Next Steps for becoming a Panther.

Your guide to arrival next steps, applying for your visa, traveling to the U.S., campus housing and more!
Your Next Steps

Congratulations on your admission to the University of Northern Iowa!

Your first step is completed – you’ve been admitted! Now, it’s time to turn your attention to completing the necessary steps in becoming an official UNI student! It’s important to us you feel prepared and supported – because we want you to attend UNI. That’s why we’ve sent this guide, which will walk you through everything you need to know and do, from this point to your arrival on campus.

Like thousands of international students before you, we’re confident UNI will quickly become your “home away from home.” It’s an awesome place here, filled with opportunity. Look forward to making new friends, getting involved and having fun in campus activities and – of course – departing here with a degree you’re proud of.

Our international admissions team is here for you if you have any questions or need assistance. We look forward to seeing you on campus and welcoming you to UNI!

— UNI International Admissions Team

Accept your offer of admission.

By doing so, you’ll be officially choosing to attend UNI, often called “committing”. All degree-seeking undergraduates must complete this step to gain access to orientation registration and housing selection. There’s a $320 acceptance fee (goes toward your tuition) to pay when accepting your offer. Use Flywire to pay by credit card or bank wire.

+ accept.uni.edu

Complete your housing contract.

If you plan to live on campus, you’ll need to complete this online. The sooner yours is finalized, the sooner you’ll be in line to choose your dorm room during housing self-selection. An early room selection time (also known as a Priority Reservation Date or PRD) gives you more options for rooms and dorms, or in other words, a better chance at living where you prefer!

+ uhd.uni.edu/contract

Apply for your student visa.

The F-1 and J-1 student visas are non-immigrant visas that will allow you to enter the United States and study at UNI. If you have received your Certificate of Eligibility, you’re ready to set up your visa appointment, which will get you on your way to your visa (see details on the next page). If you haven’t received yours yet, your file likely needs to be finalized. Reach out to us at international.admissions@uni.edu, and we’ll work with you to determine what may be needed.

Make your travel arrangements.

Before you book your flights, check the program start date on your immigration documents and look for emails from UNI with further details. Once you have made your arrangements, complete the arrival form. Our team will arrange free, local transportation to bring you to your new home!

Take your math placement exam.

All first-year undergraduate UNI students are required to complete the online ALEKS math placement exam prior to orientation. Your results will assist you and your academic advisor in choosing appropriate math courses.

Request final academic, institutional records be sent to us.

Make sure your admission file is complete including requesting any official final results from your academic institution. Check your student portal or contact international.admissions@uni.edu for more information.

Chat with current international students.

You might have a lot of questions now so it’s the perfect time for you to connect with these students through our Unibuddy chat app. They love meeting future, fellow international students and sharing their experiences.

WATCH YOUR INBOX!

It’s important to continue to check your mail and email (the one listed on your application) for updates, announcements and reminders!
Visa Application Process

Upon receipt of your Form I-20 or DS-2019 from the University of Northern Iowa, you’ll need to apply for a visa at either the United States Embassy or the consulate closest to your place of residence.

Here’s some important information related to obtaining your visa:

- F-1 and J-1 students are required to pay a one-time, non-refundable I-901 SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) fee prior to the visa appointment. The fee is $350 for F-1 students and $220 for J-1 students. The fee is payable at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website: fmjfee.com.
- Visas cannot be issued more than 120 days prior to the program start date on your I-20/DS-2019. Don’t wait until then to issue yours, however! Start gathering necessary documents for your student visa application now.

YOUR VISA INTERVIEW
Get fully prepared for yours by understanding beforehand what you’ll need to bring and do.

**Items needed during your visa interview:**
- I-20 or DS-2019 (Be sure to sign your form)
- Valid passport (issued for at least six months)
- School admission letter
- Completed visa application with required photographs
- I-901 SEVIS fee and visa application receipt
- Financial documents showing how you will pay for your educational and living expenses for at least one year

**Be prepared to answer questions concerning:**
- Your major field of study
- Your decision to attend UNI
- Sources of money for your studies
- Your intent to return to your home country after completion of your studies in the United States

If the consular officers happen to find you ineligible for a visa:
- They must return all documents to you
- They must give you written reasons for the denial
- You may secure additional documentation as needed and reapply

WE HAVE RESOURCES ONLINE for you. You can also email our Immigration and Advising Coordinator at anytime during the process.

+ intladm.uni.edu/visa
+ international@uni.edu

Say hello to the Office of International Engagement (OIE)!

While the UNI International Admissions staff have been your primary point of contact during your admissions process, we’re happy to share that we’re not the only office who will assist you. UNI’s Office of International Engagement is focused on supporting and offering comprehensive service to UNI’s international students. OIE is truly a welcoming and exciting environment that serves as the hub for all international efforts on campus. If you need assistance as a student here, it is likely you’ll find what you need here.

Services include:
- English language instruction through the Culture and Intensive English Program (CEP)
- Immigration status advising
- Orientation and pre-arrival support
- Student success initiatives

GET INVOLVED THROUGH OIE

The OIE offers many opportunities for students to develop intercultural skills through cross-cultural events, field trips, traditional celebrations and more. Two popular programs include:

International Family Friendship Program
Join and get matched with a local family who will help you get familiar with the community, the American culture and the English language – all while making your experience here an extra special one.

Conversation Partner Program
This program pairs international students with American students, staff and professors at UNI. Called “partners”, these individuals meet at least once a week throughout the school year. Oftentimes, the partners attend various athletic and cultural events together, make traditional food, visit local stores or watch movies together.
Entering the United States
United States immigration officials at the port of entry will make the final determination about your admissibility into the country as a student.

For initial entry, you must:
• Show the immigration official the UNI Form I-20/DS-2019 and your passport
• Attend the school specified on your visa

The immigration official should:
• Examine your Form I-20/DS-2019 and return it to you
• Stamp your passport

Arranging your travel plans
You will not be eligible to enter the United States more than 30 days prior to or after the start date on your I-20/DS-2019 so be sure your travel plans align with this timeframe.

Each semester, the university hosts an international orientation and registration program prior to the start of the semester. Students are asked to arrive in time for this program, as it is mandatory for all incoming undergraduate, transfer, graduate and exchange international students. You will receive an email with detailed information on arrival dates and can find up-to-date details at oie.uni.edu/orientation.

Book your flight to the airport nearest to campus (within 10 minutes) – Waterloo Regional Airport (ALO) – which is served by American Airlines with connecting service to Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD). If you cannot fly into ALO, you may look into potential flights to the Eastern Iowa Airport (CID), which is located one hour away from UNI. If you have any problems or questions, contact the Office of International Engagement (OIE) at international@uni.edu.

Preparing for your flight
You will need to bring the following immigration documents with you to the airport to enter into the United States:
• Valid passport
• Valid F or J visa in your passport
• Form I-20 or Form DS-2019

These documents are your most valuable possessions when traveling. Make sure you carry them with you on the plane – do not check them with your luggage!

Already in the United States?
Immigration procedures to follow when transferring to UNI from another university in the United States:

If you travel outside the United States before coming to UNI:
• Inform the International Student Advisor at your current school of your intent to transfer to UNI. Your advisor should make the necessary entry into SEVIS.
• Obtain Form I-20 from UNI.
• Be sure that your F-1 visa is valid or obtain a new visa.
• Present your UNI Form I-20 to immigration officials upon reentry to the United States.
• Upon arrival, bring the UNI Form I-20 and your passport to the Office of International Engagement (OIE) for immigration check in.

If you come directly to UNI without leaving the United States, bring the UNI Form I-20 and your passport to the OIE for immigration check in.
Live on campus, live the full UNI experience!

Although international students aren’t required to live on campus, we recommend it! We have a mix of traditional, suite- and apartment-style dorms to choose from with our award-winning dining facilities located nearby.

**Suite- and Apartment-style Residences**

- **Lawther Hall**: Traditional double and single rooms + suite-style rooms with private and semi-private bathrooms.
- **Panther Village**: Studio, 2- and 4-bedroom apartment-style rooms, which include a kitchen, living room and private bathroom(s).
- **ROTH Apartments**: Apartment style rooms with 1-, 2-, 3- or 8-bedroom configurations available. Includes kitchen, living room and private bathroom(s), located on the edge of campus.
- **Jennings Court Apartments**: Traditional apartment complex with 1- and 2-bedroom offerings. Includes kitchen, living room and bathroom; located on the edge of campus.

**Traditional Dorms**

**SOUTH**
- **Hagemann Hall**: Double rooms with a roommate + limited super-single rooms
- **Noehren Hall**: Double rooms with a roommate + limited super-single rooms
- **Shull Hall**: Super-single rooms
- **Rider Hall**: Double rooms with a roommate + limited super-single rooms

**NORTH**
- **Bender Hall**: Double rooms with a roommate + single and super-single rooms
- **Dancer Hall**: Super-single rooms

**SHOPPING CENTERS ARE CLOSE TO CAMPUS**

**COMPLETING YOUR CONTRACT**

Complete your housing contract as soon as possible to receive a favorable priority reservation date for selecting your room in the Spring.

[+ uhd.uni.edu/contract](+ uhd.uni.edu/contract)

**FINDING A ROOMMATE**

In the housing contract, complete your Panther Profile, a questionnaire used by our roommate matching system to help match students with similar interests and living preferences. Search and reach out to your matches to find a roommate.

[+ uhd.uni.edu/contract-completion-guide](+ uhd.uni.edu/contract-completion-guide)

**JOIN THE LIVE 2 SUCCEED PROGRAM**

Receive a $1,000 scholarship (during the second year) by choosing to live on campus for two years. Optional and not required of students.

[+ uhd.uni.edu/live-2-succeed](+ uhd.uni.edu/live-2-succeed)

**OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING**

On-campus housing is recommended but not required at UNI. The university does not arrange off-campus housing for students. You should know that public transportation is limited and off-campus apartments typically do not come furnished. If you prefer to arrange off-campus housing, you may find apartments.com or hotpads.com useful in the process.

[+ housing.uni.edu](+ housing.uni.edu)
Orientation

One of the first introductions to OIE will be your orientation program, which is led by current student leaders. This program will supply you with resources that'll help you be a successful student here, give you a chance to meet fellow international students, along with faculty and staff who will play a big role in your time at UNI.

Activities & events offered:
- Class registration
- Campus and Cedar Falls exploration
- Shopping trips
- Bank account opening

Topics discussed:
- Immigration
- Employment
- Student organizations and involvement opportunities
- U.S. classroom and education system
- Health insurance
- Bill payment
- Campus safety
- Academic resources and tips

What you can expect
- Orientation begins the week before classes start each fall and spring semester.
- It is mandatory that you attend the orientation sessions.
- There is a $375 one-time orientation and matriculation fee that will be charged to your account.

For more information on orientation visit oie.uni.edu/orientation or contact OIE at international@uni.edu.

Arriving at UNI

Packing for the school year
As you might have guessed, you’ll have a limited amount of available luggage you can bring with you. The exact amount you bring is entirely up to you. Keep in mind that if you need additional items, they are likely available for purchase after you arrive.

What to wear
Students generally dress casually for classes and are free to dress in whatever way they feel comfortable that is within reason. You will have several opportunities to showcase your traditional clothing items, if you choose to, so feel free to bring those items with you, as luggage space allows.

The Iowa climate is typical of a temperate zone, with marked seasonal variations in temperature and precipitation. When packing, bring clothes to wear for extreme heat to extreme cold weather. Chat with a current student if you have any additional questions about the weather or what attire to pack.

Every traditional residence hall room will provide you with:
- Single bed, mattress and mattress cover
- Desk and chair
- Room sink (except Rider Hall)
- Wastebasket and recycle container
- Closets and drawers
- Drapes or mini-blinds
- Unlimited Internet access

Suggested items to bring:
- Pillows, blanket, sheets and towels (or purchase a linen packet for $65)
- Toiletries
- Clothing items
- Room decorations
- Computer

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Billing

All tuition, mandatory fees and contracted room and meal plan expenses are billed directly to the student by the Office of Business Operations. Students are billed one semester at a time. U-Bills are available electronically and can be reviewed in the MyUNiverse portal. You can enroll in a payment plan option, which splits your university bill into five payments per semester.

BRINGING MONEY TO THE UNITED STATES

Students often ask how much money they should bring with them to the U.S. The amount needed varies among students; however, it is important to plan to have some cash available immediately upon your arrival for supply and other immediate expenses. For safety reasons, it is very important that you do not travel with large sums of cash in your possession. Consider getting a money order, wiring the money from a bank or using an ATM to withdraw money upon arrival.

During International Student Orientation, you will have the option to open a bank account in the United States. Although this is not a requirement, it is highly recommended that you do so because some of your living expenses will require payment by checks from a U.S.-based institution.

FLYWIRE

UNI partners with Flywire for a cost-effective way for international students to wire funds from their home country bank. Students will be offered excellent exchange rates, allowing them, in most cases, to pay in their home country’s currency and save a significant amount of money compared to traditional bank wire costs. In addition, the posting of your payment to the university will be faster, you’ll be able to track your payment, and Flywire will notify you when the university has received the payment. You can create your account and find instructions on how to make a payment on Flywire’s site.

Health and Wellness

UNI’s Student Health Clinic

When you are thousands of miles from home, in a new country, it could be scary if you happen to feel under the weather and need care. No need to worry because UNI has a health clinic right on campus. Full-time medical doctors and nurses provide a wide array of medical care including mental health services, immunizations/allergy injections, minor surgical procedures and treatment of illnesses and injuries.

Student Health Insurance

Costs associated with health care in the United States can be substantial. Insurance is designed to protect individuals from the costly expenses associated with serious medical emergencies. Health insurance is mandatory for all international students.

Required Health Screening

All UNI students must submit proof of two measles, mumps and rubella vaccinations; more detailed information will be provided to you. During orientation, all international students will be required to participate in a mandatory health screening for tuberculosis. If there is a need for any other vaccination or testing, UNI will send an email with further instructions.

+ studentaccount.uni.edu

+ flywire.com/pay/uni

+ health.uni.edu
"I love that UNI is a medium-sized university. The small classroom size allows me to have more interactions with not only my classmates but also my professors. I have found the professors at UNI to be both professional and caring."

Yuan Ling Looi (Elene)
Psychology
Malaysia

"UNI has a wonderful environment for international students. Everyone is welcomed here and everyone gets the same opportunities."

Mursal Ahmed
Business Analytics
Pakistan

HEAR MORE FROM UNI’S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS!
Follow our student-run social media accounts:
- bit.ly/UNI-International
- northerniowa
- isp.northerniowa
- uni.international
- UNINInternational (International Admissions)
- UNIOIE (Office of International Engagement)

Chat online, using Unibuddy:
+ intladm.uni.edu/unibuddy
Q. WHAT IS MYUNIVERSE PORTAL? WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M HAVING TROUBLE GETTING LOGGED IN.

A. MyUNiverse is an electronic hub for all things you’ll need as a student at UNI.

If this is the first time you are trying to log-in, follow the first-time user information at it.uni.edu/catid-faq.

If you have logged in before and are no longer able to log in, you may have to reset your password. To do so, send an email to servicedesk@uni.edu requesting your password to be reset – be sure to include your university ID number and username in the email. For additional questions, you may find the Consultant Center Assistance Chat at it.uni.edu.

Q. WHEN DO I SIGN UP FOR CLASSES?

A. An academic advisor will work one-on-one with you to finalize your class schedule during International Student Orientation (ISO). Graduate students will work directly with their academic department. Students are not allowed to register for courses prior to attending ISO.

Q. CAN I WORK ON CAMPUS? HOW DO I FIND A JOB?

A. International students can work up to 20 hours per week on campus. There are more than 3,000 on-campus jobs available. You should have access to Handshake – a system that helps you to find available positions on campus. Create a profile and search jobs that are a good fit based on your skills and interests.

Q. DO I NEED A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER? IF SO, HOW DO I GET ONE?

A. A Social Security Number (SSN) is not issued to any international student in the United States who is solely studying and not working. If you decide to get a job on campus, you will then work with the Office of International Engagement (OIE) to obtain a SSN.

Q. HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR A CELL PHONE PLAN?

A. You will have the opportunity during orientation to sign up for a cell phone plan from a provider that does not require students to have a Social Security number. You may also choose one of many prepaid phone options, which are available at different business locations in Cedar Falls.

Q. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

A. Admissions and OIE staff are always happy to assist with any questions! Email us at international@uni.edu, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

CHECK OUT our full list of FAQs.

+ intladm.uni.edu/faqs
There are many reasons UNI might be the university for you. Here’s five for you to consider as you make your decision! And, if you’re already convinced and ready to make UNI your college decision, accept your offer.

+ accept.uni.edu

Faculty will know your name.
As a teaching-focused university, UNI faculty put students first. Our average class size is 27 students, so you’ll really get to know your classmates and professors. And 98% percent of classes are taught by faculty, not graduate students or teaching assistants, which means you’ll learn from professional educators with years of teaching experience.

UNI graduates easily find success.
UNI alumni are making their mark on the world in nearly every field and every profession. Ninety-six percent of graduates became employed or continued their education within six months of graduation.

We’re considered a top 20 best value university.
College Factual ranks us as #17 (out of 1,204 schools) when it comes to “Best Value College for International Students”. This ranking evaluated our high graduation rate, low average student debt and overall great value.

You are welcome here!
The Cedar Falls community is friendly, inviting and safe. UNI is ranked among the “Safest College Campuses in America” by the National Council for Home Safety and Security.

Fun times are easy to find!
UNI has more than 270 student organizations, so there’s bound to be at least one (and probably many more) that match your interests. Music, theater, honor societies, fraternity and sorority life, student government and more!

IS UNI RIGHT for you?
There are many reasons UNI might be the university for you. Here’s five for you to consider as you make your decision! And, if you’re already convinced and ready to make UNI your college decision, accept your offer.

+ accept.uni.edu
International Admissions

+ 002 Gilchrist Hall
   University of Northern Iowa
   Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0018, USA

+ intladm.uni.edu
+ international.admissions@uni.edu
+ WhatsApp: +1 (319) 273-2363
+ Chat with current international students:
  intladm.uni.edu/unibuddy

The University of Northern Iowa does not discriminate in employment or education. Visit policies.uni.edu/1303 for additional information.