

University of Nebraska Medical Center & University of Nebraska at Omaha

# SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION:

A guidebook for international students, staff, faculty and visitors

# COVID-19 INFORMATION

**Welcome! We are happy to have you join our campus communities.**

This is an unprecedented year. We have made necessary adjustments to our campus policies as a result of the current pandemic. In addition to the information in this handbook, please note the following important points:

- Some businesses and offices have changed their regular business hours due to COVID-19. We advise you to call ahead to see what the current business hours are.
- Visits to UNMC Student Health and UNO Health Services are by appointment only. You can contact these offices by calling UNMC (402-559-5158) or UNO (402-554-2374).
- Visit these websites for current COVID-19 information:
  - » UNMC [unmc.edu/coronavirus](https://unmc.edu/coronavirus)
  - » UNO [unomaha.edu/news/coronavirus](https://unomaha.edu/news/coronavirus)

We hope your time at UNMC or UNO is successful. We are committed to supporting you while you are here. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Again, welcome!

UNMC Office of Global Engagement

UNO International Programs

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# WELCOME

Welcome to Omaha, one of America's best cities to live, work and learn.

We are happy to host you at one or both of our outstanding institutions: the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), Nebraska's premier metropolitan university; and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), with our primary clinical partner, Nebraska Medicine, a health science center with the mission to lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future.



I am privileged to serve as chancellor of both institutions. And, through this synergy, we are committed to leveraging the strengths of each university to create a more cohesive global engagement program. With the combined power of these two universities, we provide numerous opportunities to cooperate and collaborate on global engagement issues related to education, research and service.

We are committed to international collaboration, partnership and friendship. We challenge you to reach your full potential, with appropriate institutional guidance, encouragement and support. Your success is our success.

We are here for you. We are glad to have you here with us.

Please become familiar with this handbook, and take full advantage of the resources noted herein.

My best wishes as you begin this exciting journey.

Now, together, let's get to work.

Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.  
Chancellor

# WELCOME



We are pleased that you have made the decision to join the University of Nebraska Medical Center or University of Nebraska at Omaha.

We welcome and support students and scholars from diverse nations and cultures. Your presence on our campus contributes to the rich tapestry of students, staff, and faculty.

You have taken an important step investing in yourself and your future. We provide personalized support services to international students and scholars, and opportunities for all students to enhance their experience. All around you are

individuals, groups, and activities that serve to enrich your life and help you feel at home in your new community.

This handbook will provide information for current and future students, visiting scholars, international partners, as well as faculty and staff.

Our staff welcome you and hope that you will always feel free to stop by for assistance, ask questions, or just say a friendly hello. We extend warm greetings and wishes as you begin your academic program here.

Jane L. Meza, PhD

Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Engagement  
University of Nebraska Medical Center and  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Interim Executive Director of Health Security  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Welcome to UNMC.

You are entering an academic health science center where possibilities for personal growth and learning are limited only by your own diligence, intelligence and imagination. Here, you will study and work with researchers and health care professionals known around the world as experts in their fields. You will learn from the best because we want you to be the best in your chosen discipline.

Congratulations on your first step toward a career through which you will surely make a difference in this world.

H. Dele Davies, MD, MS, MHCM  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Dean for Graduate Studies  
Professor of Pediatrics  
University of Nebraska Medical Center





# WELCOME



The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) is like a family. That's a phrase we say often around here, and we mean it. As you contemplate this important decision to study in a new place, a new community, and perhaps even a new culture, one thing that brings all of us together is our desire to support each other, discover the world through each other's gifts and perspectives, and create the kind of community that inspires us all to be better.

UNO is more than a university. We are a diverse community that believes in the power of collaboration. All learners who have done the hard work of preparation are welcome here. Together, we explore new, innovation ideas, whether in healthcare, public policy, information technology, business, the arts, literature, education, biomechanics, or whichever of our 80 undergraduate and 70 graduate programs. We address pressing local and international issues. We serve others.

As you begin this journey, I encourage you to take advantage of the many rich academic and student life opportunities at UNO. Please also take time to explore Omaha. Learn how our campus touches every part of our city.

And know that if you are ever in need of support, or simply have a question you need answered, we stand ready to help with staff and services provided specifically for our international students and scholars.

We are glad you are here.

Sacha Kopp, PhD  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
University of Nebraska at Omaha



# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

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PREPARING TO TRAVEL

# INTRODUCTION

Careful planning and preparation by students and exchange visitors can ensure that the process goes smoothly. Here are some things you should do:

- Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and visa are still valid for entry into the United States (U.S.). The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- Check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- If the visa states the name of the institution you will attend or identifies the exchange program in which you are participating, verify that this information is accurate as well. If your review indicates any discrepancies or potential problems, visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a new visa.
- Students and exchange visitors entering the U.S. for the first time under their respective non-immigrant visa classification **may only be admitted up to 30-days prior to the program start date.**
- When you receive your U.S. non-immigrant visa at the Embassy or Consulate in your country, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. **You should not open this envelope!** The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port-of-entry will open the envelope.
- Be sure to carry your immigration document (I-20 or DS2019), current passport, and your admission or invitation letter in your carry-on luggage. A photocopy of your I-20 or DS2019 on your phone is not acceptable.
- Make sure you are in contact with the International Office at your campus, [unmc.edu/IHME](http://unmc.edu/IHME) or [world.unomaha.edu](http://world.unomaha.edu).

UNMC International Health and Medical Education  
Business Services Center, 3034K  
402-559-8326

UNO International Programs  
Arts and Sciences (AS), 241  
402-554-2293

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## DOCUMENTS

### VISA INFORMATION

A visa is a grant of permission to enter the country. The U.S. entrance requirements are as follows:

- You must be healthy. Specific admissible health conditions change from time to time, please consult your U.S. embassy or consulate for current information.
- You must be law-abiding. Criminal behavior is grounds for deportation.
- You must be able to support yourself financially during your stay.
- You intend to leave the U.S. after you complete your studies.



There are three types of student visas:

- **F-1 (Student Visa)** The F-1 visa is for full-time students enrolled in an academic or language program. F-1 students may stay in the U.S. for the full length of their academic program, plus any post-completion practical training, and an additional 60-day grace period. F-1 students have strict enrollment requirements throughout their academic programs and, unless granted an authorized extension by the program sponsor, must complete their studies by the program end date listed on their I-20 form. Most F-1 students enrolled in degree programs are eligible for practical training (OPT employment) during or following each successful degree level completion. Students who complete degree programs in certain STEM-eligible fields may also be eligible for additional practical training employment authorization.
- **H1-B (Occupational)** The H-1B visa allows a professional to work under sponsorship of a business. These positions typically require a bachelor's degree or higher in the field of study related to the occupation (e.g., engineers, scientists, or mathematicians). The H1-B visa is usually associated with an occupational position that requires specific specialized duties and complex knowledge to perform the duties. The initial period of stay is 3 years with possible extensions available in 3-year increments. The H1-B visa issuing process is more complex than for a student.
- **J-1 (Exchange Visitor Visa)** The J-1 visa is issued for several different categories, including degree and non-degree students, short-term and research scholars as well as medical residencies and others. Its length of authorization will often be determined by the purpose of the visit and will generally be limited to the dates identified on the DS-2019 form issued by the sponsoring institution. The J-1 visa in many categories may require the visitor to return home for a minimum of two years before returning to

the U.S. with employment sponsorship, such as H-1B or Permanent Residency. There are also time-limited bars on repeat participation in certain J-1 categories. The most common categories are:

- » **J-1 Research Scholar** – The Research Scholar category is used to invite students and scholars to the U.S. to engage in research or training in a particular field of study. This visa type allows stays for as little as three weeks and as long as five years, and requires demonstration of financial support for the duration of time requested. This support can come from any source, including from the inviting institution (as employment), the home country institution, personal funds or private affidavits from family/friends.
- » **J-1 Short-Term Scholar** – The Short-Term Scholar category is similar to the Research Scholar category except that it has a maximum duration of six months (no minimum duration).
- » **J-1 Student** – The Student category is issued for any level of education, including Non-Degree study under certain circumstances. It's duration is determined by the average length for the program of study, typically four years for undergraduate, two-to-three years for masters and five years for doctorate students. The J-1 Student category has features and requirements similar to the F-1 Student visa, but has some significant differences in both how it is administered and the post-completion training (employment) opportunities available. This category is not commonly used unless there is a reason the F-1 visa would not be available to the student.

Of these, the F-1 and the J-1 are the most common for international students.

## **SPOUSE AND CHILDREN**

- Your spouse and unmarried, minor children who intend to reside with you during your study may apply for F-2 visas. Your school must issue them an individual Form I-20, which is required to apply for their visas. You must provide a copy of your F-1 visa and provide proof of relationship.
- Your minor children are permitted to attend school in the United States while accompanying you.

For more information, visit:

[unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship](http://unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship)

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov)

[uscis.gov/working-united-states/working-us](http://uscis.gov/working-united-states/working-us)

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## CHANGING VISA STATUS AFTER ARRIVAL

The B-2 visa (Tourist Visa) is not considered a student visa for full-time study. Studying in the U.S. on a B-2 visa is grounds for deportation. Switching from a B-2 visa to a F-1 or J-1 visa after arriving in the U.S. is extremely difficult and may be grounds for deportation or prosecution for visa fraud. If you intend to enter the U.S. with a B-2 visa and possibly switch later to a F-1 or J-1 visa, be sure to get the visa with a "Prospective Student" stamp on it. You'll probably need to supply a copy of a letter of admission before they will grant you a B-2 visa with a "Prospective Student" stamp on it. As a general rule, if you intend to enter the U.S. as a student, you should get a F-1 or J-1 visa. If you decide to change status after arriving in the U.S., you should wait at least 60 days to avoid presumptions of visa fraud.

## MAINTAINING VISA STATUS AFTER ARRIVAL

If a student on a F-1 visa is not able to complete their studies by the expiration date on the I-20 form, they must apply to the school's international advisor for an extension 30 days before expiration. Extensions are normally granted for academic and medical reasons so long as there have been no violations of visa status.

It is possible to transfer schools after arrival on an F-1 visa. You will need to notify your current school of the transfer, prove admission to the new school, obtain an I-20 form from the new school, and begin studies there within 30 days of arrival. You will complete the student certification section of the I-20 and must deliver it to the international advisor at the new school within 15 days of beginning attendance at the new school.

If you are changing majors at your current school, or are changing degree programs (e.g., from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree program), you will need to have the international advisor update your I-20 to reflect the new major or degree objective. This will produce a new I-20 with new validity dates.

**TIP:** Always keep all I-20 forms issued to you, regardless of the dates or programs they reflect. Do not discard or destroy any I-20 forms unless directed to do so by your international advisor.

For more information, visit the UNMC Visa Sponsorship or UNO International Advising webpage:

[unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship](http://unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship)  
[unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/  
student-support/advising](http://unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/advising)

## **PROVING NON-IMMIGRANT INTENT**

You may need to establish that you intend to return to your home country after your studies are complete. You may need to demonstrate economic, personal, social and cultural ties to your home country. Some of the methods of doing this include:

- Providing a list of the names, addresses, ages and occupations of close family members who remain in the home country.
- Providing documentation of financial ties to the home country, such as ownership of real estate.
- Providing evidence of job prospects in the home country, such as a letter from a potential employer.
- Providing an explanation of why equivalent educational training is not available in your home country or as suitable.

Likewise, if you have close relatives or financial interests in the United States, you may have difficulty getting a visa. If a consular officer believes that you intend to immigrate to the U.S., the officer must, as a matter of law, deny the visa.

## **ADDITIONAL VISA INFORMATION**

Once you are in the U.S., check your visa status carefully before traveling to other countries. Your visa must permit multiple entry. Otherwise, you might not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. when you return from your trip. It is very difficult to get a new U.S. visa outside your home country and the U.S. if you've been denied re-entry into the U.S.

For students on an F-1 visa, your passport must be valid for at least six months when you enter the U.S. and your I-20 must have been signed by the international advisor within the past six months. You must also have a valid F-1 visa stamped in your passport and carry documentation of financial support. The rules for students on a J-1 visa are similar, except the DS-2019 form must have been signed by your sponsor within the past year. But there are exceptions for students on both visas, especially for students who have changed their visa type while in the U.S. or who come from certain countries, so check with your international advisor before any trip outside the U.S., including trips to Canada or Mexico. There are also limits on the amount of time you may stay outside the U.S. before your visa becomes invalid.

For tips on preparing for your visa interview, see this link prepared by the NAFSA organization: [nafsa.org/professional-resources/browse-by-interest/10-points-remember-when-applying-student-visa](https://nafsa.org/professional-resources/browse-by-interest/10-points-remember-when-applying-student-visa)

For more information visit [travel.state.gov/visa](https://travel.state.gov/visa)



# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## **PASSPORTS**

Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay in the U.S.

Before leaving for the U.S., make a photocopy of the page containing your photograph and passport number. If your passport is lost or stolen, this will make it easier to replace the passport. Keep the photocopy in a safe place, but do not carry it with your passport.

If your passport is lost or stolen, notify your embassy and the police immediately.



## **SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

To get a F-1 visa approved, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to pay for the first year of study and that you have resources available to cover the rest of your educational program. For a J-1 visa, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to pay for all tuition and living costs for your entire stay in the U.S.

The information you provide on the I-20 form (F-1) or DS-2019 form (J-1) will be scrutinized very carefully by both the international advisor at the school and the U.S. Department of State. If you don't have the resources necessary for study in the U.S., you will not get a visa.

# IMMUNIZATIONS

## UNMC STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

Student Health Services is located in Family Medicine Outpatient Clinic on Level 3 of the Durham Outpatient Center.

[unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth](http://unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth)

### STUDENT HEALTH CONTACT INFORMATION

Student Health Office: 402-559-5158

Appointments: 402-559-7200

Fax immunization forms to: 402-559-8118

Fax for prescription refills: 402-559-5550

### OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES

Student Counseling [unmc.edu/stucouns](http://unmc.edu/stucouns)

Scheduling Appointments [unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth](http://unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth)

Insurance [unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth/student-health-insurance](http://unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth/student-health-insurance)

## UNMC IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

For more information visit [unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth/required-immunizations](http://unmc.edu/familymed/studenthealth/required-immunizations)

International visitors/observers, please contact Nasreen Maiwandi at [maiwandi@unmc.edu](mailto:maiwandi@unmc.edu).



## PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT HEALTH COVERAGE THROUGH FUND B

Fund B is mandated by the Chancellor and is approved by the Board of Regents to support Student Health operations.

**All UNMC Students** are automatically enrolled in Student Health Fund B during registration if taking:

- Seven or more hours as an undergraduate student;
- Four or more hours as a graduate student;
- Four or more hours during Summer Sessions (both undergraduate and graduate students)

Part-time students (taking less than five hours) and dependents of students are allowed, but not required, to participate in Fund B.

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

Fund B for Student Health begins at 12:01 a.m. on the first day of the semester for which the premium covers. Fund B coverage ceases for UNMC students at 11:59 p.m. on a student's termination date, graduation date, or the last day of the semester (for continuing students).

## **STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE**

In addition to payment of Fund B (as described above), UNMC requires that full-time students have inpatient (hospitalization) insurance. Full-time students who wish to waive/decline UNMC's endorsed student health insurance program may do so by providing proof of coverage through their parents, spouse, employer or their own personal plan. If you decline the insurance you must be able to document that insurance from your home country will cover expenses in the U.S. In most cases it is better to purchase the UNMC endorsed student health insurance. If you wish to waive/decline the student insurance, you must fill out an electronic waiver form that can be found at <https://net.unmc.edu/care/>. Failure to complete the waiver will result in an automatic charge for the insurance to your tuition statement.

Also, all PhD students, regardless of enrollment status, must either accept the fee for health insurance or file the paperwork to formally waive the charging of the insurance fee.

For further information on health insurance see the student handbook at [unmc.edu/studentservices/\\_documents/handbook.pdf](https://unmc.edu/studentservices/_documents/handbook.pdf)

## **EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE**

[https://wiki.unmc.edu/index.php/Guidelines\\_-\\_Benefits](https://wiki.unmc.edu/index.php/Guidelines_-_Benefits)

A flexible benefits program is offered as part of an employment agreement. The program allows you to choose from a group of benefit options. You can customize these options to fit your personal needs and lifestyle.

J scholars using UNO employee health insurance must consult their international advisor about buying immediate mandatory insurance for medical evacuation and repatriation.

## NEBRASKA MEDICINE UNO HEALTH CENTER

The UNO Health Center is located in the Health and Kinesiology building, room 102.

Please contact us to make an appointment. Walk-ins not permitted.

402-554-2374 | [healthcenter.unomaha.edu](http://healthcenter.unomaha.edu)

The UNO Health Center offers in-person and virtual care for illnesses and injuries, chronic conditions, mental health medication management and more.

### UNO OFFICE HOURS

Refer to [healthcenter.unomaha.edu](http://healthcenter.unomaha.edu)

### OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES

Services [unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/offered](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/offered)

Insurance [unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/insurance-policy](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/insurance-policy)

## UNO IMMUNIZATION AND TB REQUIREMENTS

UNO requires all students, including international students and scholars, to provide immunization records in English from your doctor or hospital showing two Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) shots or a blood test report from a laboratory or doctor showing you are immune. We recommend getting these immunizations in your home country. If needed, you can get the immunizations at the Nebraska Medicine UNO Health Center upon arrival. The cost is covered by your UNO UHCSR student health insurance policy.

If you do not bring these immunization records signed by your home country physician, you must have the first dose of the immunization immediately upon arrival (after quarantine). The second dose must be given 30 days later. You will not be allowed to continue taking classes if this requirement is not met. This policy includes all UNO students, intensive English students in the ILUNO program and IPD students.

In addition, UNO requires all international students and scholars to complete a tuberculosis test at the UNO Health Center upon arrival (after quarantine). Appointments are required. Call 402-554-2374 to schedule.

For more information about this health requirement, visit [unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/new-student-health/international](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/health-services/new-student-health/international).

Normal hours prior to COVID-19 were Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## PACKING FOR DEPARTURE

### WHAT TO BRING

The following checklist will help you make sure you haven't missed anything important.

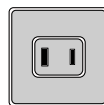


### OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

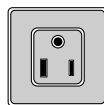
- When you travel, you should carry some specific documents on your person. Do not check them in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the Customs and Border Protection Officer. As a result you may not be able to enter the United States.
- Passport, plane tickets and I-20 or DS-2019 (immigration documents)
- Official academic transcripts and English translations
- Medical and dental records, including immunization and vaccination records and prescriptions, eyeglasses and insurance records
- Marriage certificate and birth certificates for all family members
- National and international driver's licenses
- Make two photocopies of any important document. Leave one copy at home and bring one copy with you, but keep it separate from the originals. It might be worthwhile to bring several spare sets of passport photographs in case you need to get a new passport or visa.
- A list of the names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of key contacts, both in the U.S. and at home, including the contact information for friends and family who live in the U.S.
- Books, including a dictionary and phrase book
- Business cards

### ELECTRICAL CONVERTERS

- Electrical converters/adapters. In the U.S. the power sockets are of Type A and B. The standard voltage is 120 V and the standard frequency is 60 Hz. (Note: Type A will work with Type B, but Type B will NOT work with Type A.)



TYPE A



TYPE B



## CURRENCY

- U.S. currency, credit cards, financial records (copy of bank statements and list of account numbers)
- After you clear customs in the U.S., use an ATM so you can have some U.S. currency.
- Emergency money (keep U.S. \$100 hidden somewhere on your person in the event of an emergency) after you arrive in the U.S.
- You should bring enough money with you to cover your first month's expenses until you are able to transfer funds from abroad. This will be at least U.S. \$1,500 but probably more (look at your budget to be sure).



## CLOTHING

- Do not pack clothes for winter months such as heavy clothing, boots, coat, hat and gloves or mittens. You may purchase these items at a later date when needed.
- Your carry-on bag should also include one change of clothing along with all medications, critical documents and other valuables (jewelry, electronics, etc.)

## OTHER TIPS

- The following items may seem inconsequential, but you will find them very useful: cell phone, pen, paper, safety pins, paper clips, sewing kit, extra buttons, first aid kit, snacks and plastic bags. If you lock your luggage, ensure that is a lock approved by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). More information about TSA approved locks can be found under the "Checked Baggage Screening" heading at [tsa.gov/travel/security-screening#quickset-security\\_screening\\_quicktabs\\_3](https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening#quickset-security_screening_quicktabs_3).
- Label your luggage inside and out with your name, contact information. If your luggage is lost in transit, this will help the airline return it to you.
- It can be very expensive to transport a lot of belongings. It might be better to buy what you need in the U.S. If you decide to send your belongings separately, your main options are by boat and by air. For example, if you do not already have winter clothing, buy it in Omaha, to save space in your checked luggage. Shipping items by boat takes

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

longer, but is also about half the cost of sending them by air. Allow eight (8) weeks for items to arrive by boat, or one or two weeks for items shipped by air.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING**

Before you depart, you should be aware of USDA's guidelines for bringing agricultural items into the United States. USDA restricts or prohibits many of these items from entering the country because they could carry pests or diseases that could threaten human health or devastate the environment, crops, agricultural animals, ornamental plants, and community landscapes.

***Foods not commercially packaged will be confiscated.*** Individuals who fail to declare non-commercial agricultural items may be subject to penalties ranging from \$1,100 to \$60,000 per violation.

For more information about items that are not allowed, visit [aphis.usda.gov/aphis/home](https://aphis.usda.gov/aphis/home)



## WEATHER

Omaha experiences all four seasons. Summer brings average temperatures ranging from the mid to high 80s during the heat of the day to the mid-60s at night. In the spring, the average high temperature is around 63 degrees and the average low is about 40 degrees. Fall weather in Omaha usually stays around 70 degrees during the day cooling off to the mid to low 50s at night. Wintertime average high temperatures are in the mid-30s with average lows dipping to the mid-teens. However, these are just average temperatures and not a prediction of what the weather will be like.



- July and August, on average, are the warmest months
- January and February are usually the coldest months
- Most precipitation normally occurs in April and May
- Average yearly snowfall is approximately 28 inches and usually falls during December, January and February

AVERAGE TEMPERATURES		
MONTH	HIGH	LOW
January	25°F / 0°C	12°F / -11°C
February	30°F / 3°C	18°F / -8°C
March	40°F / 10°C	28°F / -2°C
April	63°F / 17°C	40°F / 4°C
May	74°F / 23°C	51°F / 11°C
June	84°F / 29°C	61°F / 16°C
July	93°F / 31°C	73°F / 19°C
August	95°F / 29°C	73°F / 18°C
September	87°F / 25°C	58°F / 12°C
October	65°F / 18°C	41°F / 5°C
November	48°F / 9°C	28°F / -2°C
December	32°F / 2°C	16°F / -9°C

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## CALENDAR DATES

In the United States, dates are written as month/day/year. This is the opposite of the British method, in which dates are written day/month/year. So while 4/3/67 would be March 4, 1967 in Europe, it is April 3, 1967 in the United States. It is best to write out dates using the month name in order to avoid confusion.



# ARRIVAL IN CUSTOMS

- If the inspector cannot automatically verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be escorted to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.
- It is recommended that you have readily available the name and phone number of your advisor at UNMC or UNO in case your admission/participation needs to be verified.
- Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or exchange visitor admission into the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student or exchange visitor is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A, Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor. This form authorizes temporary admission for 30 days into the United States and requires the student or exchange visitor to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Non-compliance with the directions contained on these forms can result in future adverse action.
- Once you have your visa stamp in your passport, it is safe to make your travel arrangements to the U.S., though you need to be aware of the timelines for arriving. F-1 and J-1 student visas allow you to arrive up to 30 days in advance of the start date of the form you hold (I-20 or DS-2019). The I-20 specifies an “Earliest Admission Date” which is the earliest date that you can enter the U.S. The DS-2019 will not specify this date, but you can simply count back from the start date to establish the earliest date to enter (up to 30 days prior).
- If you find you are unable to arrive prior to the start of classes identified on your form, please communicate this to your international student advisor and academic program as early as possible. Arrangements may need to be made regarding your registration and course attendance depending on the length of the delay. If necessary, your international advisor will send you a letter that indicates you have permission to enter the U.S. after the start of the semester.



# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

- Upon arrival at the Port of Entry, you will be directed to a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) station to have your documents examined. Be sure to have your documentation ready, including your I-20 or DS-2019 and your passport. You should also have readily available your admission letter and your financial support documentation (if not indicated on your admission letter). Be sure your passport is open to the proper visa page (F-1 for I-20 and J-1 for DS-2019). If you have any other U.S. visas in your passport, be sure that the CBP Officer is inspecting the one for which you are seeking entry. If they mistakenly have your passport open to a valid B1/B2 visa, you may end up receiving the wrong status of entry, which can be very difficult to fix if not identified immediately.
- In some cases, even if all documentation is presented, you may be selected to undergo "Secondary Inspection." This allows CBP officers to conduct additional research in order to verify information. These verifications are conducted apart from the primary inspection line so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.
- If for some reason you are asked to, or if you feel the need to contact your UNMC or UNO international advisor, remember that the name and phone number of the person is on your DS-2019 (not on I-20). You should also have the email address of this person through continued correspondence regarding your admission to UNMC or UNO.
- Upon completion of your initial CBP encounter or at the conclusion of Secondary Inspection, your passport should be stamped (near the visa) with the date, your visa status and how long you can remain inside the U.S. with that status. For F-1 and J-1 visa holders, this should be indicated as D/S which stands for Duration of Status. This means that as long as you are in compliance with your visa regulations, you can remain in the U.S. even after the visa stamp in your passport expires. If the stamp does not indicate D/S and shows a specific date instead, you should inquire why it is a date instead of D/S.
- If, upon completion of the CBP inspection, you are found to be mostly, but not fully in compliance with the status you are seeking, you may be issued a Form I-515A, Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor. This form authorizes temporary admission into the United States for 30 days and requires you to take action in order to have your status updated to D/S. You should bring this form to your international student advisor immediately upon your arrival to campus. Your advisor will help you prepare a response to the I-515A and submit it to the proper authority. Once the I-515A response has been recorded, your status will be updated to reflect D/S rather than a specific date of expiration.

- Shortly after your entry to the U.S., your arrival will be recorded in the online I-94 system where it can be retrieved. It is important to check your I-94 each time you enter the U.S. to ensure that your entry was recorded properly. Your international advisor can assist you with this each time if you need help. If you discover an error in the I-94 information, or if you cannot retrieve your I-94 from the system, please contact your international advisor right away to investigate and take corrective action. The I-94 system is responsible for identifying the status you hold while in the U.S. and if it is incorrect or missing, your status may be considered invalid until the correction is made. Corrections are generally quick and easy so long as the error is through no fault of your own.
- Once you arrive on the UNMC campus, you should arrange to meet with your academic department to discuss your registration and other important student topics relevant to your program. After meeting with your department, you should arrange a meeting with your international student advisor to have your SEVIS record activated. Your international student advisor will make copies of appropriate documentation (I-20, passport, visa, I-94) and collect information from you regarding your local address and course registration, which are required for SEVIS activation to occur.

At UNO, you will want to complete the online International Student Orientation or make an appointment with an international advisor.

- If you are offered on-campus employment, through an assistantship or some other type of on-campus job, you will qualify to receive a Social Security Number (SSN). To obtain this number, you must apply in person at the Social Security Administration (SSA) and present your documents, including your passport, I-20, I-94 and two letters from UNMC or UNO, respectively. One letter is your on-campus job offer and the other letter is from your international student advisor. During your initial visit with your international advisor, you should mention whether or not you will be working on campus and need this letter. Your international advisor must register your attendance in SEVIS prior to visiting the Social Security Office.

# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## OMAHA ARRIVAL

### TRANSPORTATION FROM THE AIRPORT IN OMAHA

There are a number of ways you can arrange for transportation from the airport in Omaha. Below are some options.

#### RENTAL CARS

**ADVANTAGE** 800-777-5500

**ALAMO** 800-462-5266

**AVIS** 800-831-2847

**BUDGET** 402-348-0455

**DOLLAR** 800-800-4000

**ENTERPRISE** 800-325-8007

**HERTZ** 800-654-3131

**NATIONAL** 800-227-7368

**THRIFTY** 800-367-2277

#### SHUTTLES

If you stay at a hotel, check if they offer a shuttle service. Local hotel/motel (with or without shuttles) phone boards/reservation centers are located near the baggage claim areas.

#### TAXIS

**zTRIP** 402-292-2222

[ztrip.com](http://ztrip.com)

#### SMARTPHONE APPLICATIONS

**UBER**

**LYFT**

UNO provides transportation from Eppley Airfield Omaha (OMA) for new students who live in residence halls during two specific dates prior to the new semester start dates in August and January. UNO students should check the International Programs website for airport pickup information and watch their email for detailed information.



## **TEMPORARY ACCOMODATIONS IN OMAHA**

Call or reserve online



### **HOTELS CLOSE TO UNMC**

#### **DOUBLETREE BY HILTON HOTEL OMAHA DOWNTOWN**

1616 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68102  
402-346-7600  
doubletree3.hilton.com

#### **ELEMENT OMAHA MIDTOWN CROSSING**

3253 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68131  
402-614-8080  
elementomahamidtowncrossing.com

#### **HOME2SUITE BY HILTON**

4440 Douglas Street, Omaha, NE 68131  
402-504-4848  
hilton.com/en/hotels/omamcht-home2-suites-  
omaha-un-medicalctr-area/

#### **HOMEWOOD SUITES BY HILTON OMAHA DOWNTOWN**

1314 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102  
402-345-5100  
homewoodsuites3.hilton.com

#### **HOLIDAY INN OMAHA DOWNTOWN-AIRPORT**

1420 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102  
402-341-0124  
ihg.com

#### **HYATT PLACE OMAHA/DOWNTOWN-OLD MARKET**

540 South 12th Street, Omaha, NE 68102  
402-513-5500  
omahadowntownoldmarket.place.hyatt.com

### **HOTELS CLOSE TO UNO**

[unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life/  
off-campus-housing](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life/off-campus-housing)

Be sure to check the UNO pre-departure packet online on the UNO International Advising website and ask for a UNO rate.



# PREPARING TO TRAVEL

## **HOUSING**

### **UNMC HOUSING**

[unmc.edu/student-services/student-life/housing](http://unmc.edu/student-services/student-life/housing)

### **UNO HOUSING**

[unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/housing-options](http://unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/housing-options)

[unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life)

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AFTER YOU ARRIVE

# MAPS

## OMAHA MAP





# UNO MAP



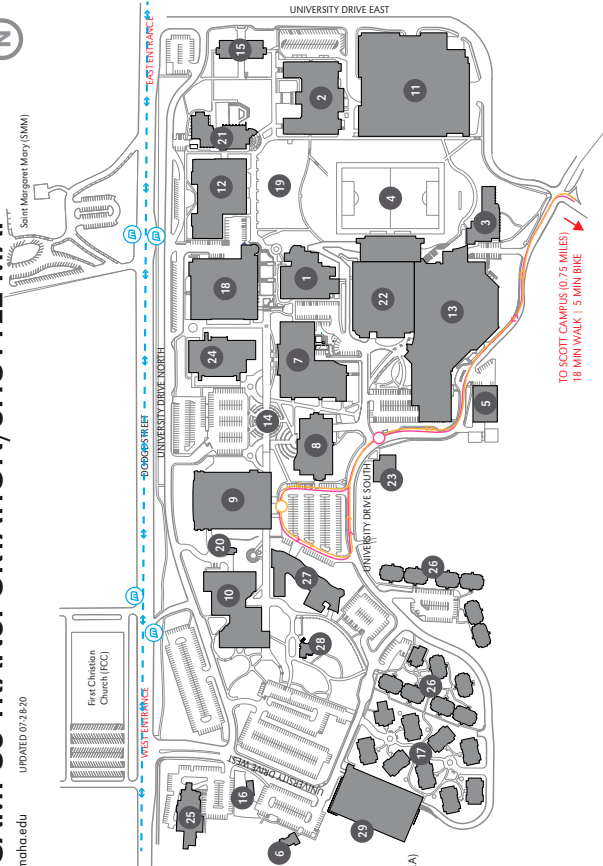
## UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA | DODGE CAMPUS TRANSPORTATION/SHUTTLE MAP

UPDATED 07/28/20

402.554.2800 | unomaha.edu

### BUILDING KEY

- 1 Alwine Hall (AH)
- 2 Arts & Sciences Hall (ASH)
- 3 Biomechanics Research Building (BRB)
- 4 Congelia Field (CF)
- 5 Central Utilities Plant (CUP)
- 6 College of Public Affairs & Community Service (CPACS)
- 8 Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (Weitz CEC)
- 9 Criss Library (CL)
- 10 Durham Science Center (DSC)
- 11 Eastpark Garage (EG)
- 12 Eastpark Garage (EG)
- Lot U - Middle Level
- Lot V - Upper Level
- 12 Eppley Administration Building (EAB)
- 13 Health & Kinesiology Building (HK)
- 14 Henningson Memorial Campanile (HMC)
- 15 (Oak) Tower (KT)
- 16 Landscape Services (LS)
- 17 Maverick Village (MV)
- 18 Mile Ball Student Center (MBC)
- 19 Pop Bowl (open space)
- 20 Resource Conservation & Recovery Area (RCRA)
- 21 Rosemary Hall (RH)
- 22 Student Center (SC)
- 23 Sculpture & Ceramics Studio (SCS)
- 24 Strauss Performing Arts Center (SPAC)
- 25 Thompson Alumni Center (TAC)
- 26 University Village (UV)
- 27 Weber Fine Arts Building (WRAB)
- 28 6553 University Drive South (VCS)
- 29 West Parking Garage (WPG)



**TRANSPORTATION/SHUTTLE ROUTE KEY**

- NEWMANN CENTER DODGE SHUTTLE
- SCOTT RESIDENT EXPRESS SHUTTLE
- METRO BUS ROUTE 2



## **MAP LINKS**

### **OMAHA MAP**

[https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/omaha/OmahaMap\\_web\\_5115f9cf-181f-4d80-b272-829b2d6db877.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/omaha/OmahaMap_web_5115f9cf-181f-4d80-b272-829b2d6db877.pdf)

### **UNMC MAP**

[unmc.edu/directions](http://unmc.edu/directions)

### **UNO MAP**

[unomaha.edu/about-uno/buildings-and-maps](http://unomaha.edu/about-uno/buildings-and-maps)



# AMBASSADOR PROGRAMS

## UNMC AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

UNMC's Global Ambassador program was designed to provide practical information about living and friendly support to new international students as they prepare for their new living community. Ambassadors and new international students are partnered during the summer. Partners are



assigned based on information provided in your registration. An email will be sent to new students about how to register with the ambassador program. Partner communications should begin several weeks before coming to Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., and continue across the first several weeks of the fall semester.

## UNO GETTING STARTED

Please visit the links provided below for information to help international students prepare to attend UNO. These links provide directions for what to do upon arrival in Omaha, Nebraska, and how to prepare for UNO campus life.

**UNO's Global Diplomat** program provides students to meet and greet incoming international students at the airport and residence halls and assists with settling in and getting to know the campus and Omaha.

For more UNO information visit:

[unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/\\_files/docs/pre-departure-packet.pdf](http://unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/_files/docs/pre-departure-packet.pdf)

[unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/getting-started.php](http://unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/getting-started.php)

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

**VERY IMPORTANT – ORIENTATION IS MANDATORY.**

### UNMC

**Required Onboarding:**

[unmc.edu/student-services/rse/onboarding](http://unmc.edu/student-services/rse/onboarding)

**All Student Orientation:**

August 19 | 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Additional information will be provided regarding international student orientation.**

### UNO

UNO's 2020 international orientation has gone online. Please watch for emails about continuing orientation activities.

# TRAVELSMART

## TRAVELSMART PROGRAM

[livegreennebraska.com/travelsmart](http://livegreennebraska.com/travelsmart)

The TravelSmart program promotes *active transportation*, which includes biking, carpooling, taking the bus, and walking.

All staff and students affiliated with UNMC, Nebraska Medicine and Clarkson College who primarily work or study at the 42nd and Dewey Streets campus are welcome to participate.

As a TravelSmart participant, you have access to the following:

- Free online service to help match you with carpool partners
- Free carpool pass
- Free Omaha Metro bus pass and access to improved bus stops/shelters around campus
- Free indoor/secure bike parking and access to lockers and shower facilities
- Free ride home if an emergency occurs on a day that you use active transportation (Emergency Ride Home)
- Opportunity to cancel or keep your current parking permit (if you cancel it, you have a three-month grace period to request it back for the same parking lot)
- \$3 Daily-rate flexible parking for the days you travel to campus by yourself in a vehicle (assuming you cancel your current parking permit)

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Omaha does not have an extensive public transportation system. However, there are bus routes to many places.

You may also ride the Omaha city buses for free with your UNMC student I.D. or UNO MavCard.

Go to [ometro.com](http://ometro.com) for more information on fares and routes.



# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In most communities in the United States, but not all, dialing 911 on any phone will connect you to emergency services such as ambulance, fire and police. You do not need to put money in a pay phone to dial 911. Likewise, your college or university will have an on-campus emergency service with its own telephone number. You should memorize these telephone numbers.



You should receive a card with these phone numbers when you obtain your UNMC ID card. When on the UNMC campus, dial the security number rather than 911. Security will dispatch someone to your location immediately and then call 911 if needed. UNMC security officers are familiar with the campus and may be able to reach you sooner than Omaha police officers.

Another way to get emergency help is to dial 0, which reaches a telephone operator. Tell the operator that you have an emergency and the street address and city where help is needed. The operator will connect you to the appropriate emergency service.

Call the emergency telephone numbers if you need help immediately in a life-threatening situation. For example, you should dial 911 if a crime is in progress, someone is badly injured or ill, there is a fire or you fear for your life.

For non-emergencies you should call the non-emergency telephone number for the local police station or campus police. For example, if a car is blocking your driveway, or to report vandalism, if your car was damaged in the parking lot.

#### **EMERGENCIES (FIRE, AMBULANCE, SERIOUS ACCIDENTS) 911**

#### **UNMC INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOTLINE 402-559-5111**

This is the security office at UNMC. International students may call this number to ask for assistance with problems they encounter while new to living in Omaha.

#### **UNO PUBLIC SAFETY 402-554-2648**

#### **UNO ON-CAMPUS EMERGENCIES 402-554-2911**

#### **OMAHA POLICE (NON-EMERGENCY) 402-444-4877**

#### **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 211**

#### **UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA'S PHONE DIRECTORY [nebraska.edu/4in1](http://nebraska.edu/4in1)**

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Most people you meet in the United States will be friendly and helpful. However, there is still a moderate amount of crime. A few simple precautions will help keep you safe. Visit [crimemapping.com](http://crimemapping.com) for more information about crime rates in Omaha and other major cities in the U.S.

The following common tips will help prevent you from becoming the victim of a crime:

- **Tips for the Home.** Remember to lock the doors and close the windows to your apartment when you are not at home. You should also install window locks or stops on all the windows, especially if you are renting a first-floor apartment. Some people leave on lights and a radio to give the impression that someone is home.
- **Tips for the Car.** Keep your car doors locked at all times. Get a map and know where you are going and how to get there before you leave on a trip. Always park your car in a well-lit area. Never leave valuable articles or packages on the seat; lock them in the trunk.
- **Walking at Night.** Don't walk alone at night. Try to walk with a group of friends. Walk on busy well-lit streets and avoid poorly lit and deserted areas. If you are lost, walk as though you know where you are going and stop at the police station or a gas station for directions. Do not hitchhike or take rides with strangers. It is not safe.
- **Crossing the Street.** In the United States cars drive on the right side of the street, not the left. So on most streets cars will be approaching you from your left. Many international students have been hit by cars because they expect the cars to approach from the right. Always cross the street at a corner and look both ways before crossing the street.
- **Bicycle Safety.** Bicyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet at all times. Ride to the right side of the roadway. Never ride against the traffic. Wear brightly colored clothes and reflectors. Try not to ride alone. Use hand signals. For more tips on bicycling, go to [dot.nebraska.gov/media/4011/bicycle-safety-current.pdf](http://dot.nebraska.gov/media/4011/bicycle-safety-current.pdf)
- **Phone Scams.** A phone scam is when someone calls and says you have been specially selected (for this offer), you have won a valuable prize, or you owe money to the government. These are just some examples. If you answer the phone and hear this, hang up immediately. For more information, go to [consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams](http://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams).

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## PRACTICAL DAILY NEEDS

### SHOPPING SUGGESTIONS FROM OTHER STUDENTS



- **Aksarben Village** ([aksarbenvillage.com](http://aksarbenvillage.com))  
Located near the UNO campus, Aksarben Village is an entertainment and shopping community with unique shops, restaurants, bars, bike trails, movie theater, fitness facilities, outdoor live entertainment and green spaces.
- **Asian Market** ([asianmarketomaha.com](http://asianmarketomaha.com))  
Asian Market carries a wide selection of both Asian and non-Asian fresh vegetables, fruit, seafood and meat, as well as other grocery items: Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, African, Filipino, Korean, Japanese and more.
- **Bakers** ([bakersplus.com](http://bakersplus.com))  
This is a grocery store close to UNMC campus on the southwest corner of Leavenworth and Saddle Creek Road.
- **Target** ([target.com](http://target.com))  
They have food, clothing, health and beauty products and a pharmacy.
- **CVS/Walgreens** ([cvs.com](http://cvs.com) or [walgreens.com](http://walgreens.com))  
There are many CVS/Walgreens pharmacies and general stores in town.
- **Midtown Crossing** ([midtowncrossing.com](http://midtowncrossing.com))  
This is an entertainment district one mile east of campus on Farnam Street. There are a variety of restaurants. There is a movie theater, a park area and many public events in the summer.
- **The Old Market** ([oldmarket.com](http://oldmarket.com)) This is the downtown area of Omaha. It is east on Farnam and between 10th and 13th streets. There are restaurants of all types and price ranges. There are also stores that sell music, books, furniture, novelties and clothing. A farmers market is held on Saturday mornings in the summer and early fall.
- **Walmart** ([walmart.com](http://walmart.com)) This is a grocery store (not Walmart department store) within walking distance.
- **Westroads Mall** ([westroadsmall.com](http://westroadsmall.com)) This mall features JC Penney's, Von Maur, restaurants, a movie theater and a lot of other shops.

## SHOPPING CLOSER TO UNO

- **Hy-Vee** ([hy-vee.com](http://hy-vee.com))  
This is a grocery store located at 51st and Center Streets, close to UNO.
- **Target** ([target.com](http://target.com))  
They have food, clothing, health and beauty products and a pharmacy.
- **Walmart** ([walmart.com](http://walmart.com))  
This particular store is close to UNO, specifically the Scott campus. You can get practically everything here.

## HOUSING

### UNMC HOUSING

A variety of on-campus and off-campus housing options are available. For students with families, as well as single graduate students, the UNMC student housing is a popular choice. All rental units are located on the UNMC campus, within a short walking distance to all campus buildings. Properties consist of one, two and three bedroom units. Prices range from \$485 to \$700 per month for a one bedroom and \$580-900 per month for a two bedroom apartment. Additional housing details can be found on the UNMC housing website, [unmc.edu/housing](http://unmc.edu/housing). All rental agreements are made through the UNMC Business and Finance Student Housing, Rental Property Management. The on-campus student apartments are located at the east end of the Student Life Center parking lot. Maintenance and campus security are available 24 hours-a-day. Leases are based on the academic year. Parking is provided.

For additional information, contact Esther Collins at 402-559-5201 or [ecollins@unmc.edu](mailto:ecollins@unmc.edu). Students should also know that there is a waiting list for UNMC housing; therefore, they should contact Esther Collins as early as possible if they are interested in living in the UNMC apartments.

The majority of students that choose to live off-campus live near UNMC, while others find apartments in other areas of the city that may require a longer commute. There are a few apartment buildings between 36th and 38th Streets and between Farnam and Jones Streets that are reasonably priced and are located in a relatively safe part of the city so you can still walk to campus. Most students recommend not searching for apartments in the North, South and especially East of these blocks. Apartments that fit your requirements and price range can be found throughout Omaha. There are many apartments and homes to rent between the UNMC campus and 72nd Street. Drive times are only about 10 minutes and these neighborhoods are nice. An excellent resource for housing options off-campus is GradRent. Their website is [gradrent.com](http://gradrent.com).

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## **UNO HOUSING**

If you plan to live on campus, submit a housing application for Maverick Village, University Village, Scott Village, Scott Court, or Scott Hall. Apply as early as possible. For additional information and to apply, visit [housing.unomaha.edu](http://housing.unomaha.edu).

Or learn about other housing options at [unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life/off-campus-housing](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/housing-and-residential-life/off-campus-housing).

## **WEBSITES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL DURING YOUR HOUSING SEARCH:**

[rent.com](http://rent.com)

[gradrent.com](http://gradrent.com)

[apartments.com](http://apartments.com)

[omaha.com](http://omaha.com)

[apartmentguide.com](http://apartmentguide.com)

[omaha.craigslist.org](http://omaha.craigslist.org)

[forrent.com](http://forrent.com)

[angieslist.com](http://angieslist.com)

Some things to keep in mind when you are searching for apartments:

1. Most apartment complexes will require the security deposit and first month's rent at lease signing. The security deposit could range from \$250 to an amount equivalent to one-month's rent.
2. If you are bringing a pet a pet deposit will be required, which ranges from \$150 to \$400. In addition, you may be asked to pay a monthly pet rent. Some complexes only allow cats and some only cats and small dogs.
3. At the time of lease signing, you will also be asked to fill out an application for services from the Omaha Power Public District (OPPD) for electricity and the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) for natural gas and water. If you do not have a payment record with either one of these companies, you will be asked to pay a security deposit to have these services started. OPPD and MUD can ask for a deposit in the range of \$50-\$200. The exact amount is often determined by the average monthly payments from the previous tenant.
4. Most leases are one-year long. In some cases you will be able to sign six-month leases or go on a month-by-month basis. With shorter leases the monthly rate may be higher.

## **UNDERSTANDING APARTMENT LISTINGS**

Apartments for rent are often described using cryptic language and abbreviations. You will need to learn to decode apartment listings in order to find a place that meets your needs.

Common abbreviations: incl (included), elec (electricity), 1 1/2 baths (one full bathroom and one with just a toilet and sink), a/c (air conditioning), w/w (wall to wall carpeting), h/w (hardwood floors), dw (dishwasher), furn (furnished), cpt (carpeted), gar (garage for a car), yard (includes a backyard), eff (efficiency),



immed (available immediately), fp or frplc (includes a wood-burning or gas fireplace). A security building has a locked front door in addition to locks for each apartment.

Rental costs depend primarily on the size, condition and location of the apartment, and whether utilities are included. Larger apartments and apartments which are closer to the school or shopping usually cost more.

The first distinguishing characteristic is the type of the apartment. The different types are defined as follows:

- **Sleeping Room.** A sleeping room is a single room, usually furnished, located in a private home, with a shared bathroom and kitchen. This is the least expensive option, but provides little privacy.
- **Efficiency.** An efficiency is a single room with a private bathroom. The room will include a small alcove that serves as a kitchen and should provide a stove, refrigerator, sink and cabinet space.
- **Studio.** A studio is somewhat larger than an efficiency, and has a separate kitchen and eating area designed for one person.
- **One, Two or Three Bedroom.** Regular apartments include a separate kitchen, bathroom, living room and/or dining room and the number of bedrooms advertised.

The next important consideration is what is included in the rent and what is not included.

- **Utilities.** If the advertisement says that utilities are included, that usually means electricity, heat/gas and water/sewage, but not telephone or cable TV. If the advertisement doesn't specify any utilities, assume that you will be responsible for paying for them. If heat is included, this sometimes means that the landlord controls the temperature, not you. Water and sewage fees are usually paid by the landlord, except if you are renting a house.
- **Furnished or Unfurnished.** A furnished apartment will include a bed, chest of drawers or dresser, a couch or sofa and a dining room table and chairs. A furnished apartment will also include a stove and refrigerator. An unfurnished apartment will include a stove and refrigerator, but nothing else. A furnished apartment will cost extra each month. Graduating students often sell their furniture to incoming students. Most apartments rented are unfurnished.

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

- **Parking.** If you intend to own a car an apartment that includes a garage or off-street parking is best. It is sometimes difficult to find a parking space on the street, especially if many students with cars live nearby.
- **Laundry.** You should also ask whether there are any laundry facilities. In apartment buildings there is usually a coin operated washer and dryer, but not always. Few apartments have laundry machines in each unit.

## LEASES

A lease is a written contract between the tenant (you) and a landlord which allows you to use a dwelling for a designated period of time in exchange for monthly rent payments. The lease outlines the restrictions on the use of the dwelling and the responsibilities of tenant and landlord. A lease is a legal document and should be read carefully before signing.

If you don't understand part of the lease, ask the landlord or a friend to explain it to you. Don't be afraid to cross off sections with which you disagree just because it is a printed form. Both you and the landlord must initial any changes to the printed lease. If the landlord promises to make certain repairs or there are pre-existing problems with the property, attach a list to the lease and have the landlord sign it. The list should include all problems, including leaking faucets, clogged drains, stains on the walls and rugs, peeling paint, cracks and holes in the walls and ceiling, non-functional kitchen appliances and anything else you notice.

When you pay for the rent and security deposit, get a receipt. Get a separate receipt for the rent and security deposit. It is best to pay the rent by check and to use a separate check for the security deposit. You will need this at the end of the lease in order to recover your security deposit. To get your security deposit returned when you move out, clean the apartment well, return the key to the landlord and provide a forwarding address. We recommend sending this by certified mail, return receipt requested, so that you have proof the key and forwarding address were received by the landlord. The landlord then has 30 days to return your deposit or send you a list of the repairs, their actual cost and any money left in the security deposit.

## RENTER'S INSURANCE

This is property insurance that provides coverage for a policyholder's belongings and liabilities. It is generally inexpensive.

Many students obtain renter's insurance to insure their possessions against fire or theft. The landlord is not responsible for your belongings if they are destroyed in a fire or stolen. Most renter's insurance policies also protect you

if someone is injured while in your apartment. Ask for replacement value coverage, so that the insurance covers the cost of replacing the item. Be careful not to hang clothing on the fire sprinklers to avoid flooding the apartment.

## **MOVING IN**

### **INTERNET SERVICE**

The major companies that provide internet service in Omaha are Cox and CenturyLink. Each provide internet, cable TV and landline phone services.

### **TELEPHONE SERVICE**

Many students will choose to have a cell phone. There are a few options to choose from. The two basic options for cell phone service are called prepaid and contract. Prepaid are plans in which you pay for the minutes you use before you use them. When your minutes are close to being used up, you purchase more minutes. Stores such as Target and Walmart often sell these phones.

Cell phones with a contract have monthly charge that you pay whether or not you use the minutes the plan includes. Some of the companies that provide cell phone services are Sprint, AT&T, Verizon, Cricket and T-Mobile. Each company has stores in the area that sell their services. Visit each company's website to locate a store.

International phone calls often cost significantly more than domestic calls. However, many internet services such as Skype, Google Voice, and WhatsApp offer free or low priced international phone calls. This technology is always changing, so search the internet or talk with fellow international students about which are the current best options.

### **PLACING PHONE CALLS**

U.S. country code: 001 or +1

East Nebraska prefix: 402 & 531



# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## DEPENDENTS

### CHILD CARE

If your children are too young for school and both parents are away during the day, you will need to enroll them in a day care center. Day care can be very expensive, costing between \$100 and \$200 a week or more.

For temporary care during the evening, you can hire a neighborhood teenager or college student to baby-sit your children for \$5 to \$15 an hour. Ask your neighbors, friends and colleagues for recommendations. You can also post an advertisement on bulletin boards on campus.



### CHILDCARE CENTERS AROUND UNMC

#### **Donna's Little Darlings**

1025 South Saddle Creek Road  
402-558-7050  
donnaslittledarlings.com

#### **Kathy's Kinder Kids**

4175 Cass Street  
402-553-5733

#### **Kids Count 2 Childcare Preschool**

4827 Dodge Street  
402-884-0089

#### **Kidz First Child**

#### **Development Center**

5001 Leavenworth Street  
402-553-1600

#### **Little Lamb's Daycare and Preschool, Inc**

4408 Capitol Avenue  
402-554-1171

#### **Montessori Learning Center of Dundee**

5103 Capitol Avenue  
402-558-6018

#### **NE Medical Center-Family Place**

115 South 42nd Street  
402-552-2375  
nebraskamed.com

#### **UNO Child Care Center**

(for ages 18 months and older)  
6001 Dodge Street  
402-554-3398  
unomaha.edu/child-care-center

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dependents of a non-immigrant visa holder of any type, including F-1, are not prohibited from attendance at either a public primary school, an adult education program or another public educational institution.

# U.S. DRIVER'S LICENSE

## DRIVING IN THE U.S.

For more details visit  
[dmv.ne.gov/examining](http://dmv.ne.gov/examining)



1. An International Driving Permit (IDP) translates information contained on your driver's license into 10 languages so that officials in foreign countries are able to interpret your license. An IDP supplements a valid government-issued license—it does not serve as a replacement for a license. If you are stopped by law enforcement, you will most likely be asked to produce both your IDP and your official driver's license. The United States does NOT issue International Driving Permits to foreign visitors, so you will need to obtain this before traveling to the U.S.
2. If you are going to reside in the U.S., you can get a U.S. driver's license once you are in the U.S. Since you have to present at least two documents showing that your home address is in Nebraska it may take a few weeks to have these documents. The website referenced above shows which type of documents you can provide.
3. F/J students and scholars must be registered in SEVIS prior to visiting the DMV office. Additionally, all immigration documents (I-20/DS2019) are verified prior to the issuance of a license or State ID Card.
4. There is a written test and a driving test. After you complete the written test, you can get a Learner's Permit that allows you to legally practice driving. Read the driver's manual and do not practice driving before you get this permit.
5. Driver's licenses are issued from the state you reside in, not from the federal government. Once you receive your driver's license, you will be permitted to drive in all other U.S. states. The laws in each state vary from one to another. It is your responsibility to know and obey the laws of the state you are driving in.
6. Do not purchase a driver's license online as these are all fraudulent. You have to go to the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office in person to take your written and driving test.
7. The local DMV offices are listed below. They are open during federal work days Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

4502 Maass Road (Hwy 370 at 48th Street),  
Bellevue, NE 68133 | 402-595-2039

17007 Burt Street, Omaha, NE 68118 | 531-600-7537

## **GETTING A DRIVER'S LICENSE**

### **F1 VISA DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:**

- I-20 from your school in U.S.
- Enrollment verification letter from school (only from UNMC)

You can also take classes to learn the information needed to pass the written test and practice for the driving test.

For more information [dmv.ne.gov/examining/trngtest/com](http://dmv.ne.gov/examining/trngtest/com)

# SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

## GETTING A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

Social security numbers generally are assigned to people who are authorized to work in the U.S. Social security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for social security benefits. Social security will not assign you a number just to enroll in a college or school.



If you want to get a job on campus, you should contact your international advisor (designated school official) for international students. This official can tell you if you are eligible to work on campus and give you information about available jobs. Also, your school may approve certain limited off-campus employment, as permitted under Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations. If your school has authorized you to work either on or off campus, and you meet social security's eligibility requirements described in the next section, you can get a social security number.

For more information go to [socialsecurity.gov](http://socialsecurity.gov)

## NEBRASKA OFFICE LOCATION

604 North 109th Court  
Omaha, Nebr. 68154  
866-716-8299  
800-772-1213

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (noon)  
Thursday - Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Closed on Federal Holidays

## DIRECTIONS

Office located at 108th and Dodge on the North side.

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

## BANKING

### CHECKING ACCOUNTS

You will need a checking account to pay bills, such as rent and utilities. It isn't safe to send cash through the mail. It also isn't safe to carry large amounts of cash on your person, so you should pay for most of your purchases using a check or credit card.



To open a checking account visit a bank and ask to open a checking account.

You will need to deposit money into the account when you open it. You can deposit cash or traveler's checks or arrange for a wire transfer from your home bank. American Express also offers a variety of services that make it easy to withdraw money from your checking account back home. Additional deposits and withdrawals may be made at any time.

The bank will ask you for your social security number. If you are exempt from this requirement fill out an IRS Form W-8, which you can obtain from the bank.

Most checking accounts will include a debit card you can use to withdraw money from your account at any ATM, 24-hours per day. This lets you make deposits, withdrawals and other transactions (e.g., balance inquiries) at any time, even when the bank is closed. ATMs are located throughout the city near shopping areas and sometimes inside grocery stores. Most people don't carry a lot of cash because they can get cash from an ATM when they need it. ATMs limit the amount of your daily withdrawals usually to a maximum of \$300.

If your ATM card is ever stolen notify the bank immediately. Your liability for a stolen or lost card is limited to \$50 if you report the loss promptly.

Be careful in selecting an ATM to use because the bank that owns the ATM can charge a fee (typically \$1 – \$3) in addition to any fees your own bank may charge for ATM withdrawals. So it is best to use your ATM card to withdraw money only from ATMs owned by your bank. Although you can make withdrawals from almost any ATM, these fees can add up.

### MONEY TRANSFERS

Wire transfers are a type of electronic funds transfer. They are usually considered the safest way to transfer funds, especially large amounts, to banks in countries overseas. Most large banks belong to a bank network in Belgium called the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial



Telecommunications (SWIFT)[1] that helps to verify and process financial messages, including wire transfers. In order to make a wire transfer to another country, you will need information from the recipient and pay a fee to your bank to process the transfer. The recipient may be another person or another bank account in your name.

Most major banks have an online wire transfer option. You may be able to independently transfer funds via the bank's webpages. Do a search for international wire transfer options on your bank's website, or look for the wire transfers section on the top toolbar of your bank's website. If you cannot locate the online wire transfer page, call your bank for more information.

To complete an international wire transfer, you will need specific information from the recipient of the transfer, including:

- The full name and address of the recipient bank.
- The recipient's name, address, and account name (savings, checkings, money mart, etc.).
- The recipient's account number, or International Bank Account Number (IBAN). Your recipient should be able to get this information from their bank, or from their banking statement.
- The recipient's bank's SWIFT/BIC code. Your bank will require the recipient's bank's SWIFT/BIC code in order to identify which bank they are transferring your money to. The recipient should be able to get their bank's SWIFT/BIC code by asking their bank for this information. Your bank may also be able to locate the recipient's SWIFT/BIC code based on the recipient's account information.

Most banks charge an international wire transfer fee ranging from \$40 – \$50 per transfer. The receiving bank may also charge a small fee to process the wire transfer, ranging from \$10 – \$20. The recipient of the transfer can ask their bank about the exact fee for receiving and processing a wire transfer.

Keep in mind that there are several online options for wire transfers, such as such as PayPal or OFX. These services charge reasonable fees for international wire transfers. They can wire the money directly from your bank or you can set up an ACH direct debit.

Source: [wikihow.com/Make-an-International-Wire-Transfer](https://www.wikihow.com/Make-an-International-Wire-Transfer)

Western Union: [westernunion.com/us/en/send-money](https://westernunion.com/us/en/send-money)

PayPal: [paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/send-money-online](https://paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/send-money-online)

OFX: [ofx.com/en-us](https://ofx.com/en-us)

## **CREDIT CARDS**

**CAUTION!** It can be easy to overuse a credit card and get into financial trouble. Use it sparingly and make timely payments. A poor credit rating will increase your level of credit card interest, ultimately resulting in a larger re-payment balance.

Credit cards are such an ingrained part of the American way of life that you will have trouble making certain purchases with anything other than a credit card. If you want to place an order by phone, rent a car or buy airline tickets, you need to have a credit card. Sometimes, you can use the debit card from your checking account for these transactions, but not always.

Many international students find it difficult to get a credit card in the U.S. because they do not have an established credit history. So if you already have a major credit card such as a MasterCard (Eurocard, Access, Chargex), Visa (Barclaycard, Carte Bleue) or American Express, it is a good idea to bring it with you. American banks can check your credit limit on the foreign card. This may make them more likely to issue you a credit card. Also, if you opened a checking or savings account with a bank that offers credit cards, it may be easier to get a credit card from that bank since you have money on deposit with them.

Because getting a major credit card is difficult for international students, you should take every opportunity to establish a good credit record. Be careful to not bounce any checks. If you open a department store credit card, pay the bills promptly. Mailing your payment late several times or missing a single payment can ruin your credit rating. After you've established a good credit history, it will be easier to get a major credit card. The major credit cards in the U.S. are Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover.

# POSTAGE AND SHIPPING

## U.S. POSTAL SERVICE (USPS)

The U.S. Postal Service delivers letters and packages. You can also purchase stamps and money orders here. They deliver mail both domestically and internationally.



Letters and correspondence are usually sent by First-Class Mail within the United States. There is no need to pay extra postage for air mail, because all First-Class Mail is routinely sent by air. On the other hand, when sending mail abroad you should pay for air mail because surface mail travels by ship and is considerably slower.

## ADDRESSING MAIL

When addressing mail for delivery within the U.S., don't forget to include the zip code. If you don't include a zip code, delivery will be delayed. You can use a five-digit zip code if you don't have the nine-digit zip code. The zip code should be placed on the same line as the city and state, after the state, not before.

The following is an example of how you would address a letter to a person named "John Student". The number "12345-6789" is the nine-digit zip code. You should print the address in capital letters and omit punctuation, since that makes it easier for address reading machines to scan the address.

MR JOHN STUDENT  
1234 MAIN STREET  
CITY STATE 12345-6789

For detailed information about how to address mail, visit [usps.com/ship/preparing-domestic-shipments](https://usps.com/ship/preparing-domestic-shipments)

## OTHER SHIPPING SERVICES

In addition to the U.S. Postal Service, there are several companies that offer shipping services for letters and packages. The primary advantage of the U.S. Postal Service is the inexpensive rates for delivering letters. Also, only the U.S. Postal Service can deliver packages to a PO Box. The other shipping companies are only able to deliver to a street address.

The major shipping companies are:

FedEx: [fedex.com](https://fedex.com)

UPS: [ups.com](https://ups.com)

DHL: [dhl.com](https://dhl.com)

# AFTER YOU ARRIVE

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# RESOURCES

# LEGAL AND IMMIGRATION AID

## LEGAL AID

If you are arrested in the U.S. for a serious crime, you have the right to not say anything until you have spoken to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you by the court free of charge.



The American legal system differs significantly from legal systems in other countries. The person accused of a crime is considered innocent until proven guilty. The accused person is also entitled to a trial by jury for serious offenses, such as murder, rape, burglary and drug trafficking. Conversations with your attorney are private and cannot be used against you. These rights are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. If you are not already familiar with the U.S. legal system your attorney can explain it to you.

If you plead guilty to a serious crime or are convicted of a serious crime, you will be subject to deportation.

## IMMIGRATION RELATED WEBSITES

### AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)

[aila.org](http://aila.org)

AILA is a national bar association of more than 5,200 attorneys who practice immigration law. For more information, call 1-202-216-2400, fax 1-202-371-9449 or write to American Immigration Lawyers Association, 1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005 U.S.A.

### AMERICAN IMMIGRATION CENTER

[us-immigration.com](http://us-immigration.com)

This site provides information about topics relating to U.S. immigration.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IMMIGRATION ISSUES

UNMC: [unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship](http://unmc.edu/global/support-services/immigration-visa-sponsorship)

UNO: [unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/legal.php](http://unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/legal.php)

General: [studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov)

## CULTURE SHOCK

One consequence of traveling to another country is culture shock. The stress of a new situation, confusion due to language difficulties and a number of small cultural differences add up to culture shock. You might feel depressed, be homesick for your country and family, have difficulty sleeping or concentrating and avoid contact with others.

If you experience these symptoms, try talking to someone. All currently enrolled UNMC students are provided with free counseling services at the Counseling and Student Development Center ([unmc.edu/stucouns](http://unmc.edu/stucouns)). UNO students should contact Counseling and Psychological Services ([unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/counseling-center](http://unomaha.edu/student-life/wellness/counseling-center))

While preparing yourself ahead of time can help you deal with culture shock, you cannot completely avoid going through it at some level. Living and working conditions as well as the pace of life may seem totally unlike your familiar world, but the more you know, the more you can learn about what to expect when you arrive.

Before you ever leave home, study up on the area you will call home when you get to the U.S. Learn about unspoken rules and expectations, social manners and current affairs. Talk to anyone you know who has studied in the U.S. and ask them about their experience.

Most importantly, go into your adventure with an open mind. Put aside any stereotypes or preconceptions you already have. People experience culture shock because of mismatched cultural cues and expectations. When these cues collide, hostility and confusion ensue. Notice similarities and differences without judging them and realize that you can experience something as different without labeling it as inferior. Respect the new culture without denying your own.

Our universities provide various social, interest, or support groups which may help guide you through this cultural transition. Please reach out to an advisor or counselor if you are experiencing high levels of stress.



# SOCIAL & CULTURAL NORMS

## **STEREOTYPES**

Do not believe all of the stereotypes you may have heard about Americans. Even the ones that are true in general may not be true about specific individuals or a large segment of the population. For example, although Americans tend to be louder and more boisterous than people from other cultures (especially at athletic events), many of the people you meet will be quiet and polite. Some people may be intolerant and afraid of people from other cultures, but most will be pleasant and welcoming. Remember that American films and television exaggerate in order to generate excitement. So this gives a distorted picture of what life in the United States is really like.

## **PERSONAL SPACE**

When two people are talking to each other, they tend to stand a specific distance apart. Each person has an invisible boundary around their body into which people they do not know well are not welcome. If someone comes inside their boundary, they will feel uncomfortable and move away to increase the distance between them.

The average personal distance varies from culture to culture. Americans tend to require more personal space than in other cultures. So if you try to get too close to an American during your conversation, he or she might back away. Try to be aware of this and if the person with whom you are speaking backs away a little, do not try to close the gap.

Also, some Americans avoid physical contact while speaking. Touching is often too intimate for casual acquaintances. So don't put your arm around their shoulder, touch their face or hold their hand unless you know this is acceptable. Shaking hands when you initially meet is usually always acceptable.

## **DEMEANOR**

Americans are much more assertive than most international visitors. Speaking for yourself and attempting to persuade someone to adopt your view are not only not taboo, but expected. You may need to become more assertive and speak out on your own behalf more than you might be used to. Take the initiative and volunteer information that will be of interest. In an interview, talk about your goals and accomplishments. It is ok to criticize someone's opinion, as long as you are providing feedback that is helpful.

Eye contact is also important and expected in conversations. It is not a sign of disrespect, but instead an indication of openness, honesty and enthusiasm.

## **FORMS OF ADDRESS**

American names are written and spoken with the given name first and the family name last. So John Smith's family name is Smith, not John.

In a formal setting, address men as "Mister" (abbreviated as "Mr."), married women as "Misses" (abbreviated as "Mrs."), and unmarried women as "Miss" (abbreviated as "Ms."). However, the distinction between Mrs. and Ms. is not as common now-a-days. Often both married and unmarried women go by Ms. If the person has an M.D. or Ph.D., they will often be addressed as "Doctor" (abbreviated as "Dr.").

In an informal situation, Americans will introduce each other by first name without titles. If you are introduced to somebody by first name, you can address him or her by first name the next time you meet. The only exception would be for someone who holds an important position, such as the university Chancellor or Vice Chancellor. Unless they tell you otherwise, faculty should be addressed using their title and last name (e.g., "Professor Smith").

When in doubt, use the formal manner of address, since it is better to error on the side of formality. It is also appropriate to ask how they prefer to be addressed.

## **ATTIRE**

Americans do tend to be more informal than people from other countries. It is common for Americans to wear casual clothing to school and to greet professors by first name. Nevertheless, good manners and politeness are always appropriate.

However, there are situations and environments in which formality is the norm. Some businesses require their employees to wear a uniform or a suit. It would be inappropriate to wear a T-shirt and blue jeans to a job interview. Some of the more expensive restaurants require formal attire. Americans tend to dress up for cultural events (the opera, theater and ballet) and to dress down for athletic events. Americans usually wear formal attire at weddings and funerals.

## **BUSINESS CLOTHING**

Proper business attire is important in the U.S. If you dress inappropriately for an interview, for example, your chances of getting the position are significantly reduced.

Men should have at least one suit, consisting of a coat and tie with a white button-down shirt. Dark suit colors, such as navy blue, black or dark gray, are best. The tie should match the suit and not be flashy.

Women's clothing is more difficult to describe. The goal is to achieve a conservative and professional look. Notice what other professional women are wearing and dress similarly.

## **BUSINESS-LIKE MEETINGS**

Business visits, on the other hand, tend to be extremely punctual. If you arrive late to a business appointment, it will reflect badly on you. So try to arrive on time or even a little early. If you know that you will be arriving late, you should telephone ahead to let them know of the delay.

If a business meeting takes place over a meal, expect the business discussions to begin after everyone has been seated. Socializing tends to occur after the business is concluded, not before. This is in contrast with the practice in many other countries, where the purpose of the meal is to socialize and get to know each other before any business is discussed.

When businessmen or businesswomen meet, they usually introduce themselves by shaking right hands. When you shake hands, don't crush their fingers, but also don't hold their hand too lightly. A firm handshake is best and is a sign of self-confidence. This is an important aspect of American culture, so if you are not familiar with this form of greeting, practice with an American friend.

Business cards are not normally exchanged upon meeting. If you need a colleague's contact information, it is ok to ask them for their card. It is also ok to offer someone your card. However, there is not an elaborate ritual of exchanging cards as in other cultures.

## **SOCIAL VISITS**

Americans often plan social gatherings on short notice, so don't be surprised if you get invited to someone's home or to see a movie or baseball game without much warning. If you are busy, do not be afraid to decline the invitation. Perhaps suggest a time that would be better. Your host will not be insulted.

If a friend has invited you to drop by anytime, it is best to call before visiting to make sure it is convenient for them. Do not stay too long, since you do not want to overstay your welcome.

For a casual dinner invitation, do not arrive more than five minutes early, because your host may still be preparing for your visit. Arriving more than 10 minutes late is considered rude if very few people were invited. If many people were invited, it is ok to arrive a little late, even as much as half an hour late. For example, it is ok to arrive late for a party, for a potluck dinner or

# SOCIAL & CULTURAL INFORMATION

for a social gathering involving a large group of people. The main consideration is whether there are enough people in the group so that your late arrival will not be noticed.

At a party, don't be surprised if you are asked what you do for a living. This is a normal opening line of conversation and not an insult.

## **TIPPING**

The words "tip" and "gratuity" are used interchangeably, with "gratuity" having a slightly more formal connotation. Restaurants do not include a service charge in the bill, so you should tip the waiter 10 – 20% of the total bill. If service was slow or particularly bad, some Americans will tip only 10%. Likewise, if service was particularly good, it is appropriate to tip 20%. Tipping is only appropriate in restaurants which offer table service. You do not tip the cashier in a fast food restaurant.

Taxi drivers expect to get a tip equal to 15% of the total fare. If the driver was especially helpful or got you to your destination more quickly than you expected, give a 20% tip. Hotel bellhops expect a \$1 tip for helping you with your bags. If you order room service, the gratuity is included in the bill. Coat checkroom attendants expect \$1 per coat. Hairdressers and barbers expect a tip of 15% of the bill. Valet parking attendants expect a \$1 tip.

Bribery, although common in many other cultures, is not considered appropriate and is often illegal in the U.S. Attempting to bribe a policeman will certainly get you arrested.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking has become more socially unacceptable in the U.S. Smoking is prohibited in government and public buildings, schools and many businesses. In Nebraska, smoking is prohibited in almost every indoor environment other than some hotel rooms, stores that sell only tobacco and tobacco related items, facilities doing research related to the health effects of smoking and private residences (which are not licensed child care programs). Businesses, schools and public places have different rules about smoking outside on their property. Usually the rules are posted, but if they are not, please ask before you smoke.

Tobacco products may not be sold to anyone under 18 years old. Federal law requires stores to ask to see a photo ID for anyone under 27 years old. Buying cigarettes for a child or giving a child a cigarette is illegal. There are severe penalties for smoking on an airplane or in an airplane lavatory. Smoking is prohibited on all public transportation.

If you are a guest in someone's home, you should ask whether it is ok to smoke in or outside the home. If there are no ashtrays in the house it is a good sign that smoking is not acceptable.

## **RECYCLING**

In Omaha and on campus efforts to recycle materials are evident. On campus are wastebaskets colored green or blue. Items that can be recycled go in these bins. Clear plastic and aluminum items go in green bins while paper products go in blue.

Visit the website to learn more about recycling efforts across campus.

UNMC: [livegreennebraska.com/recycling](http://livegreennebraska.com/recycling)

UNO: [unomaha.edu/sustainability/waste-recycling](http://unomaha.edu/sustainability/waste-recycling)

City waste management also collects recyclables. These bins are green and are free to residents. To learn more, visit the Omaha website:

[wasteline.org/mybin](http://wasteline.org/mybin)

## GENDER RELATIONS

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND TITLE IX**

Both campuses are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. UNMC and UNO are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected and included.

UNMC and UNO do not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment.

UNMC and UNO comply with all local, state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

UNMC and UNO require new international students to participate in an interactive Title IX training session during International Student Orientation or at another date during fall semester. Information provided in this session will help you to:

- Better understand U.S.A. culture and regulations
- The importance of creating an environment in which harassment and/or sexual assault is unacceptable and survivors are supported
- To identify situations in which sexual assault may occur
- How to step in/intervene safely to prevent situations in which sexual assault may occur

The Equal Opportunity in Education Act, commonly known as Title IX, is a U.S. law established in 1972. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs receiving Federal financial assistance. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

- Sexual harassment of students, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX
- Title IX applies also to same-sex, bisexual and transgender students  
Sexual Violence
- Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated either against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol
- An individual also may be unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability

- A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion. All such acts of sexual violence are forms of sexual harassment covered under Title IX

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Sex:** At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of biological characteristics including, chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs

**Gender:** Refers to attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex:

1. Behavior compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative.
2. Behavior viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitutes gender non-conformity.

**Gender Identity:** A person's innate, internal sense of his or her gender.

**Gender Expression:** The way in which a person presents his or her gender to the outside world.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term referring to a person whose gender identity or expression falls outside of stereotypical gender norms and who may or may not seek to change their physical sex characteristics through hormones, sex reassignment surgery or other actions.

**Cisgender:** Refers to individuals whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

**Sexual Orientation:** An individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to people of the same or opposite sex or gender.

**Transitioning:** The process through which a person modifies his/her physical characteristics or manner of expression in order to bring his/her internal gender identity in harmony with his/her external gender expression, such as:

1. Taking hormones
2. Sex reassignment surgery
3. Covering certain body parts
4. Changing speech patterns, hair, wardrobe, makeup or other changes

**LGBTQ** is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer, and is used to designate a community of people whose sexual or gender identities can create shared political and social concerns.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is attracted to other women.

**Gay:** A man who is attracted to other men.

**Bisexual:** An individual who is attracted to both genders.

**Trans:** An umbrella term that seeks to incorporate individuals whose gender identities do not match their biological sex.

**Queer:** Individuals who experience fluidity in their experience of sexuality or gender and therefore do not identify strictly as LGB or T. The term 'Queer' can also include those who do not identify as either gender.

UNMC and UNO have resources for students who seek assistance, have questions, or want to learn more. UNMC and UNO encourages you to review the following websites:

- UNMC Title IX website: [unmc.edu/TitleIX](https://unmc.edu/TitleIX)
- UNMC Title IX Resources Omaha campus website: [unmc.edu/titleix/campus-resources/omaha](https://unmc.edu/titleix/campus-resources/omaha)
- UNO Gender and Sexuality Resource Center website: [unomaha.edu/student-life/inclusion/gender-and-sexuality-resource-center](https://unomaha.edu/student-life/inclusion/gender-and-sexuality-resource-center)

At UNMC, the following persons have been designated to handle any questions, concerns or complaints you may have:

### **Discrimination or Disability Inquiries**

Cheryl Bagley Thompson, PhD, RN

Assistant Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs/Student Affairs

Student Life Center – Office# 2036

402-559-2792 | [cbthompson@unmc.edu](mailto:cbthompson@unmc.edu)

### **Title IX Inquiries**

Carmen Sirizzotti, MBA

Title IX Coordinator

Administrative Building (ADM), Office# 2010

402-559-2717 | [csirizzotti@unmc.edu](mailto:csirizzotti@unmc.edu)

At UNO, please contact:

[unomaha.edu/office-of-equity-access-and-diversity/resources/title-ix](https://unomaha.edu/office-of-equity-access-and-diversity/resources/title-ix)



## RELIGION

The U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom for all faiths. Omaha has many Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. There are also religious centers for Muslim, Hindus and Buddhists. The best way to find out more information is to search online for these various houses of worship.



Freedom of religion also means that you are likely to be solicited by people who want to invite you to their religious group or social activities. Use your judgment when interacting with a persistent new contact. Some of these groups can be helpful while others may be quite aggressive. There are a few that target college students, especially international students. If you are interested in their religion, do some research about the group online. Then, you will know better if further contact or association fits for you.

# SOCIAL & CULTURAL INFORMATION

## AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

The American calendar is filled with numerous holidays. The following table shows some of the more popular holidays. National holidays have been indicated in bold face. Most non-essential government offices will be closed on these National Holidays. Banks and post offices also tend to be closed on these days and many businesses will also give their employees the day off.

<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>January 1</b>
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>	<b>Third Monday in January</b>
Ground Hog Day	February 2
Valentine's Day	February 14
<b>President's Day</b>	<b>Third Monday in February</b>
St. Patrick's Day	March 17
April Fool's Day	April 1
Patriot's Day	Third Monday in April
Mother's Day	Second Sunday in May
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>Last Monday in May</b>
Flag Day	June 14
Father's Day	Third Sunday in June
<b>Independence Day</b>	<b>July 4</b>
<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>First Monday in September</b>
<b>Columbus Day</b>	<b>Second Monday in October</b>
Halloween	October 31
Election Day	Tuesday after the first Monday in November in years divisible by 4
<b>Veterans Day</b>	<b>November 11</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>Fourth Thursday in November</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>December 25</b>

## **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME (DST)**

Daylight Savings Time—often referred to as “Summer Time,” “DST,” or “Daylight Savings Time”—is a way of making better use of the daylight in the evenings by setting the clocks forward one hour during the longer days of the summer, and back again in the fall.



## **CLOCKS BACK OR FORWARD?**

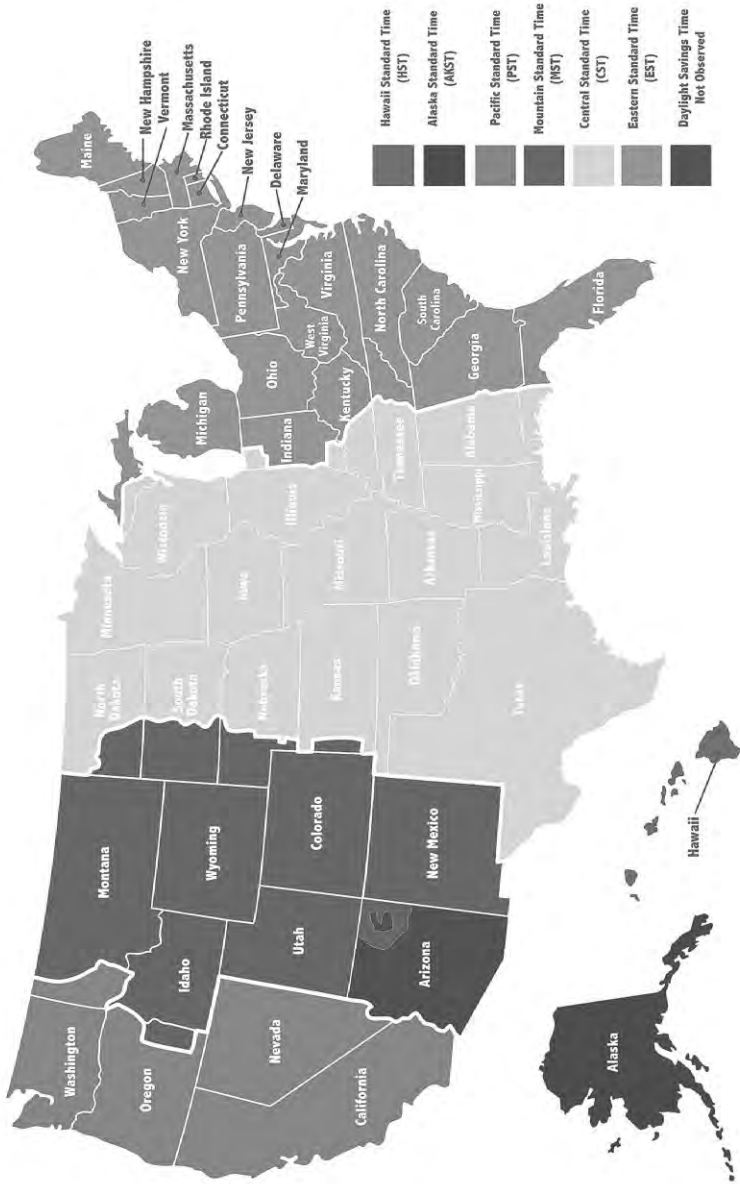
The clock moves ahead (= losing one hour) in the spring when DST starts, and falls back one hour (= gaining one hour) when DST ends in the fall. To remember which way the clock goes, keep in mind one of these sayings: “*spring forward, fall back*” or “*spring ahead, fall behind.*”

## **WHEN WE CHANGE OUR CLOCKS**

Most of the United States begin Daylight Savings Time at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and reverts to standard time on the first Sunday in November. In the U.S., each time zone switches at a different time.

# SOCIAL & CULTURAL INFORMATION

## UNITED STATES TIME ZONES



Some of the information provided in this handbook has come from the following sources.

- [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)
- [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)
- <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>
- [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
- [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- [www.visitomaha.com](http://www.visitomaha.com)  
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- [www.unmc.edu](http://www.unmc.edu)
- [www.unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/  
student-support/advising](http://www.unomaha.edu/international-studies-and-programs/student-support/advising)
- [www.edupass.org](http://www.edupass.org)  
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