of understanding and adapting to the new cultural norms.
4. **Integration/Biculturalism Phase:** A period where one becomes comfortable navigating both their home and host cultures.
5. **Reverse Culture Shock:** The final phase that occurs upon returning to one's home country after the program abroad, often accompanied by unexpected readjustment challenges.



Causes of Culture Shock:

1. **Language Barrier** – Difficulty in communication or understanding the local language.
2. **Cultural Differences** – Unfamiliar customs, social norms, and practices (e.g., greeting styles, dining etiquette).
3. **Food and Drink** – Unfamiliar cuisine and different dietary habits.
4. **Climate** – Adjustment to a new climate or weather conditions.
5. **Separation from Family and Friends** – Feeling isolated from familiar support systems.
6. **New Systems and Technology** – Learning how to navigate local systems like transportation, healthcare, or education.

Symptoms of Culture Shock:

1. **Confusion or Anxiety** – Feeling lost or unsure about how things work in the new culture.
2. **Homesickness** – Longing for familiar surroundings, people, or comforts from home.
3. **Frustration** – Feeling overwhelmed by daily challenges or misunderstanding cultural cues.
4. **Isolation or Loneliness** – Difficulty forming relationships or feeling disconnected from others.
5. **Depression or Low Mood** – A sense of sadness or low motivation, feeling disconnected.
6. **Physical Symptoms** – Fatigue, trouble sleeping, headaches, or stomach issues due to stress.

How to Get Through Culture Shock:

1. **Be Open and Curious** – Try to understand and appreciate the new culture rather than resist it.
2. **Build a Support Network** – Connect with others, both locals and fellow expats, for social support.
3. **Stay Connected with Home** – Keep in touch with family and friends through calls, messages, or video chats, find a local grocery store or restaurant that sells familiar foods.
4. **Embrace New Experiences** – Take part in cultural activities, explore new places, and try local foods.
5. **Practice Self-Care** – Take time for yourself, rest, and maintain a healthy routine.
6. **Give Yourself Time** – Adjustment takes time, so be patient with yourself and understand that feeling disoriented is normal.

Other Resources

The [Cordell Hull Foundation for International Education](#) (CHF) has created a very informative culture shock curve and video presentation. They have granted permission to International Student and Scholar Services (I3S) to share this valuable information with our students and scholars. The password is: chfnv

BANK INFORMATION, TERMS, & EXPLANATIONS

Americans do not usually carry a lot of cash. They prefer to pay by check, even for small purchases, or by credit card/debit card. To function efficiently in the U.S. economy, you will need to open a checking account at a local bank. This section introduces you to a few of the basic banking options available.

When you open an account with a bank - most require two pieces of identification, such as your passport.

You do not need a Social Security number to open a bank account, but: if your bank asks for a Social Security Number and you do not have one, fill out Internal Revenue Service (IRS) W-8 BEN Form, which will prove to the bank that you are exempt from this requirement. The W-8 BEN Form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw8ben.pdf>) is available at banks or on the web in PDF form. There is no charge for the form.

PNC Bank is conveniently located in the bottom level of the Student Center. You may choose to bank with whichever bank you like, but we have found PNC Bank to be welcoming to international students and scholars.

Banking Terms & Explanations

Understanding basic banking and finance terms can help you to navigate the U.S. banking system. To learn more, please consider speaking with banking professional or utilizing the suggested resources below:

- **Helpwithmybank:** <https://www.helpwithmybank.gov/glossary/index-glossary.html>
- **Nerd Wallet:** <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/banking/10-essential-banking-terms>
- **Forbes Advisor:** <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/banking/glossary-of-basic-banking-terms/>

Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Safety

Automated Teller Machines (ATM) are conveniently located all around Kalamazoo and in some areas of the WMU campus. They are convenient, but you must be cautious when using one. Thefts do occur, usually at night and in poorly lit areas.

To learn more about how you can protect yourself, please read the ATM Safety Tips at:

<https://www.aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/consumer-resources/protect-your-money/atm-safety-tips>

AVOIDING SCAMS, FRAUD AND THEFT

Example of a Scam: Someone calls or emails you, pretending to be from the government or a public office. They make false statements about a problem with your immigration status and ask you for money to have it resolved.

Ways to Avoid Scams, Fraud and Theft

- **Do not pay any money or give any personal information.** The government will never call or email you to request money from you.
- **Let I3S know** about this type of call or email immediately.
- **Visit the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) webpage** which gives important information on how to avoid scams <https://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams>. Please also visit the common scam section of USCIS and familiarize yourself to be safe <https://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/common-scams>.
- **Visit the IRS webpage** dedicated to discussing tax scams and reporting consumer alerts <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>

TAXES

As an institution of higher education, the staff in the Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) are not authorized to offer tax preparation services or advice. Therefore, staff cannot answer specific tax questions or help you prepare your tax forms. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to meet your tax obligations and do so accurately. Failure to file tax forms is a violation of United States law and may jeopardize your future status in the U.S. Helpful information on tax requirements for international students and scholars is provided by the Department of Homeland Security's [Study in the States webpage](#).

HIGE has received positive feedback from international students and scholars who have used [Sprintax](#), an online preparation service for international students and scholars. Other tax preparation services might be available to students and scholars through banks, local accountants and online.

Tax Filing Requirements

Have Received US-source Income: All non-resident scholars who received US-source income are required to file federal Forms 1040, 1040EZ, 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ, etc. and/or Form 8843 by April 15 each year (unless April 15th falls on weekends). Non-resident scholars MAY also be required to file Michigan (or other state) tax returns, depending on their income.

Have NOT Received any US-source Income: Non-resident scholars (and their dependents) who received no US-source income do not need to file the above-mentioned forms, but are required to file Form 8843 by June 15 (or 16) each year, found at <http://www.irs.gov>.

Tax Information for WMU Employees: If you are employed by WMU, qualify for, and choose to claim a tax treaty exemption, you must obtain Form 8233 from the payroll department. The Payroll Office will use the information you provide on Form 8233 and "Attachment for Form 8233" to record your tax treaty exemption. When your period or amount of exemption has expired, the Payroll Office will automatically begin to withhold taxes. A new form 8233 and attachment must be completed annually in January.

For more information on tax information for WMU employees, visit <https://wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/yourpay/tax-information> or call WMU Payroll at (269) 387-2935.

Additional Tax Information

J-2 Dependents: Depending on the situation, you may be able to claim your spouse and/or children as dependents for tax purposes. Please consult with U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or professional tax preparers for further assistance.

Tax Treaties: If you are a resident of a country with which the U.S. has a tax treaty you may be exempt from payment of U.S. federal income tax on certain income earned in the United States. Consult IRS Publication 901 (U.S. Tax Treaties) to find out whether your country has a tax treaty with the U.S. that allows such a deduction and additional details regarding the deduction. <http://www.irs.gov>.

Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN): ITIN is a tax processing number issued by the IRS. The IRS issues ITINs to individuals who are required to have a U.S. taxpayer identification number but who do not have, and are not eligible to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN). ITINs are for federal tax reporting only, and are not intended to serve any other purpose. You may need to request an ITIN for your dependent if you are claiming them on your taxes. For more information about applying for ITIN, please visit <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/general-itin-information>

2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA): The U.S. State Department wishes to notify Exchange Visitor Programs and J-1 Exchange Visitors who have work components to their exchange programs that the 2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) includes changes to the federal income tax law that may affect some exchange visitors. For more information on the TCJA, please visit the IRS website and look for IRS Publication 5307 <https://www.irs.gov/tax-reform>

OBTAINING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OR LETTER OF INELIGIBILITY

Social Security is the U.S. government's social insurance plan. If you have employment in the U.S., you must obtain a Social Security card/number.

- **Employment:** Always check with I3S before accepting or commencing any employment. Please note that a Social Security card/number has nothing to do with your eligibility for employment. Its basic purpose in the United States is to monitor earnings for income tax purposes. If you do not plan to work, you do not need a Social Security Number.

Note: For the purpose of obtaining a driver's license, many scholars are issued a Letter of Ineligibility instead of a Social Security Number.

To Apply for a Social Security Number (or Letter of Ineligibility for the purpose of obtaining a driver's license): you must go in person to the Social Security office and bring documents, including your:

1. Passport
2. DS-2019
3. Printed copy of I-94
(<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/home>)
4. WMU employment offer (for obtaining a Social Security Number only)
5. A status verification letter from I3S

Please note that at this time, visits to the Social Security Office are by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, please call the Social Security Office.

Social Security Office Nearest WMU

317 South Drake Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Phone: (866) 331-9088

<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/ic001.action#officeResults>

For general Social Security information call 1-800-772-1213 during normal business hours or visit <http://www.ssa.gov>

OBTAINING A STATE OF MICHIGAN PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD

If you do not need a driver's license but do need extra identification, you can get a State of Michigan identification (ID) card at any Michigan Secretary of State office. The identification requirements are the same as the identification requirements for a driver's license.

OBTAINING A STATE OF MICHIGAN DRIVER'S LICENSE

A [step-by-step guide](#) to assist you in obtaining a Michigan Driver's license is available from the Michigan Secretary of State.

In general, applying for a Michigan Driver's License requires the following:

1. **Social Security Number or Letter of Ineligibility:** In many cases, scholars are issued the Letter of Ineligibility instead of a Social Security Number (which are typically only issued to scholars who are employed in the U.S.).
2. **Required documents:** a list is provided by the Michigan Secretary of State.
https://media.mlive.com/news/baycity_impact/other/DE40_032001_20459_7.pdf
3. **Application to Michigan Secretary of State:** submit an application for a Michigan Driver's License at a Michigan Secretary of State branch office

Secretary of State Office Nearest WMU

3298 Stadium Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49006

For update hours, visit

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/faqs/resources/secretary-of-state-offices>

The Secretary of State office will determine the expiration of your driver's license based on the end date of your immigration status documents (DS-2019). For more information, visit <https://www.michigan.gov/sos> or call 1(888) 767-6424.

TRAFFIC STOPS

Please visit the Michigan State Police website to learn more about what to expect during a traffic stop. <https://www.michigan.gov/en/msp/services/safetytips/safe-driving-tips/what-to-expect-during-a-traffic-stop>

INTERNATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE & RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS

International treaties, as well as state and federal laws, govern the operation of commercial and noncommercial vehicles by people licensed to drive by other countries. An individual may operate a **noncommercial** motor vehicle using a license issued by his or her home country.

While operating a passenger vehicle in this state, nonresident drivers who hold a driver's license issued by a country other than the United States must have in their immediate possession their valid license to operate a motor vehicle issued by that country and, if no English translation appears on the front or back of the license, one of the following:

- A valid international driving permit.
- A document containing a photo and an English translation that substantially corresponds to an international driving permit if the license to operate a motor vehicle is issued by a country that does not issue an international driving permit.

Courts and law enforcement officers should not seize and destroy foreign driver's licenses pursuant to section 625g of the Michigan Vehicle Code.

1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic: Residents of countries who are signatories to the 1943 Convention may drive in this country if they have a valid **noncommercial** or **commercial** driver's license issued by a country listed below (or an authorized political subdivision of that country) in their immediate possession and, if no English translation appears on the front or back of the license, one of the following:

1. A valid international driving permit.
2. A document containing a photo and an English translation that substantially corresponds to an international driving permit if the license to operate a motor vehicle is issued by a country that does not issue an international driving permit. These countries include: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Uruguay.

Commercial Drivers Licenses Issued by Canada or Mexico: If a driver has a valid Commercial Driver License issued by Canada or Mexico, the license must be honored as required by federal law (see 49 USC 31301 *et seq.* and 49 CFR 383.23).

Special Reciprocity Agreements with Germany and The Republic of Korea: Pursuant to MCL 257.302a(4) of the Michigan Vehicle Code, the Secretary of State has determined that the standards for licensing operators in Germany and the Republic of Korea correspond substantially to those of the State

of Michigan. Therefore, reciprocal driving privileges were extended to Germany, effective November 10, 1997, and to the Republic of Korea, effective February 14, 2012. Persons holding valid driver's licenses issued by Germany or the Republic of Korea may operate passenger vehicles in Michigan on such licenses, if they are not receiving compensation for such operation. The privileges extended to Germany and Republic of Korea have not been withdrawn. If you have any questions, please contact the Michigan Department of State at (888) SOS-MICH; (888) 767-6424."

1949 Convention on Road Traffic: Residents of countries that are signatories to the 1949 Convention may drive in this country if they have a valid non-commercial driver's license issued by their country of residence. For a list of participating countries, please visit https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsV.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XI-B-1&chapter=11&Temp=mtdsg5&clang=_en

Additional Foreign Driver's Licenses Valid for Nonresidents Under Michigan Law: Under state law, additional foreign driver's licenses are now valid in Michigan with the requirement that all nonresident drivers with foreign licenses must carry an English translation of their license. The Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC) supported the legislation that resulted in [Public Act 138, 2016](#).

Licenses from "non-treaty" countries are now recognized as valid provided the driver can prove "legal presence" in the United States. Nonresidents who have a license from a "treaty country" and it is in English or have a translation, are driving legally in Michigan. Nonresidents who have a license from a "non-treaty" country, must possess a valid passport, a valid visa, or other valid documents to verify their legal presence in the U.S. and an English translation.

For more information and a list of treaty countries, please visit the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center resource page: <https://michiganimmigrant.org/sites/default/files/SB501English.pdf>

International Driving Permit: All drivers with foreign licenses that are not in English are now required to have the license translated into English with a document from their home country called an "International Driving Permit" or "IDP". For individual who cannot get that document, a translation that has similar information is required. Anyone fluent in both languages relevant to the license can do the translation. There is no requirement in the law that a translator have any particular certification.

SAMPLE DRIVER'S LICENSE TRANSLATION FORM

**[ATTACH
PHOTO OF
DRIVER TO
TRANSLATION]**

TRANSLATION OF PERTINENT PARTS OF FOREIGN DRIVER'S LICENSE:

NAME: MIDDLE: LAST:

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PHONE NUMBER: HOME STREET ADDRESS ON LICENSE:

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CITY: STATE/PROVINCE: ZIP CODE:

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DRIVER'S LICENSE NO.: COUNTRY OF ISSUE EXPIRATION DATE:

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BIRTHPLACE: CITY: COUNTRY: BIRTHDATE (MO DAY YEAR):

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PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX BELOW TO INDICATE THE TYPE OF VEHICLE FOR WHICH LICENSE IS VALID:

☐ MOTORCYCLE ☐ PASSENGER CAR ☐ VEHICLE OVER 7,700 LBS
☐ VEHICLE OVER 8 SEATS ☐ VEHICLE WITH HEAVY TRAILER

TRANSLATOR'S CERTIFICATION

I, _____, AM COMPETENT TO TRANSLATE FROM THE _____
LANGUAGE TO ENGLISH AND I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS A TRUE AND
CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THE PERTINENT PARTS OF THE ATTACHED FOREIGN DRIVER'S
LICENSE.

SIGNATURE OF TRANSLATOR: DATE:

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Telephone number and agency information of translator, if any:

Family Information

I3S hopes that this section will help you and your family be better prepared for life in the U.S.

CHILD SAFETY

Car Safety: When buying a car seat, check carefully to see that it meets approved safety requirements. You can be fined by the police if your child is not in a car seat. When using the car seat, be sure to carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions every time your child travels. Visit the Michigan State Police website to see the current laws regarding car seats.

<https://www.michigan.gov/en/msp/divisions/ohsp/Child-Passenger-Safety>

Child Abuse and Neglect: Michigan law forbids child abuse (beating or excessive punishment inflicted by the parents or other family members). Teachers and childcare providers are required by law to report any suspected child abuse to the county children services agency. They may conduct an investigation. Children must never be left alone in the home or in public at any time. If the police investigate and find that child neglect exists, they may file child endangerment charges against the parents and take the children to the county children services agency temporarily.

For more information on U.S. child safety laws and safety tips, please visit

https://www.cdc.gov/parents/children/safety-in-the-home-and-community.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/parents/children/safety.html

CHILD CARE

Babysitters: People who stay with children when the parent is absent are known as babysitters. When both parents leave the house for even a short time, children must have a babysitter.

Day Care Centers: Day care centers provide care for children whose parents have to be away all day. Various programs and activities are often provided. Ask for a description of the center's program.

SCHOOLS

Preschools and Nursery Schools: In these schools (ages 3 - young 5's), the main goal is typically not academic learning, but reading readiness, socialization and a broad range of other learning experiences. Usually no lunch is served as the program typically run only in the morning or afternoon.

Kindergarten: At most public and some private schools, children who are 5 years old attend kindergarten. Children are required by Michigan law to attend kindergarten. Children learn reading readiness, social skills and basic elementary education. A child cannot enter first grade without completing kindergarten.

School System: There are three school levels: elementary (ages 5-11), middle school (ages 11-14), and high school (ages 14-18).

For more information on the U.S. school system, please visit:

[https:// usahello.org/education/children/grade-levels/#gref](https://usahello.org/education/children/grade-levels/#gref)

Types of Schools

- **Public Schools:** In all public schools, education including textbooks and bus service is free. Typically, boys and girls attend classes together, Monday through Friday, seven hours a day. Hot lunches are usually available for purchase or your child may bring a lunch from home. You may enroll your child in the English as a Second Language program if he/she has shown a need on the English Enrollment Test.
- **Parochial Schools:** These schools are church affiliated and partially subsidized by the church and partially by the family. In general, children learn the same basic subjects as in conventional public schools but may also study religion. Usually, children are required to wear uniforms and may be subject to more rigid guidelines. Typically, hot lunches are provided at the school and you may be asked to volunteer with various school activities.
- **Private Schools:** These schools are fully funded by families and outside donations. The philosophy of the schools varies greatly so parents should visit the school and read about its philosophy before enrolling children.

To enroll your child in Kalamazoo Public Schools:

Contact the KPS Administration Building by calling (269) 337-0100 or visit them at 1220 Howard Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. | <http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com>

To enroll your child in Portage Public Schools:

Please visit <https://portageps.org/enrollment/info/> for information.

Parent's Responsibilities

- **You will need to register your child for school at their designated registration times.** Contact the school your child will be attending for scheduling and registration. Your child may need a TB test, proof of vaccinations, and doctor's physical checkup to register.
- **Bring up any concern about your child's social, cultural, and education adjustment.** Call the school and ask for an appointment to discuss your concerns. You do not need to wait for parent/teacher conferences to meet with someone from your child's school.
- **Make sure that your child is at school on time.** Promptness in arriving at school is required. If your child misses the school bus, you are responsible for transportation.
- **Write excuses for your child's absence.** Acceptable reasons for absence are: sickness, sickness or death in the family and religious holidays.
- **Schedule appointments with doctors or dentists after school hours when possible**
- **Dress your child for the weather.** The weather in Kalamazoo changes rapidly. Play times are usually outside so your child will need an extra jacket or sweater to put on or take off as needed. Label all clothing and personal items with your child's name.
- **Withdraw your child from school when you leave Kalamazoo.** Send a letter to the child's teacher or principal giving the exact date of withdrawal. Report cards, certificates of attendance, etc., will be given to you by the school upon request.
- **Volunteer as a parent aide in your child's class.** If you would enjoy helping with school activities or want to share information about your culture, let your child's principal or teacher know at the beginning of the year.