

International Student Handbook



BELLEVUE
UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

we're for you.™

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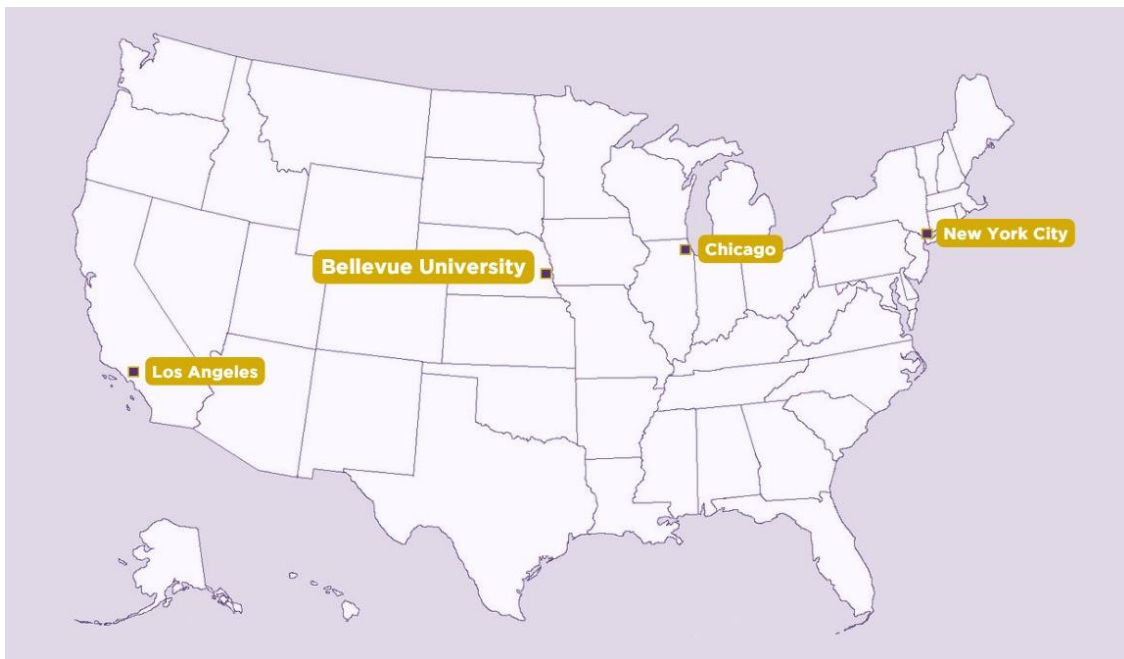
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Welcome to Bellevue University!

We are all very glad you have chosen Bellevue University (also called BU)! We hope you will enjoy your educational experience here and take advantage of the many services and facilities offered on our campus. International Student Services has many dedicated professionals to help make your experience enjoyable and successful. Please let us know when you need our assistance!

Bellevue University

Bellevue University is a non-profit, open access institution with more than 50,000 graduates worldwide. Founded in 1966, the University is a recognized national leader in preparing students for lifelong career success while making college affordable. Our Real Mastery® approach helps students not only learn, but master, the knowledge and skills employers expect. Students apply learning to real world situations, giving them the confidence to showcase their talents to a current or future employer.



International Student Services (ISS)

International Student Services (often referred to as ISS) is in the Durham Administration Building (DUR). We are here to help you transition to the United States and provide continued assistance throughout your stay in Nebraska. From the moment that you arrive, we're here to help you learn more about Bellevue University. Whether you have questions about American culture, academics, or the community in general, please

come talk to our team. We're dedicated to creating a welcoming environment for all international students to connect and learn from each other. Visit our international tearoom, a space designated for relaxation and socializing!

For questions about your F-1 or J-1 immigration status, our DSOs/AROs are your go-to resource. They can assist you with any immigration-related concerns and we encourage you to reach out to them. We also organize activities and workshops to discuss these important issues.

Department Email: iss@bellevue.edu

Meet the International Student Services (ISS) Team



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Lisa McCarter

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PDSO/ARO



Kinsey Christopherson

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DSO/ARO



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1 Durham Center (DUR)
1036 Bruin Blvd.

2 Hitchcock Humanities Center (HUM)/
Crisis Auditorium
1040 Bruin Blvd.

3 Riley Technology Center (RTC)
1012 Bruin Blvd.

4 Freeman/Lozier Library (LIB)
1028 Bruin Blvd.

5 R. Joe Dennis Learning Center (LCN)
1004 Bruin Blvd.

6 Margre H. Durham Student Center
1008 Bruin Blvd.

7 Gordon Lozier Athletic Center
1024 Bruin Blvd.

8 eSports Arena
1024 Bruin Blvd.

9 Hollis and Helen Baright Bookstore
815 Bruin Blvd.

10 Educational Services Building (ESB)
818 Bruin Blvd.

11 Maintenance
901 Bruin Blvd.

12 Wellness Center
2104 Harvell Cir.

13 Rotert Building (ROT)/Military Veteran
Services Center (MVSC)
2108 Harvell Cir.

14 John B. Muller Administrative
Services Building (MASB)
812 Bruin Blvd.

15 Sustainability Lab
1002 Bruin Blvd.

16 Student Housing
1211 Betz Road

17 Student Housing
1215 Betz Road

18 Student Housing
1303 Betz Road

19 Student Housing
1805 • 1807 • 1809 • 1811
Lloyd Street

Your Steps to Arrival!

Your Form I-20/DS-2019 – The I-20 or DS-2019 is your first step to arrival! If you are coming to the US on an F-1 visa (most common), you will receive a Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility. If you are coming to the US on a J-1 visa, you will receive a Form DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility. Be sure to review all documents and keep them in a safe place for your records. If a correction is needed to the I-20 or DS-2019, contact the DSO/ARO that signed page one of your document.

Pay the I-901 – If you are not transferring your SEVIS record from another university, you must [pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee](#). This must be paid before you attend your visa appointment, and only after you receive your I-20 or DS-2019. Bring the payment receipt with you to your appointment and when you enter the US. It is important to always keep the receipt for your records.

Resources - Use the [Education USA](#) and the [Travel.State.Gov](#) websites to get more information about how to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa.

Apply for your visa - There are several stages involved in the visa application process and they may vary by Embassy and Consulate. Find a US Embassy or Consulate office at www.usembassy.gov/. Generally, you should expect these steps:

1. Complete the Online Visa Application (DS-160) after you receive your I-20/DS-2019
2. Schedule an in-person interview appointment
3. Gather the required documentation
4. Attend your visa interview

Plan your arrival! - Make travel and living arrangements after you receive your visa. Visit [the Housing section](#) of this handbook for more information. Please see our [Arrival Dates and Orientation webpage](#) for details about when you should arrive.

In the plane, carry your I-20 or DS-2019, valid passport, valid F-1 or J-1 visa, admission letter, and financial documents. You will need to present these documents to a Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Officer at the Port of Entry to the United States. **DO NOT** put these items in your checked baggage.

Attend Orientation and Complete your ISS Check-In - All new international students are required to attend international student orientation and complete an ISS check-in upon arrival at Bellevue University. Students will receive the orientation and check-in information by e-mail and we will post details on our [Arrival Dates & Orientation webpage](#). We recommend that you arrive in Bellevue, Nebraska no later than a week prior to the program start date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019.

Insurance Requirement: All F-1 and J-1 international students with a BU-Sponsored I-20 or DS-2019 are required to take out health insurance coverage during their period of enrollment at Bellevue University (see page 34: “**Health and Wellbeing Resources**” for details).

Suggested Packing List

Prescriptions

- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, you may want to consider bringing an extra pair. If you have a prescription for your glasses, you can bring the prescription with you so that another pair can be made easily.
- Your medical insurance is not likely to cover eye examinations and dental care, so it is recommended to take care of these matters before you leave.
- Copies of important medical records. Have prescriptions written in English in generic terms.

Other things you should remember to bring

- Your academic transcript and diploma (if applicable)
- Your driver's license from your home country (if you have one)
- Your marriage license (if applicable) and other important documents
- Items for sharing your culture with others, such as souvenirs, music, postcards, photographs, or traditional dress (if you have room in your luggage)

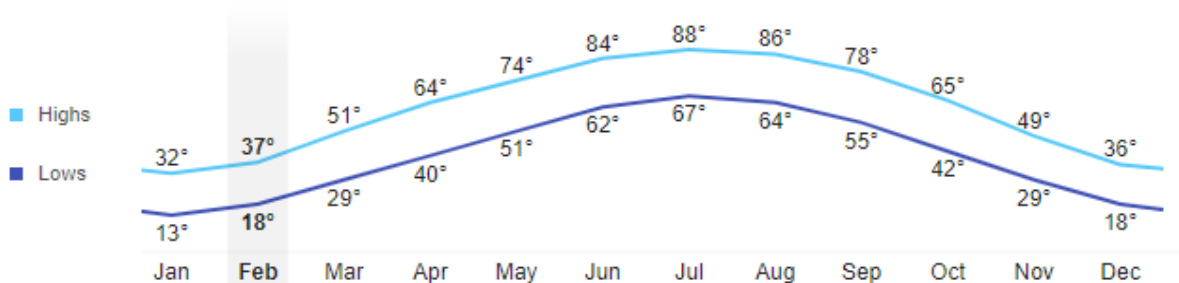
Clothing and Linens

For classes, casual attire is typically acceptable and expected. Dresses, suits, and other formal attire are suitable for more formal events like graduation ceremonies, weddings, or job interviews. Choose clothing that's easy to care for rather than items requiring frequent dry cleaning and ironing. You're welcome to wear your national dress if you prefer. Consider the local climate and seasons when packing your clothing.

Annual Local Temperature Forecasting

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| °F | 32°/13° | 37°/18° | 51°/29° | 64°/40° | 74°/51° | 84°/62° | 88°/67° | 86°/64° | 78°/55° | 65°/42° | 49°/29° | 36°/18° |
| °C | 0°/-11° | 3°/-8° | 10°/-2° | 18°/5° | 23°/11° | 29°/16° | 31°/19° | 30°/18° | 26°/13° | 18°/6° | 10°/-2° | 2°/-8° |

Temperatures (°F)



Even if you live on campus, you will need to provide your own blankets, sheets, towels, lamps, pillow, cooking utensils, and other household items. These items can be easily purchased after you arrive.

Small Appliances

If you are bringing small appliances and electronics from your own country (such as phone charger, laptop computer, etc.), remember to bring an adapter plug with you. U.S. electrical current operates at 110-120 volts, 60-cycle AC. You'll need a US adapter for electrical appliances. Unless your appliances can operate at 110-120 volts, it's recommended to leave larger items like hair dryers and hair straighteners/curlers at home.



U.S. Standard Adapter



U.S. Standard Socket

Other Items

If you have favorite sporting equipment like a swimsuit or tennis racquet, you can bring them with you. However, it's best to leave heavier items like golf clubs, bicycles, or basketballs at home. This type of equipment can easily be borrowed or purchased in the U.S.

Things You Should DEFINITELY NOT Bring!

- Pets
- Large appliances such as refrigerator, microwave, air conditioner, grill, etc.
- Firearms, weapons, sharp items
- Fireworks or other flammable items
- Hot plates, portable butane stove, or butane
- Coil lighting, lantern, or any other high-power flashlight
- Space heaters

We also recommend that **you do not bring** any valuable items, such as expensive jewelry, with you.

Housing

Students are responsible for setting up their own housing unless otherwise informed by ISS. here are options for both on-campus and off-campus housing. If you choose to live off campus, it is your responsibility to find and secure housing. Please see the housing options below for more details.

For all types of housing, you will need to provide your own pillows, sheets, blankets, towels, dishes, silverware, and pots and pans. Off-campus housing is often not furnished, so you would also need to provide your own furniture if you choose to live off campus.

Hotels

Before you settle down in an apartment or house, you may need to find a temporary place to stay when you arrive in Bellevue. Be sure to book this ahead of time so that you do not have issues. If you want to find a hotel or inn near Bellevue University campus, please check the [Hotel Guides](#).

On-Campus Housing

Please see [the university's housing webpage](#) for details about on-campus housing. If you are hoping to live on campus, be sure to arrange housing as soon as you can!

On-Campus Housing is an apartment-style dormitory that includes furniture, a full kitchen, a cafeteria meal plan, and all utilities.

In addition, a Residence Assistant (RA) is available in the building, or by phone, and Bellevue University security secures the premises.



Please email the Residence and Student Life Office with any questions at residencelife@bellevue.edu.

Students who are eligible to be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and are under the age of 24 will receive priority placement. Subject to availability, accommodations may be provided for Graduate students. At this time, married or family housing is not available.

Off-Campus Housing

If you choose to live off campus, it is your responsibility to find and secure housing.

It is *strongly encouraged* that you live near campus. If you live far away, finding transportation to campus may be difficult. Living nearby ensures that you can attend classes without too much difficulty, even with bad weather or transportation complications. **Please note:** There is NO local public transportation in Bellevue.

The average cost for a one-bedroom, unfurnished apartment is \$900 to \$1,200 per month. Most apartments are unfurnished and, typically, you will need to sign a six-month or one-year lease. A lease is a legally binding agreement. By signing a lease, you commit to staying in the apartment for the entire term, obeying all apartment rules, and paying your rent on time. Additionally, you may also be responsible for covering utilities, such as water, electricity, gas, and internet separately from rent. Refer to the “Setting Up Utilities” section below for more details.

Requirements for Renting

Apartment complexes may require a co-signer on your lease, proof of income (such as your last three months’ bank statements), and/or a prepayment. Landlords will also ask for your rental history. If you previously lived on-campus, the university housing office may assist you with rental history references. Please contact them for details.

Some landlords may request a Social Security Number (SSN), which most international students do not have. If you do not have an SSN, politely inform them of this.

When choosing an apartment, consider:

- Furnished or unfurnished
- Private or shared bedrooms and/or bathrooms
- Availability of laundry services (and if there is a fee for the laundry machines)
- Accessibility to campus
- Parking availability (if you have a car)
- Lease term (many leases are at least six months or one year)
- Deposit (in addition to the first month of rent, a security deposit is usually required, which is returned to you if you leave the apartment in good condition)
- Utilities (gas, electricity, water) may be paid by you or the landlord
- Safe neighborhood (talk with residents or police to learn about safety)
- Number of roommates

Tips/Safety Tips for Off-Campus Living:

- Be aware of scams! Visit [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) for tips to recognize and avoid housing scams
- If possible, pay by check or money order; not cash.

- Always ask for a receipt in order to have proof that you have paid.
- In the US, a written contract is more important than what is said verbally.
- If possible, bring a friend with you to help ask questions.
- Read carefully before you sign a contract. Ask for a copy.
- To find out how far an apartment or house is from Bellevue University, look on Google Maps or similar site. The address for Bellevue University is 1000 Galvin Road South, Bellevue, NE, 68005. Google Maps (or a similar site) will be able to give you an idea how long the commute to and from school will be.
- Keep your doors locked at all times – even when you are at home during the day.
- Keep the blinds or drapes closed when you are gone.
- Use a peephole to determine who is knocking before you open the door. If you are still not sure, question the stranger through the door.
- Have someone check on your place when you are out of town.
- Get to know your neighbors in case of an emergency.
- Never leave your key outside under a mat or in a place accessible to a stranger.
- Never leave notes on your door that indicate you are away.

Housing Quick Vocabulary:

- AC/H = Air-conditioning and Heat
- HVAC = Heating and Cooling System.
- BR = Bedroom
- BA = Bathroom
- ½ BA = No shower or bathtub
- Util. = Utilities: gas, electricity, and water
- Dep. = Deposit, usually one month's rent or less.

Setting Up Utilities:

Many off-campus housing properties require tenants to set up their own utilities, such as *electric, gas, water, internet, television cable/satellite, and phone* service. These costs should be considered separately from rent for most off-campus living. When signing the lease agreement with your landlord, request all necessary contact information for utility services. Utility companies often require a deposit. Be sure to confirm with the utility company whether the deposit will be refunded at the end of your service period.

Transportation from the airport to Bellevue University:

Taxis are available from Omaha Airport (Eppley Airfield) to Bellevue University (BU).

Cost may vary. Some transportation options may include:

- Taxi Services (zTrip-763-318-2900 or City-402-933-8700),
- Ride Apps (Uber, Lyft)
- Car Rental (be sure to have proper license)

After Arrival at Bellevue University (BU)

International Student Orientation (ISO)

International Student Orientation (ISO) is REQUIRED for all incoming international students. This program will give you the chance to learn important information for your studies, as well as to meet your new classmates. Families are encouraged to attend orientation with their new students, if they'd like to.

New Student Orientation

All new Bellevue University students must attend New Student Orientation (NSO) in addition to the International Student Orientation (ISO). NSO is your first step in becoming a successful Bellevue University Student! The NSO sessions are held either on campus or through an online webinar. [See details on the NSO Webpage.](#)

Your gateway to success:

- Activate your student account
- Learn how to make payments
- Learn how to register for class with student coach/advisor
- Meet your new classmates and current Bellevue University students
- Learn how university resources can help you succeed
- Find out about student activities and clubs
- Meet the Bellevue University president, deans, and faculty



In addition to NSO, Bellevue University has created a set of modules in Blackboard called "**Pathways to Success**" to help you prepare for your classes and become familiar with university services. This resource is a nice compliment to NSO, you can still attend one of the live events even if you've completed the modules. Please plan to complete this in Blackboard during your first few weeks of classes.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) Test

All new international students new to the US are required to have a tuberculosis (TB) test **within the first two weeks of classes** to ensure the health and wellbeing of the international student and campus as a whole. Please see details on the [ISS webpage.](#)

Students who do not complete the requirement within the first 2 weeks of classes will be reported to the Dean of Students for appropriate action. In addition, future enrollment will be blocked until the requirement has been met.

On-campus Events

Please see the [Calendar of Events](#) for Bellevue University campus events. Official Bruin team schedules can be found on the [Athletics website](#). We will also hold other cultural events during your stay, so be sure to check your email often for those announcements!



Moving In

The following is a list of items you will want to purchase once you arrive in the United States. This list applies to both on-campus and off-campus living, although additional items may be necessary if you live off campus. More details can be found on the [Student Housing webpage](#).

Apartment Shopping List

Per Apartment (check with roomates):

| | |
|---|---|
| Kitchen Bowls Plates Drink Cups Silverware Set Pasta Strainer Cooking Utensils (i.e. spatula, large spoon, tongs, whisk, vegetable peeler, pizza cutter, etc.) Utensil Holder Knife Set (2-3 pcs.) Cutting Board Can Opener Dishrack Pots and Pans (2-4 pcs.) Toaster Coffee Pot Tupperware Containers Saran Wrap Tinfoil Storage Bags Scissors Pot Holders/Oven Mitts Dish Towels Sponges Trashcan Trash Bags | Cleaning Supplies Dish Soap Dishwasher Soap (<i>if dishwasher in unit</i>) Laundry Soap Dryer sheets Windex Paper Towels Swiffer & Refills Broom/Dustpan Clorox Wips Iron/Ironing Board Vacuum (<i>if carpet in unit</i>) |
| Health and Safety Items Flashlight Band-Aids Neosporin/Antiseptic Aspirin | Bathroom (each bathroom) Bath Mat – <i>outside shower</i> Nonslip Bath Mat – <i>inside shower</i> Toothbrush Holder Wastebasket Hairdryer Toilet Paper Keenex/Tissue |
| | Living Room Lamp and Light Bulbs (<i>some living rooms do not have overhead lights</i>) Smart TV (<i>cable is not included, but you can use streaming services through the WiFi</i>) |

Per person:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bedroom Hangers Laundry Basket Alarm Clock Twin XL Sheet set Twin XL Comforter/Blanket Pillow Bath Towl Set | Personal Items Bath/Body Soap Hand Soap Shampoo & Conditioner Deodorant Toothpaste Hair Brush/Comb Q-Tips Razors Shave Cream Tweezers Nail Clippers Reusable Shopping Bag(s) |
| | School Supplies Notebooks (1 per class) Folders (1 per class) Pens/Pencils/Highlighters Flash Drive Laptop Computer (if needed) |

Remember that if you are living off-campus, most apartments are not furnished.

On-campus apartments are fully furnished with the below items:

- Twin XL Bed, Desk, 4-Drawer Dresser, Kitchen Table or Bar and Seating, Couch, Arm Chair, Coffee Table, and End Table

Betz Road: Full-size kitchen appliances, including microwave, no dishwasher. All showers have doors. Washer/dryer in unit. Units have hard floors.

Lloyd St.: Full-size kitchen appliances, including microwave, no dishwasher. Bathrooms include a tub/shower combo, basic liner/rings are provided. Laundry facility on-site. Units have hard floors.

Campus Services and Resources

Bellevue University strives to support the well-being of all students, employees, and the surrounding community.

Security

The goal of Bellevue University is to provide a secure, safe campus and work place for its students and employees. Students, faculty, and staff at Bellevue University who observe or are involved in any crime or incident on campus should report the incident to the Security Department as soon as possible via one of the methods below.

Security stations are in the Administrative Services Building (ASB) and the Maintenance Building. If it is a non-emergency situation, you may use the following contact details:

The Non-Emergency number:

- Bellevue University Security: (402) 557-5000
- Bellevue Police Department: (402) 293-3100
- Sarpy County Sheriff's Department: (402) 593-4111
- Bellevue Police Department: (402) 293-3100
- Omaha Police Department: (402) 444-4877

In an EMERGENCY situation, please call the following number right away:

- Off-campus: 911
- On-campus: 911
- Emergency Blue Phones located in each Bellevue University parking lot

Please look over the webpages for other pertinent [Health and Safety Information](#).

Personal Safety Reminders

While the Bellevue and Omaha area is generally safe, risks do exist. Follow these guidelines to ensure your personal safety.

- **While you are WALKING:**
 - Walk in well-lit areas. Avoid walking after dark. Walk confidently and stay in groups when you go to your car or if you must walk in the dark.
 - Be aware of your surroundings, taking note of other people and the environment.
 - Don't wear obviously expensive clothing or jewelry
 - Don't carry too much cash
 - Purchase pepper spray if you must walk alone often.
 - Avoid becoming intoxicated and walking alone at night.
 - Always keep an eye on your belongings

- **While DRIVING or RIDING in a car:**
 - Always keep your car doors locked, even if you live on campus.
 - Avoid driving after midnight, as more people drink and drive late at night.
 - Always avoid being in a car alone late at night. If you are at a friend's home and the hour is late, consider staying overnight.
 - Stay alert when you drive. Watch the cars and people around you.
 - Make sure you have adequate gas, preferably a full tank.
 - If you own a car, it is a good idea to have a towing service or at least a cell phone.

- **While in your APARTMENT:**
 - Keep your doors and windows locked.
 - Don't give your address or phone number to people you do not know.
 - Don't open your door without finding out who is there. If someone comes to repair something, or to check your meter, ask to see identification before letting them in. If anyone comes to your door and says they are a police officer, ask to see identification.
 - Don't give personal information over the phone or internet to strangers.
 - You do not need to feel obligated to speak to strangers who come to your door or call you on the telephone. If a salesman or recruiter comes to your door or calls on the telephone, don't feel you must buy something or talk to them. Politely say you are not interested and shut the door or hang up.

- **Protect your PERSONAL PROPERTY and PRIVATE INFORMATION:**
 - Do not leave your books, book bags, documents, or other personal items unattended, even for a few minutes.
 - Never share your bank pin number or Social Security number with anyone
 - Do not leave digital media lying in public spaces. Log out of e-mail and bank websites and close the internet browser when you are finished using a public computer.
 - Do not be too open with information about your whereabouts on social media
 - Visit ATMs, convenience stores, and gas stations in daylight if possible.
 - If you see suspicious activity that you think could be criminal, get the license plate number of the vehicle involved and a description of the car for the police. Go to a lighted public area where there are other people.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees for the current academic year, please see [Undergraduate/Graduate Tuition & Fees](#). Fees are for academic and administrative support services and student activities. Tuition and fees are due 14 days before the start of classes every term.

Failure to pay the tuition bill timely may result in an administrative withdraw from all courses, which may affect the student's immigration status.

Graduation Fee

The Graduation Fee is assessed to **all students** that are close to degree completion. This fee covers various costs associated with degree completion, including but not limited to the final degree audit, diploma, postage, and the commencement ceremony.

Payment Methods

See the [Payments and Billing webpage](#) for detailed information about your payment options. [Flywire payments](#) are recommended for international wire transfers.

Late Fee

Be aware of the due date for your tuition bill. Past due accounts may be charged a late payment fee. The student may also be administratively withdrawn from all future classes if any amount becomes past due or delinquent. Tuition bills are typically due two weeks before the start of the semester.

Academic Student Coach

Every student is assigned a dedicated academic advisor called a Student Coach upon entering a class, for the duration of their degree completion plan. The Student Coach will act as a steward for you, the student, throughout your academic journey while attending Bellevue University. Coaches provide multiple integrated coaching services encompassing time management techniques, referral services, academic services, and financial services to students.

Registering for Classes

You must register for classes with your Student Coach each term. Please also contact your student coach regarding any questions about your major or course schedule. You are encouraged to develop a degree plan with your Student Coach to ensure required courses are available when you need them. If you aren't sure who your student coach is, please ask! ISS can assist you with this or you may contact Bruin Support Services.

****An “[International Student Hold](#)” will be always on your account. This is a notification to all departments that you have enrollment restrictions due to your immigration status.***

One Stop Welcome Center



BRUIN Support Services assists on a variety of topics for students, faculty, and staff. Located on the main floor of the Administrative Services Building (ASB), the team can assist with payments, transcript issues, and technical support. Students can also meet with their Student Coaches in the available meeting rooms.

Please see the [Bruin Support Services Webpage](#) for details on how to receive assistance and technical support online, by phone, by email, and in person.

Records and Registration

Please visit the [Registrar](#) webpage to learn how to request official transcripts, certificates, diplomas, and enrollment verification.

Tutoring Services

Bellevue University offers both face-to-face and online methods of tutoring. Please go to [Tutoring & Study Skills Program](#) for more information on receiving assistance for challenging material and good study skills practices. Please schedule an appointment at: [Writing & Tutoring Center](#).

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers many forms of writing assistance, including brainstorming, idea development, organization, expository strategies, style, voice, academic conventions, APA documentation style (citations), and readability (grammar and mechanics). Please review the [Writing Center Webpage](#) for additional details.

Location: Freeman/Lozier Library Room 439

Contact: call 1-402-557-5449 or email writing@bellevue.edu

Webpage: <https://www.bellevue.edu/student-support/writing-center/writing-center>

Schedule an Appointment

Students who wish to receive assistance with their writing can receive assistance from a consultant in one of four ways: Face-to-Face, Online Interactive, Telephone, or a Writing Review. Please schedule an appointment at: [Writing & Tutoring Center](#)

Please cancel your appointment if you are unable to keep it. For the **cancellation or no-show policy**, please refer to the [WCONLINE site](#).

Library

Bellevue University state-of-the-art library and media center offers books, music, movies, computer labs, satellite television from around the world and a quiet place to study. Students find a wealth of printed material and robust research databases, as well as experienced staff to guide their research.

Use the [Library Website](#) and your Bellevue University credentials to access the catalog, online databases, special collections, and general information.

Residential Life

A good way to build a support network of people and enrich your experience at Bellevue University is through Student Life Activities, Clubs, and Organizations. We also encourage you to support our athletic and recreational teams. Bellevue's male and female teams include golf, soccer, basketball, baseball, cross-country, volleyball, softball, and E-sports.

Please visit the [Residential Life page](#) for more information and see [athletic calendars](#) for sports events.

Bookstore

The Bellevue University Bookstore is located adjacent to the Administrative Services Building (ASB). Textbooks, Bellevue University apparel, gifts, and supplies are available at the bookstore.

Dining Services

Bellevue University BRUIN Dining Services provides the campus community with a variety of options. BRUIN Dining is located in the Student Center. BRUIN cafe is open Mondays through Thursdays. Students can purchase a meal plan on their student account or pay with card for each meal. For information regarding hours of operation, meal plans, and menus visit [Dining Services](#).

International Student Organizations & Affiliations

BU MIX Organization serves to engage all types of students in sharing their cultural experiences and learning from one another.

BU Chinese Students and Scholars Association (BU CSSA) promotes social and cultural exchange among the Chinese community and other cultural and social groups on campus and locally.

BU Cultura Latina promotes and spreads positive awareness of Latino culture on campus and in the community by providing learning opportunities about customs and traditions through workshops and events on campus.

On Campus Health Activities & Recreation

Wellness Center

The Bruin training and Athletic center, weight room, and equipment are located at the Wellness Center. The facilities are open to staff and students.

The Wellness Center is temporarily located by the Baker's at 701 Galvin Rd, Suite 112. Hours are 8am-5pm Monday-Friday.

Scholarships

Scholarship funds are provided through a variety of sources and donors. Applications are reviewed throughout the academic year. Fewer options exist for international students, students pursuing Graduate and Ph.D. degrees, and students studying at a distance. For additional details, please review the [Scholarships webpage](#).

Bellevue University Policies and Rules

A full listing of Bellevue University's policies and procedures can be found in the current year's [Bellevue University Student Handbook](#). These policies are especially important to know and remember:

Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

All students and staff members (men and women) must be given equal opportunities for education, participation in athletics, and for use of university services. None of these may be denied on the basis of gender, age, religion, race, or country of citizenship.

In addition, all people have the right to be protected from unwelcome sexual attention. Likewise, all people, regardless of their country of citizenship, can be arrested for these offenses. Unacceptable behavior can include speech based on sex, visual contact based on sex, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, and requests for sexual favors. If you feel like rejecting such conduct will affect your grades or the possibility of getting a job, or if it makes it very difficult for you to study or work, the behavior may constitute sexual harassment.

If you believe you have been the subject of discrimination or sexual harassment, or if you have been accused of sexual harassment, we encourage you to report the incident. Please find information about reporting an incident and more on the webpage here: <https://www.bellevue.edu/student-support/center-for-health-and-safety/sexual-violence>.

Privacy of Information

In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, Bellevue University is prohibited from providing protected information from your educational record to a third party, not exempt by the act, without consent. Information related to the student and maintained by the institution may be included in the educational record. If you wish to grant the university permission to release information about your educational record to a third party, a Student Information Release Authorization form must be completed. The authorization form is found within your BRUIN Student Portal on the Resources and Forms tile by selecting Forms, Student Forms, and Student Information Release. Be sure to complete the form in full and save.

Tobacco and Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act

It is illegal to possess, use, or distribute controlled drugs (such as marijuana, cocaine, or heroin). It is illegal to share any medications a doctor gave to you by prescription.

Alcoholic/Beverages

Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, drinks with liquor) are not allowed on the Bellevue University campus. Students living in university housing should refer to the [Student Housing Handbook](#) for the most up-to-date policy information for the residence halls. Additionally, it is illegal to drink beer, wine, or any other alcoholic beverage in the United States if you are under the age of 21. It is illegal to give beer, wine, or other alcohol to people under the age of 21. It is illegal for anyone to drink while driving, and it is illegal to drive any vehicle while drunk. It is illegal to be drunk in public.

Smoking Policy

Bellevue University has been a tobacco-free campus since November 21, 2013. The university is committed to providing its students, faculty, staff, vendors, and other visitors with a respectful environment. Smoking and/or the use of any tobacco product is not permitted. This includes all buildings, parking lots, and grounds. This policy covers all tobacco products (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, pipes, bidis, hookahs, cigars, e-cigarettes, chew, snuff, snus, and other tobacco products or devices) and applies to all students, faculty, staff, vendors and other visitors of Bellevue University. For more information contact hrstaff@bellevue.edu.

Academic Requirements & Student Success

Class Requirements

Make sure you meet these requirements in order to avoid complications with your visa status:

- Enroll in and attend classes full time each semester
 - Full time enrollment at Bellevue University is defined as:
 - **8 credit hours** per semester if you are an undergraduate student
 - **6 credit hours** per semester if you are a graduate student
 - **Non-degree J-1 students** may have a prescribed course of study that is specific to their program.
- Unless summer is your first or final term, or unless summer is required for your program the annual vacation is summer term. See page 35 for additional details.
- **NEVER drop below full-time status without first obtaining permission from both your student coach and ISS.** If you are encountering a situation that requires that you reduce your course load, please contact a DSO/ARO in ISS as soon as possible. They can advise you on your options.
- Make progress in your studies and pass your classes.

Online Classes (Distance Education)

U.S. immigration regulations restrict the number of online classes an F-1 or J-1 student can count towards their full-time enrollment each semester. This means that only one online class (up to 3 credit hours) can count towards full-time enrollment during all semesters.

Please also note that excessive Zoom or Virtual Participation in an in-person course may also be considered a status violation. Always attend your in-person classes in person.

If you are in your FINAL SEMESTER with one course remaining, the final course CANNOT be taken as an online course if you are planning to stay in the U.S. on F-1/J-1 status.

Academics

Educational systems differ from country to country. Here are some things you need to know about academic life at Bellevue University:

The Student/Instructor Relationship

The student/instructor relationship in the U.S. is generally more informal than in other countries. It is acceptable and expected for students to ask questions and discuss topics with the instructor. Some instructors don't mind being called by their first name;

In class, students may speak without raising their hand and be recognized. If students have any questions, they can also refer to the class syllabus.

Tips for Academic Adjustment and Success

- Professors prefer it if students discuss ideas rather than just sit and listen. The manner in which you express your viewpoint is important, however. Show respect by acknowledging the professor or classmates' point of view and then offer your opinion. Say, "In my opinion..." or "I think..." or "I feel..." or "I believe..."
- If you do not understand, ask. If you are not yet used to asking questions in class, send an email, or make an appointment with your professor.
- At the start of each semester, you will be provided a syllabus for each course. This is an outline of the course objectives, due dates for assignments, and much more. Keep the syllabus for the duration of the course and refer to it if you are not sure about assignment requirements. Pay close attention when the professor discusses the syllabus as they will often explain during this time how grades will be determined.

Missing Class

You are expected to go to class on time, participate, and notify your instructor ahead of time if you will be absent. It is better to be late to class than to skip class. If you must miss class because of illness, you may need a doctor's excuse, especially if you have a long illness and you must miss several classes. Ask your professors for their policies on missing class, but do not assume that they will allow you to miss class. Their policies may also be included in the syllabus. It is also recommended to notify your professor beforehand if you know you will be absent from a class.

Missing the first week of courses is strongly discouraged as you will miss vital class information and affects the attendance verification process. For more information, please see the [current year's student handbook](#) and refer to your professor or syllabus.

Grading

Grades are on a 4.0 scale, with grades ranging from A+ to F. **GPA** is the *Grade Point Average* computed by multiplying credit hours by the class numerical grade and then dividing total credits into the total grade points. Please see details in your course syllabus and in the [Bellevue University Student Handbook](#).

Academic Standard of Progress

To complete the requirements for degree conferral, a student will need to maintain a grade point average that meets or exceeds a minimum standard of progress. Academic Standard of Progress standing is based on cumulative GPA. The standard of progress

required may remain in effect for seven years from the date of matriculation (enrollment). If the standard of progress is amended during this period, the student is subject to the conditions of the established practice effective at that time. If a student does not meet the minimum standard of progress they will be placed on Academic Warning, Probation or Suspension. *Please see the corresponding terms and tables.*

- **Academic Warning:** An early intervention and action reminding a student that degree completion is impossible unless the academic record is improved.
- **Academic Probation:** An action that occurs if a student does not meet the cumulative GPA requirements for two consecutive terms. Students must contact their student coach to determine the exact number of hours and GPA needed to return to good standing before enrollment into the next session. Other consequences may follow including not participating in organized university activities except as part of class work.
- **Academic Suspension:** An action that occurs if a student does not meet the cumulative GPA for three consecutive terms. Students suspended from Bellevue University will not be re-admitted for a period of 12 months. This one-year period begins at the end of the last session of enrollment prior to suspension.

Academic Honesty

What constitutes academic honesty varies from culture to culture, and it is important to understand rules of academic conduct at Bellevue University. Bellevue University is committed to academic excellence. The University expects academic honesty from all members of the University community and believes it is essential for academic excellence and integrity. Academic honesty includes adherence to guidelines established by the instruction in a particular course for both individual and group work. It prohibits representing the work of other's to be one's own (plagiarism); receiving unauthorized aid on an assignment (cheating); using similar papers or other work product to fulfill the obligations of different classes without the instructor's permission; tampering with library, computer, or student materials; or facilitating dishonesty by others Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violating course rules contained in the course syllabus
- Getting or providing unauthorized assistance from another student on a paper or project
- Providing or receiving information during quizzes and exams
- Falsifying, fabricating, or dishonest reporting of research results
- Taking the place of another student or enlisting another student to take your place in an exam
- Altering grades
- Plagiarizing

Plagiarism means using someone else's work as your own without giving proper credit to the real author. While you are expected to draw on many research sources to write papers, you must not claim their work as your own. This is considered stealing. In the United States, students are expected to disclose and cite any information they received from another source, whether it was a book, an article, or an encyclopedia. Failure to give credit to the original author is considered plagiarism, which is a serious offense.

When a faculty member believes a student's conduct constitutes academic dishonesty, the faculty member will have a discussion with the student to give the student an opportunity to provide an explanation. If the student provides an adequate explanation to the satisfaction of the faculty member, the matter will be deemed resolved. If, in the opinion of the faculty member, an adequate explanation is not provided by the student, the faculty member may sanction the student in accordance with the Academic Dishonesty Penalties section below. The faculty member is responsible for documenting this decision and notifying the Dean of Students' Office. The Dean of Students Office is responsible for notifying the student of the decision, the sanction being imposed, and the right to appeal.

Academic Dishonesty Penalties

Penalties for academic dishonesty may include a warning, a grade of "F" on the work in question or for the course. These are the only penalties that a faculty member may separately impose for an incident of academic dishonesty.

In addition, any student engaged in academic dishonesty may be subject to further disciplinary action up to and including formal reprimand, short-term suspension, long term suspensions, and/or expulsion according to the policies and procedures of the university. These penalties can only be imposed by the appropriate administrator at the University.

These actions and subsequent penalties may affect your F-1 Status and may result in termination of your SEVIS record and require leaving the United States immediately.

Immigration Regulations/Policy

Important Immigration Responsibilities

ISS is here to assist you, but it is the student's responsibility to always maintain their immigration status. Always ask ISS if you have questions or concerns regarding your immigration status. Keep these guidelines in mind to avoid serious immigration issues:

- You must remain enrolled full-time during each semester, pay all tuition and fees, attend your classes, and make academic progress to maintain your status.
- Off-campus employment is **not permitted** without proper authorization, which may be limited. This includes all off-campus internships required for your program – unpaid or paid.
- Report any changes in your local address, immigration status, or legal name to ISS within 10 days of any change. **This is required by law.**
- You must notify ISS if you need to leave the program early. Notify ISS and get permission before you drop any classes.
- Always carry your I-94 (either electronic printout or paper card).
- Notify ISS **immediately** if you change your major or change your level of study. You must be issued a new Form I-20 or DS-2019.
- Be sure to keep your I-20/DS-2019 and passport safe and accessible when needed and keep all previous copies for your records.
- Make certain your passport is always valid six months into the future.
- Never leave the United States without your form I-20/DS-2019 (signed for travel), a valid passport, and a valid visa (or plans to renew your visa before you return).
- It is very important for all students to know the program start and end date on their I-20s/DS-2019s. It is your responsibility to notify ISS if you will not be able to complete your degree program **BEFORE** the end date on your I-20/DS-2019. **You must notify us and get your I-20/DS-2019 extended BEFORE it expires.** Failure to do so will result in being out of status. Your I-20/DS-2019 cannot be extended after expiration.
- If you are outside the U.S. for more than five months after being on F-1 status, you will need a new form I-20 and will need to pay a new SEVIS fee before reentering the US. You must also be sure that you have a valid visa for re-entry.
- If on F-1 status: You must act on your status **within 60 days of finishing your program**. This might include departing the US, or, if eligible, applying for OPT, transferring your SEVIS record to another school in the US, being admitted to another academic program at Bellevue University, or applying for a change of status
- If on J-1 status: You must leave the U.S. **within 30 days of finishing your program**. Before your program end date listed on your DS-2019, if eligible, you

may also apply for Academic Training, transfer your SEVIS record to another school in the US, be admitted to another academic program at Bellevue University, or apply for a change of status.

- Whenever you plan to travel outside the United States and plan to return for your studies, you **MUST** receive a travel signature on your I-20/DS-2019. To receive the travel signature, please drop off your I-20/DS-2019 with ISS **at least two weeks before departure**.
- **Always ask ISS if you have questions!**

Authorization to Release Information by School

By coming to the United States as an F-1, you have given authorization to the school that holds your form I-20 to release reportable information to the government as needed.

Penalty for Failure to Maintain Status

Failure to comply with immigration regulations will result in the termination of your student immigration status. This means that you lose benefits associated with your visa type, such as on-campus employment, and will need to leave the US immediately. Reinstatement to F-1 or J-1 status is only possible through re-entry into the United States or application through the USCIS. Applying for reinstatement must be done within five months of termination and is a lengthy, difficult, and risky process. Reinstatement may be denied and deportation is possible. For this reason, it is very important for you to maintain your status while you are in the United States. Please always ask ISS if you have any questions or concerns regarding your F-1 status.

F-2 Visa Holders (Dependents of F-1 Visa Holders)

F-1 visa holders may have dependents with them in the United States. F-2 dependents are defined as a spouse or an unmarried minor child (under 21 years of age). F-2 dependents remain in status only as long as the F-1 from whom the status is derived remains in valid F-1 status (and only until attaining age 21 if a dependent child).

Dependents are not eligible for the Bellevue University student health insurance and should purchase health insurance immediately upon arrival. F-2 visa holders cannot work in the United States and cannot enroll in a full course of study at the university level (F-2 dependent children under age 21 can study full time at the elementary or secondary levels – Grades K-12).

If an F-2 visa holder is wishing to study at the university level, they may only do so **part time**. U.S. law only allows an F-2 to enroll **part time only** unless the study is avocational or recreational in nature. Bellevue University does not consider any program to be avocational or recreational in nature. Therefore, all F-2 study at Bellevue University must be done **part time**.

It is considered a violation of F-2 status to engage in full-time university study. An F-2 must apply for and obtain a change of status to F-1 if they wish to enroll full time. A change of status from F-2 to F-1 may be done through travel or from within the US through an application to the USCIS, which takes several months. Please discuss your options with a DSO in International Student Services if you are considering a Change of Status. Full-time study may only begin **after** the change of status has been approved.

Duration of Status (D/S)

A nonimmigrant student may be admitted for duration of status. This means that you are authorized to stay in the United States for the entire length of time during which you are enrolled as a full-time student in an educational program and any period of authorized practical training **as long as you maintain your F-1 or J-1 status**. You are also entitled to a 60-day grace period (30 days for J-1 students) after the end of your program or authorized practical training. While in the United States, you must maintain a valid foreign passport unless you are exempt from passport requirements. You may continue from one educational level to another, such as progressing from high school to a bachelor's program, or a bachelor's program to a master's program, simply by being admitted to a new degree program at a higher degree level and/or transferring your SEVIS record to a new school within the US. *You must receive a new I-20 or DS-2019 for the new degree level.*

School of Record

For initial entry to the US, you must report to the school whose form I-20/DS-2019 you used to obtain your visa and enter the US. If you have a Form I-20/DS-2019 from more than one school, it is important to have the name of the school you intend to attend specified on your visa by presenting a Form I-20/DS-2019 from that school to the consular officer. Failure to report to the specified school will result in the loss of your student status and subject you to deportation. In special circumstances, you may request an immediate transfer out to another school that you have been admitted to and where you will be able to enroll within 30 days of your entry to the US. Students transferring from one school to the next must report to an international student advisor within 15 days of the start of their program and sign their new transfer Form I-20.

Re-entry

A nonimmigrant student may be readmitted to the US after a temporary absence of five months or less from the United States if the student is otherwise admissible. You may be readmitted by presenting a valid foreign passport, a valid visa, and a Form I-20/DS-2019 endorsed for re-entry on page 2. All information on the form I-20/DS-2019 must be current and your SEVIS record must be active. *Please verify this with ISS before travelling.*

Transfer to another School

When transferring out to another school from Bellevue University, a student should notify International Student Services as soon as possible and fill out the proper forms. An acceptance letter is required for the completion of the transfer as well as a **F-1 Bellevue SEVIS Release Form** (sent through DocuSign by ISS). A J-1 transfer form will be provided by request only. There may also be documents from the school you are wishing to attend that need a BU ISS signature. Please work with your transferring school to get those documents.

The next school will issue a Form I-20/DS-2019 upon release of the SEVIS record from Bellevue University. We recommend that you buy health insurance coverage for the time between schools, if needed.

If dismissed from a program, you have limited time to transfer out your SEVIS record. Please contact ISS for questions about this timeframe.

Program Extension

If you cannot complete the educational program by the end date on your form I-20/DS-2019, you must apply for an extension **before the form I-20/DS-2019 expires**. An application for an extension of stay must be requested and approved **prior to the expiration date on your I-20/DS-2019**. Failure to submit a timely request for an extension may result in falling out of status. Poor academic performance is not in itself a permissible ground for approving an extension. Students requesting an extension must provide a compelling academic or medical reason verified by the academic advisor/student coach and ISS, an updated financial affidavit form, and bank documents showing funding to complete the program. To request a program extension, complete the program extension form through DocuSign (provided by ISS) and then meet with ISS to complete the process. **This must be approved before your document expires, so we recommend starting this process at least a month before expiration.**

Concurrent Enrollment

All F-1 undergraduate students doing concurrent enrollment at another school must have at least eight credits at Bellevue University and have concurrent enrollment approved by your student coach and DSO at Bellevue University. If approved, our office will issue a letter for you to take to the other school. Upon enrollment at the other school, you must turn in a copy of your course schedule from that school. For more information, contact your student coach and ISS.

Address Updates

You are required by law to submit any change of address to ISS within 10 days of your move. Please notify Bellevue University ISS by submitting a [Change of Address Form](#). Please make any changes in BRUIN as well. In BRUIN, list your Bellevue/Omaha

address as your home address and your home country address as the permanent address. Post Office (P.O.) box numbers are not accepted for permanent addresses.

Travel and Vacation

Please see the [Bellevue University academic calendar](#) for holidays when Bellevue University is closed and/or for any break periods. International students are required to enroll full-time in all terms with the exception of one vacation semester. Required terms are Fall, Winter, and Spring. Unless you are starting your program in the summer term, or you were informed that summer is required for your program, summer is considered an optional term and will be your vacation term.

Students who arrive in the United States on an I-20 for summer or whose program requires summer enrollment must enroll for the summer term.

Please be aware of the attendance policy at Bellevue University when planning travel. It is typically not advised to travel while classes are in session. Never travel during the term unless you have already made arrangements with the professor within their attendance policy. It is the student's responsibility to make those arrangements and ensure participation and enrollment is maintained. If you fail to participate during an absence, this may result in a negative impact on your grades, withdrawal from the class, and/or potentially affect your immigration status. If an administrative withdrawal takes place due to non-participation, F-1/J-1 status may be affected, which would prevent re-entry into the US. Please consider all risks before traveling while class is in session.

Traveling – Documents & Procedures

If you plan on returning to the United States to continue school, a travel signature will be required on page two (2) of your I-20 (for F-1 students) or on page one of the DS-2019 (for J-1 students). You must drop off your I-20/DS-2019 at ISS to receive a travel signature. The endorsement process may take 2 business days and ISS recommends that students drop off the document at least 2 weeks prior to your departure. If you are not able to drop off your I-20 for travel signature, you may contact ISS and request digital processing.

Travel Endorsements are valid for one year from the date signed (or 6 months for students on OPT). However, International Student Services recommends that you get one each time you travel outside the United States and plan to return to your studies.

A valid visa is also required for re-entry. If you will be traveling out of the United States and will be applying to renew your visa, be prepared to provide financial documentation for your interview at the consulate. If you are changing your source of funding, provide our office with updated financial documents so that your form I-20/DS-2019 can be updated before you travel.

Passports should always be kept valid six months into the future. Do not let your passport expire while you are in the US. Contact your embassy if you need to renew your passport.

Keep copies of **all** immigration documents for your own records and be sure to provide any updated copies for you and any dependents to International Student Services.

When you arrive in or leave the United States, your travel history is recorded on an electronic I-94 record. You must [download and review your I-94](#) *after each entry into the US*. This is proof of your status. Please contact ISS if you have trouble accessing your I-94.

Stay Informed

Please contact International Student Services if you have any questions about your immigration status or immigration regulations. Check your Bellevue University e-mail regularly for important immigration information.

Health and Wellbeing Resources

Health Insurance

In the United States, the government does not cover health care costs. Students must pay for every doctor or hospital visit, and health care in the U.S. is very expensive. Medical problems can lead to significant debt, which may prevent a student from continuing their studies. For this reason, if you are a Bellevue University student on a Bellevue-Sponsored F-1 or J-1 visa, you are required to have health insurance coverage.

Bellevue University has partnered with an insurance company to provide you a sufficient health insurance plan. F-1 and J-1 students with a BU-sponsored I-20 or DS-2019 will be automatically enrolled in this plan and the charges will automatically be charged to the student's account each semester. Students will be billed for insurance at the time of course registration each term.

If you would like to take out a different plan, you may request to waive the Bellevue University plan. Students who wish to waive the Bellevue University plan and the insurance cost on their student account must submit an insurance waiver request **every term** they wish to waive the insurance requirement. Students must submit a waiver request in person in the ISS office before the start of the term and receive approval notification in writing from ISS. Please see additional details about insurance, waivers, and more on our [Health and Safety webpage](#).

New students enrolling in their first semester will be charged an additional one-month insurance fee to cover pre-arrival. This fee covers up to 30 days before the program start date listed on your Form I-20 or DS-2019. Students who waive the student plan coverage in their first term will also waive this additional one-month pre-arrival coverage and should ensure they have insurance coverage while in the US before classes begin.

For more information on the BU health insurance requirement and waiver, please visit the [Bellevue University Health & Safety Page](#). For details about the BU Student Health Insurance Plan Coverage, please visit the [Bellevue University Dissinger Reed Insurance webpage](#).

Insurance Policy Review

Refunds for the Bellevue University student health insurance are rarely possible. If you end your studies in the middle of a term, we will not be able to cancel or refund your insurance plan. Summer insurance will be charged to the spring term tuition bill along with the spring insurance to cover the annual vacation term. It is not possible to get a refund if you end or complete your studies prior to the summer term.

Students who have applied for or been approved for OPT are no longer automatically enrolled in the health insurance coverage each term. OPT students are strongly encouraged to take out a health insurance plan with their employer, take out a plan through Dissinger Reed, or take out a private plan.

Insurance for your dependents (*spouse or child*) is strongly encouraged as well, but unfortunately Bellevue University does not offer a plan for dependents.

General and Emergency Medical Care

Medical check-up, physicals, colds, flu, sinus infections, or strep throat as well as other non-or less life-threatening illnesses should be attended to at a clinic or doctor's office. You find a clinician that fits your needs and call to set up an appointment. General Medicine or Family Medicine offices take care of most general care needs. Options close to the university are listed in another section.

The biggest mistake many students make is going to a hospital emergency room when they do not have a medical emergency. Emergency rooms are places for true medical emergencies, and if you are waiting with a non-emergency, you will be considered low-priority, and will have to wait a very long time, often for hours.

What is a medical emergency?

A medical emergency is any situation in which a doctor is needed immediately. Examples include a broken bone, a head or neck injury, heavy bleeding, or a severe car accident.

Responding to a Medical Emergency

In case of a serious injury or illness, the victim should go to a hospital. The closest to campus is the Nebraska Medicine Bellevue, located at 2510 Bellevue Medical Center Drive. Another option is University of Nebraska Medical Center at 2510 Bellevue Medical Center Drive. If you or anyone else is critically injured or not able to move or drive, call 911 immediately. A dispatcher will answer and request specific information about your location and the nature of the injury or illness. Do not hang up the phone until the dispatcher directs you to do so. An ambulance will arrive shortly, and sometimes a fire truck or the police will also respond. Treatment will be provided on-site or the victim will be transported to a hospital. Ambulances are expensive, and should only be used in an emergency. You can call 911 to get police, fire, or medical assistance in any serious emergency.

Health Services and Psychological Services

Bellevue University is committed to ensuring all students are able to maintain their well-being while fully participating in the college experience. We understand college can be a

stressful event and can burden one's physical and/or mental health. Bellevue University encourages students to take advantage of community organizations and national support systems. Crisis Counseling Services are available in-person on the main Bellevue campus to local Bellevue University students. You may find a list of useful resources, including counseling services and wellbeing resources, on the [Center for Health and Safety page](#).

Pharmacy

A pharmacy is the only place that sells doctor-prescribed medicines. If your doctor prescribes a medication, you may fill it using any pharmacy, including CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart. You may have to pay for prescriptions in full at the time of pickup and submit a claim to your insurance later. Make sure to keep copies of all receipts for your records.

Non-prescription drugs, often called “over-the-counter” medications – aspirin, cold tablets, vitamins, etc., are in plain view on drug store shelves.

CVS Pharmacy: <https://www.cvs.com/>

Walgreens Pharmacy: <https://www.walgreens.com/>

After-Hours Medical Care

For health care services after regular business hours, a nearby clinic is open in the evenings. Urgent Care Bellevue is located at 1307 Harlan Drive. Open Mon-Sat 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM and Sundays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. No appointment necessary.

International Student Employment

Please be aware that the primary objective of your F-1/J-1 student status is to study. Therefore, you must always put your studies first. Employment opportunities will be limited while you are in your degree program. Please see our [Work Authorization Webpage](#) for more in-depth details about your options. In addition, you may review the Employment Workshops in the Blackboard Organization (International Student Community) for more in-depth details about your options.

If you have any questions about your employment options, please contact International Student Services at iss@bellevue.edu or visit us in the Durham Administration Building.

On-Campus Employment

Students who hold a valid F-1/J-1 immigration status are eligible to work on campus a maximum of 20 hours per week when school is in session.

J-1 students must receive work authorization through ISS BEFORE starting work on campus.

On-campus employment is NOT permitted after completion of a degree program. Your I-20/DS-2019 will be shortened to match your degree program. Even if your I-20/DS-2019 isn't expired, if you have completed your degree, you are not permitted to continue working on campus unless you plan to immediately start a higher degree at Bellevue University and have received the I-20 for that new program. Please contact ISS if you have questions or concerns about your eligibility to work on campus.

If you are a current student looking for employment, you can find assistance through our Student Life services. Please see details on the [Student Employment at Bellevue University Webpage](#).

Off-Campus Employment

NEVER work OFF campus without authorization!!

Working off campus is greatly restricted and **work authorization is ALWAYS required.**

Work includes receiving **ANY** compensation for single or multiple services such as honorarium, tutoring, babysitting, etc.

More details about obtaining Off-Campus Work Authorization can be found on the [International Student Services Website](#). Please contact ISS whenever you have questions or doubts.

BU Career Services Office

Bellevue University Career Services can assist with many aspects of employment. They can assist in career planning, creating resumes and cover letters, practice interviewing, and networking. To see all the services, they provide please visit the [Career Services](#).

All questions about work authorization and immigration-related questions must be referred to International Student Services!

How do I get a Social Security Number (SSN)?

Please contact ISS for details on how to apply for a social security number.

Note: You will not be able to apply for a social security number (SSN) without an offer of employment. This includes replacement cards, if you have already been issued an SSN card in the past.

Income Tax

All international students who are physically present in the US are required to complete Form 8843 regardless of earned income or not. All students who earned income are required to report their earnings to the IRS and state government. April 15th is the deadline each year for completing tax forms for the previous year. Nonresident tax payers cannot file U.S. taxes electronically – any return done electronically by a nonresident will be filed incorrectly. This information comes from a local IRS nonresident expert. Nonresidents must complete and mail paper forms. The filing deadline for every year is April 15th unless you request an extension through the IRS.

Bellevue University does not offer assistance with preparation of your income tax at this time. You will want to reach out to tax experts, such as HR Block or Jackson Hewitt, to help you with your taxes. Other local universities may also host a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site each year for non-resident tax payers. Students must investigate this information on their own.

Living in Bellevue

Climate and Weather

Seasons

People in Nebraska experience four distinct seasons. Temperatures are often very cold at the peak of winter and very hot in the middle of summer.

Summer weather begins in June and lasts into August. Summers are typically hot and humid, with little rain. In summer, a “heat index” is often reported with the temperature, which is a combination of the air temperature and the humidity, since the combination of heat and humidity feels warmer than the air temperature.

Fall begins in September and is known for warm days and cool nights, lasting until November. As winter approaches, the days become colder and precipitation increases.

Winter can arrive as early as November and lasts through February. Snow is common, and temperatures can become very cold. It is not common for much snow to fall in November and December, but a light snowfall can make streets and sidewalks slippery and dangerous. The coldest times are usually in January and February. It is important to know the “wind chill index” because it will tell you the effect of both air temperature and wind speed. The wind chill index often is colder than the actual air temperature.

Spring arrives toward the end of March and lasts through May. The weather is usually cold and wet in early spring, but the temperatures get warmer as summer approaches.

Average daily high temperatures are:

- Spring (March-May) 16 C or 60.8 F
- Summer (June-August) 28 C or 82.4 F
- Fall (September-November) 17 C or 62.6 F
- Winter (December-February) 1 C or 33.8 F

Severe Weather

In Midwestern states like Nebraska, weather conditions are sometimes dangerous. When these conditions occur, announcements will appear on television and on the radio. Most of the time the weather warnings are not very serious, but it is helpful to know how to interpret broadcast weather warnings. Weather notices are often identified by county. If the weather notice mentions Sarpy County (the area surrounding Omaha) or any county north or west of Sarpy County, you need to pay attention to it.

If the weather warning is important, all regular programming on the television (NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX) and radio will be replaced with news and weather broadcasts. If

there is a tornado warning, sirens all over Omaha will sound to let people outside know that they need to seek shelter. The sirens are tested for a few minutes every month during the spring and summer. A testing message will appear on TV screens letting people know that the siren is only a test.

A “warning” for Sarpy County means the bad weather is happening right here and right now. Examples include a tornado warning, severe thunderstorm warning, flash flood warning, and blizzard warning. You should go indoors when there is a warning. For a tornado warning, you should seek shelter in the interior, lower-level of the nearest building away from windows.

A “watch” for Sarpy County means that the bad weather has a chance of coming, but it is not here yet. Examples include a flash flood watch, severe thunderstorm watch, or a tornado watch. There is no need to take action, but you should monitor subsequent weather announcements closely.

Weather Vocabulary

A **tornado**, also called a cyclone or a twister, are swirling columns of wind, and are the most violent of all storms. The greatest potential for such storms exists from April through September. If there is a tornado warning for Bellevue or Sarpy County, you will hear loud sirens sound for three minutes. After the first three minutes, cities and towns that may be affected by the tornado will continue to sound their sirens until the danger is past. Hearing these sirens is a signal for you to take shelter in a basement immediately. Stay far away from windows, which may break. If possible, take a flashlight and a battery-operated radio with you. The radio will keep you informed of the storm conditions, and the flashlight is useful if electric power goes out. Do not go outside when a tornado warning is in effect – you may be injured. If you are outside, go inside a building as soon as possible. If there is no shelter nearby, lie down in a ditch or depression in the ground.

TORNADO



(DAMAGE)



Severe thunderstorms are a very strong and fast rainstorm accompanied by thunder, lightning, high winds, and sometimes hail. It is very dangerous and you should seek shelter indoors.

A **thunderstorm** is a strong and fast rain storm accompanied by thunder, lightning, and sometimes high winds. It does not threaten serious injury, but you do not want to be caught outside in a thunderstorm.

Hail is frozen pellets of rain, ranging in size from a pea to a golf ball. Large hail can be dangerous and damaging to cars and buildings. Find shelter immediately, since hail can injure you.

HAIL



BLIZZARD



A **blizzard** is an intense and sometimes long-lasting snow storm that limits visibility and results in hazardous snow accumulation. You should not drive or walk in a blizzard.

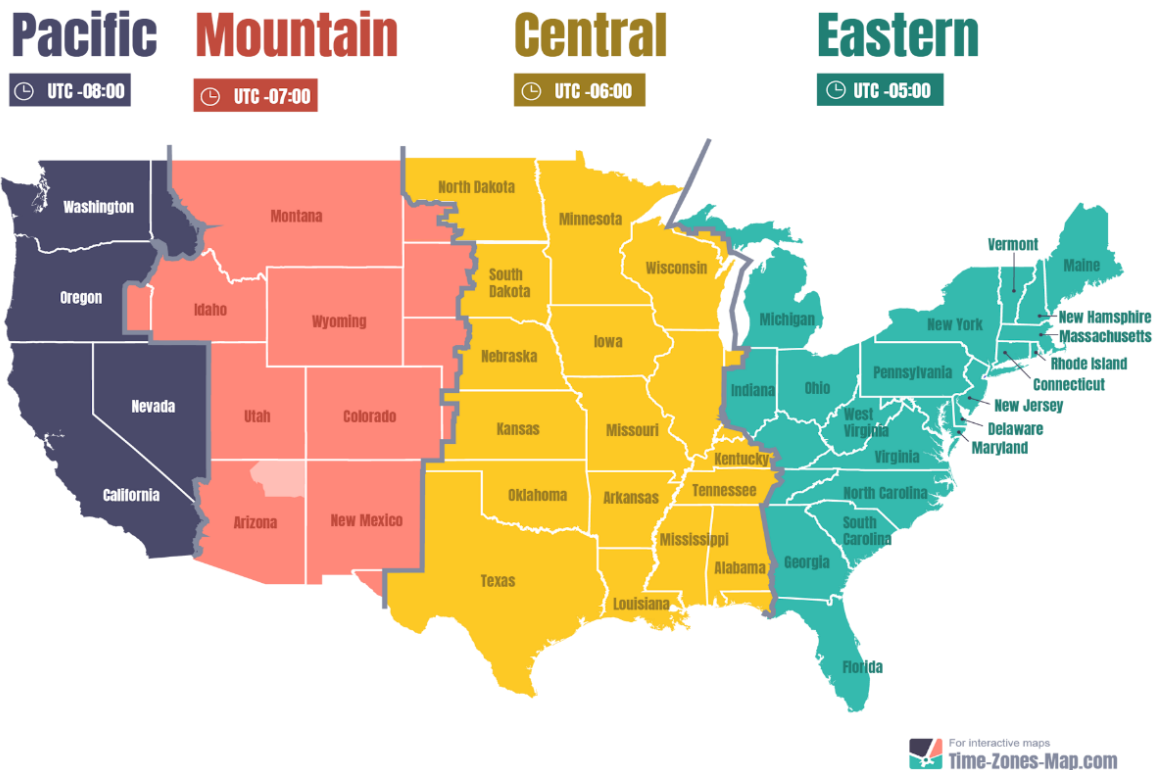
Please see the [National Weather Services Webpage](#) for various weather occurrences and definitions.

Time and Money

Daylight Saving Time Zone

Daylight saving time (DST), also daylight savings time or daylight time (United States and Canada) and summer time (United Kingdom, European Union, and others), is the practice of advancing clocks during warmer months so that darkness falls later each day according to the clock. The typical implementation of DST is to set clocks forward by one hour in the spring ("spring forward") and set clocks back by one hour in autumn ("fall back") to return to standard time. In other words, there is one 23-hour day in late winter or early spring and one 25-hour day in the autumn.

Bellevue is located in the Central Time Zone (CST).



Banking and Debit Cards

If you do not have a U.S. bank account, you may want to consider opening an account at a local bank or credit union. It is important to compare fees and services to determine which bank is the best fit for you

When you are setting up your account, take your passport, and the funds you intend to deposit with you. Banks do NOT require a social security number to open an account. Bank Options include, but not are limited to: Chase, First Bank, US Bank, and Wells Fargo.

Automatic Cash Cards

You can use these cards to receive cash from an automatic teller machine (ATM) using a PIN number. If you don't use the machine correctly, it may keep your card after your second attempt. Using an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) card at a different bank than the one it was issued from may incur a fee.

Many cash cards are now issued with a credit card logo in the corner like a credit card. These can be used to pay for your purchase at the point of sale, simply by signing the receipt. You can also use these as debit cards to make purchases at stores by entering your PIN number. Cards like this can also be used to order merchandise online or over the telephone. The money is withdrawn directly from your account, so be careful not to overdraw your account.

Do not share your PIN number with others and always report lost or stolen cards or checks to your bank as soon as possible.

Checking Accounts

You may not be familiar with our system of writing checks, but most Americans do not carry a lot of cash. If you have a checking account, you should keep good records, as it is illegal and expensive to overdraw your account, which means to write a check or withdraw money when your account is empty. Some banks charge \$20 or more for each check which overdraws your account and the store where the check was used will also charge a penalty fee.

Credit Cards

Many international students want to apply for a credit card when they arrive in the United States, but they are almost always rejected. This is because they do not have sufficient credit history, or a record of paying bills regularly and on time. You cannot use a parent or sponsor as proof that you will pay your bills because these people often do not have a credit history in the United States. If you have a checking account, particularly one with a debit card that you can use like a credit card at the point of sale, you almost never need a credit card. If you must have a credit card, it is best if your family members have the bank in your home country issue a card in your name.

Savings Accounts

A savings account is an interest-earning account for large sums of money. You can make deposits (add to your account) and withdrawals (take away from your account); however, you should not use it like a checking account. Savings accounts currently limit the number of withdrawals that can be made, or charge extra fees for excessive withdrawals.

Temperature, Weights, Size, and Measurements

The metric and Celsius systems of weighing and measuring are not in use in the United States. Here are some informational tables that will help you:

Temperature

| Fahrenheit | Celsius |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 212° | 100 (water boils) |
| 104° | 40° |
| 98.6° | 37° (body temperature) |
| 86° | 30° |
| 68° | 20° |
| 50° | 10° |
| 41° | 5° |
| 36° | 2° |
| 32° | 0° (water freezes) |
| 23° | -5° |
| 14° | -10° |
| 5° | -15° |

Conversion rates: $1^{\circ} F = (C \times 9/5) + 32$, $C = (F - 32) \times 5/9$

Weight, Volume, Distance, and Speed

16 ounces (oz.) = 0.45 kilograms

1 pound (lb.) = 0.45 kilograms

1 ton = 907 kilograms

1 cup = 0.24 liters

1 pint = 0.47 liters

1 quart = 0.95 liters

1 gallon = 3.8 liters

1 inch (in.) = 2.5 centimeters

1 foot (ft.) = 0.3 meters

1 yard (yd.) = 0.91 meters

1 mile (mi.) = 1.6 kilometers

35 miles per hour (mph) = 56 kilometers per hour

45 miles per hour (mph) = 72 kilometers per hour

60 miles per hour (mph) = 97 kilometers per hour

Clothing sizes

Clothing sizes in the United States may differ significantly than those used in your home country. This table will help you convert from one to another:

Women's Clothing Sizes

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| American | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 |
| British | 28 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 |
| Continental | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 46 |
| Japanese | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 |

Men's Clothing

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| American | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 46 |
| British | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 46 |
| Continental | 44 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 52 | 54 | 56 |
| Japanese | S | | M | | L | | LL |

Men's Shirt Collars Sizes

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| American/British | | 14 | 14 ½ | 15 | 15 ½ | 16 | 16 ½ | 17 |
| Continental/Japanese | | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 |

Women's Shoes Sizes

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| American | 6 | 6 ½ | 7 | 7 ½ | 8 | 8 ½ | 9 |
| British | 4.5 | 5 | 5.5 | 6 | 6.5 | 7 | 7.5 |
| Continental | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 |
| Japanese | 23 | 23.5 | 24 | 24.5 | 25 | 25.5 | 26 |

Men's Shoes Sizes

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| American | 5 ½ | 6 ½ | 7 ½ | 8 ½ | 9 ½ | 10 ½ | 11 ½ |
| British | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Continental | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 |
| Japanese | 24.5 | | 26 | | 27.5 | 28 | 29 |

Local Services

Mail and Parcel Delivery

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has the primary responsibility for delivering mail. Regular mail (letters, magazines, and packages) will be delivered to your address, whether you are at a homestay, residence hall, or apartment, every day except Sundays and official U.S. holidays. If you have questions about how to mail something, or if you just need to buy postage stamps, most post offices are open Monday through Friday and Saturday mornings to help you.

The nearest off-campus Post Office: 2609 Victoria Ave, Bellevue, NE 68005

Newspaper

A number of regional, national, and international newspapers can be obtained from news media stands in Omaha or on campus. The Omaha World-Herald is available for home delivery and [online](#). To find out about cultural events in Omaha, look in the Go section of the daily editions and the Entertainment section of the Sunday World-Herald.

Television

Broadcast

| Call letters | Channel | Description |
|--------------|---------|--|
| KMTV | 3 3.1 | CBS affiliate; 3.2 Live Well Network |
| WOWT | 6 6.1 | NBC affiliate; 6.2 WeatherNow |
| KETV | 7 7.1 | ABC affiliate; 7.2 Me-TV |
| KXVO | 15 15.1 | CW affiliate; 15.2 Azteca America |
| KYNE | 26 | PBS member station, part of NET Television |
| KBIN | 32 | PBS member station, part of the Iowa Public Television network |
| KPTM | 42 42.1 | Fox affiliate; 42.2 My Network TV This TV; 42.3 Estrella TV |

Movie Theaters

Omaha has many movie theaters, some specializing in new releases, others in artistic, independent films, and others showing older films with inexpensive ticket prices. Some theaters give a discount if you show your student ID. Most of the time it costs less to see a movie if you go before 5pm; earlier showings are known as matinees. Expect to pay high prices for



popcorn, candy, and drinks. Movie ratings offer some guidance to a film's content. Marcus Twin Creek Cinema is located at: 3909 Raynor Parkway, Bellevue, NE 68123.

Discounts are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays! Check the [Twin Creek Cinema webpage](#) for details.

Shopping

Omaha offers a wide variety of shopping malls, specialty boutiques, discount department stores, and thrift stores, which sell second-hand goods. For a full directory of shopping outlets in Omaha, check out the shopping section at [Visit Omaha](#).

Sales Tax

In the Omaha area, you must pay sales tax of about 7 percent on all items (except grocery food items) that you purchase. This is not a large amount when purchasing everyday goods, but it is a significant cost on top of the purchase price of a car. You do not pay this tax to the car dealer or private seller; it must be paid to the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles afterward. Figure this cost as you are deciding what kind of car you can afford.

Grocery Stores

Omaha has many types of grocery stores. Full-service supermarkets, such as Hy-Vee or Baker's, sell most foods a student would need, including a full selection of fresh produce. Discount supermarkets, such as Aldi, have a similar variety, but offer slightly lower prices because they do not bag groceries for you or offer as many specialty foods. Whole Foods and smaller competitors offer only healthy, all-natural foods, some labeled as "organic," meaning they were produced without man-made chemicals such as pesticides. These stores tend to be more expensive. You can also purchase groceries at smaller convenience stores. While these stores may be faster or closer to your home, their prices are typically higher.

Also, Omaha has many specialty grocery stores tailored to immigrant communities:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Omaha Oriental Food and Gifts | 10737 Mockingbird Dr. | 402-339-2671 |
| Asian Market | 321 N. 76th St. | 402-391-2606 |
| Jacobo's Mexican Grocery | 4621 S. 24th St. | 402-733-9009 |
| Mediterranean Foods, Inc. | 3025 S. 83rd Plaza | 402-390-0120 |
| Mison's Oriental Food Mart | 1414 Harlan Drive | 402-292-0250 |
| Mediterranean & European Grocery | 8601 Blondo St. | 402-391-2546 |
| Subzi Mundi | 2320 N 72nd St. | 402-390-2348 |
| Laos Thai Market | 4520 S 24th St. | 402-733-0579 |

Dining Out and Tipping Practice

Omaha is a “restaurant city” with nearly every type of food available. Dining out can be considerably more expensive than purchasing groceries and cooking yourself. It is customary to tip the waiter or waitress when you pay for your meal, either by leaving cash on the table or adding gratuity to the receipt when you pay by credit or debit card. The amount of the tip should reflect the quality of service you received; however, **15-20%** is considered necessary, as service workers rely mostly on tips for their earnings.

To explore the dining possibilities of Omaha, please check [Visit Omaha](#).

Transportation

Learning to Drive

To practice driving you must have a Learner’s Permit, which allows you to drive only when you are accompanied by a licensed driver.

It is important for you to learn how to drive well and to get to know Omaha’s streets before you buy a car. Also, remember that if you have never driven in winter weather you may have difficulty driving on ice. Ask someone who has lived in Omaha for a long time about winter driving because there are special techniques you need to know. Cornhusker Driving School and other driving schools offers several hours of classroom and road instruction. Call 402.707.8689 or see [Cornhusker Driving School](#) for more information about Cornhusker Driving School.

Good places to practice driving are shopping mall parking lots or large church parking lots during the early morning hours. You can also practice on the road early Sunday mornings when there is little other traffic. You must always be with someone who already has a Nebraska driver’s license when practicing.

How to Get a Driver’s License

First, you need to pass a written test. Then you must pass a driving test with an examiner in the car. The written test consists of 25 multiple-choice questions, which are shown with pictures. You can prepare for the test with a driver’s manual, available at the testing center. If you fail the test, you can take the test again at any time you want. In addition, you can bring a dictionary because there is no time limit during the test.

For the driving test, you must bring your car. If you don’t have a car, you can borrow a car from a friend and take the test. The car you use to take the test must have working seat belts and turn signals. While you are taking the driving test, you must follow the examiner’s directions very carefully. If you pass all the tests, you can get your driver’s license right away. All written and driving tests are taken at the following Sarpy & Douglas County offices:

- 4502 Maass Rd (Bellevue)
- 4208 S 50th Street (South Omaha)
- 2910 North 108th Street (108th and Maple)
- 7414 North 30th Street (North Omaha)
- 5730 S 144th Street (Millard Area)

The ***most important thing*** is to be sure to bring your passport, I-94 form, and two letters postmarked with your address.

For more information and current fees, visit [Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#).

How to Get Car Insurance

It is illegal and dangerous to drive without car insurance. If you have an old car, you must have at least liability coverage. This means that your insurance would cover damage to the other person in case of a collision. Full coverage is recommended if you have a new car which you will wish to resell later.

You must get insurance as soon as possible after purchasing your car. Without insurance, you can't register your car. In addition, if you are caught by the police driving without insurance, you will be cited and fined. It is recommended to shop around and get several insurance quotes before purchasing a policy. Insurance rates vary by the type of car, your age, and even where you live. Discounts may be available for students who earn good grades. You must ask the insurance company if these discounts are available to you.

There are two types of insurance: liability and full-coverage. Liability insurance compensates the other victim(s) in an accident. It is required. Full-coverage insurance, however, will pay both you and the other driver in the event of an accident. The price of full-coverage insurance is almost twice that of liability insurance. It is not required, but is a good policy to have if your own car is valuable. Car insurance is usually sold on a six-month contract basis.

Buying a Car

Here are some VERY important things to consider before you make a car purchase:

1. Know your budget ahead of time and express this clearly to any car dealer.
2. Research car insurance options ahead of time. (Full coverage is best!)
3. Shop for cars in places that are well known and have good reviews.
4. Always look up the car's history and note any previous car accidents or repairs. Check under the vehicle's hood, the tire treads, spare tire, and underneath the car to see if there's any notifiable concerns.

5. Use websites like Kelley Bluebook to see what other people think of that car model/year and to calculate the estimated value.
6. Get a second opinion about the car from a trusted friend or family member.
7. Test drive the vehicle on a highway to see how it operates at higher speeds. Listen for strange noises and test the breaks/acceleration.
8. Do NOT pay for a car without any documentation from the seller proving that they currently own the car and are selling it to you (Title, taxes, contract, receipt, etc.)
9. It is HIGHLY recommended to buy a warranty in case something is wrong with the car within the first 6 months-1 year.
10. Read ALL documents and understand all the terms of your purchase before signing your name.

Taxis and Uber

Taxi cabs can be expensive. Uber/Lyft can be less expensive but the same situation still applies. If you need a taxi, call/book 15 to 30 minutes before you are ready to leave.

For early morning departures, **book the day before**. They will ask you, "What city, please?" and if you are going to pay with cash or credit (credit or debit card). Note that if the dispatcher has trouble understanding your call, there is no guarantee a cab will be sent. *Please remember to tip 10-20%.*

- Uber: www.uber.com
- Lyft: <https://www.lyft.com>
- zTrip (cab): 402-292-2222; <https://www.ztrip.com/omaha/>
City Taxi Inc: 402-933-8700; <http://www.citytaxiinc.com/>

American Culture, Social Life and Culture Shock

What is Culture Shock?

Culture shock describes the impact of moving from a familiar culture to one that is unfamiliar. It includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people and learning the ways of a new country. It also includes the shock of being separated from the important people in your life, such as family, friends, colleagues, and teachers: people you would talk to at times of uncertainty, people who give you support and guidance.

Factors that can contribute to culture shock:

- **Climate:** Many students find the Midwest climate can affect them a lot. You may find the grayness and dampness, especially during the winter months, difficult to get used to.
- **Language:** Listening and speaking in a new language is tiring. In class, some international students have trouble understanding the lecture and reading materials. People speak quickly and you may feel embarrassed to ask them to repeat what they said. If English is not your first language, you may find you miss your home language.
- **Social roles:** Social behaviors may confuse, surprise or offend you. For example, you may find people appear cold, distant or always in a hurry. Or you may be surprised to see couples holding hands and kissing in public. You may find the relationships between men and women more formal or less formal than you are used to, as well as differences in same sex social contact and relationships.
- **Rules of behavior:** As well as the obvious things that hit you immediately when you arrive, such as sights, sounds, smells and tastes, every culture has unspoken rules which affect the way people treat each other. These may be less obvious, but sooner or later you will probably encounter them and once again the effect may be disorientating. For example, there will be differences in the ways people decide what is important, how tasks are allocated and how time is observed. In business and academic life, keeping to a schedule is important. You should always be on time for lectures, classes, and meetings with academic and administrative staff. If you are going to be late for a meeting, do try to give advance notice.
- **Values:** Although you may first become aware of cultural differences in your physical environment, (e.g. food, dress, behavior) you may also come to notice that people from other cultures may have very different views of the world from yours. Cultures are built on deeply-embedded sets of values, norms,

assumptions and beliefs. It can be surprising and sometimes distressing to find that people do not share some of your most deeply held ideas, as most of us take our core values and beliefs for granted and assume they are universally held. As much as possible, try to suspend judgment until you understand how parts of a culture fit together into a coherent whole. Try to see what people say or do in the context of their own culture's norms. This will help you to understand how other people see your behavior, as well as how to understand theirs. When you understand both cultures, you will probably find some aspects of each that you like and others that you don't.



- **Relationship Stress:** If your spouse or partner has accompanied you to the U.S., remember that the stress of the transition may cause struggles in your relationship. The transition to a new culture may be very difficult for your partner. Your partner may feel very isolated; he/she has been transplanted from your culture and separated from family and friends. Simple tasks can be stressful due to the language barrier. Often, they do not have opportunities to engage in productive, meaningful activity such as pursuing a degree, and it may be more difficult for them to make new friends.

American Culture

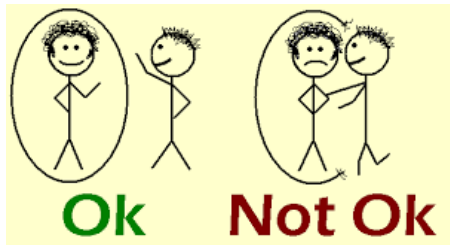
Basic Etiquette

Due to the friendly nature of most Americans, they are quick to use first names. Although this may make those who are accustomed to a more formal social environment somewhat uncomfortable, it is the norm for American culture. Formal titles (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Fr., Sr., Dr., etc.) are used together with the person's family name and should be used if you are speaking with the elderly or people in authority. They may ask you later to use their first name. Punctuality is highly valued in the U.S. and is considered a sign of respect toward the person whom you are to meet. Punctuality for private parties and casual events is more flexible; however, always inform the host of a dinner or formal occasion if you will be late or must cancel. Students are expected to be on time for class and appointments with instructors. Your grade may be affected if you are late multiple times. Many instructors and administrators welcome personal interactions with individual students. Students are encouraged to ask questions and express their opinions in the classroom. Observe the American students' actions to identify acceptable behavior.

Courtesy

Politeness and patience will serve you well in the United States. This includes remembering to say “please” and “thank you.” This common form of respect is not reserved only for those in a position of authority, but for each and every person you meet in a store, on the street, in class or in an office. If you need a favor or have a simple request, saying “please” will be much more effective than if you are simply demanding. Provided that you are kind, the person with whom you are speaking will likely return your kindness.

Personal Space



Some Americans prefer to maintain about 18 inches (46 cm) of space between themselves and the person with whom they are speaking with. This personal space is very important and, if limited, the individual may become uncomfortable. Typically, Americans do not hug or kiss an acquaintance upon greeting, but rather shake hands or nod their heads. They also do not touch while speaking, although a brief touch on the arm or shoulder might indicate sympathy or concern to someone they know. Once a friendship has developed, some may greet each other with a hug.

Sharing and Privacy

Privacy and personal possessions are important to Americans. People work hard to have a car, house, clothes, and other belongings. Be sure to ask how someone feels about sharing his or her space and belongings.



Apparel



Formal dress is seldom worn by students on the University's campus. They typically wear jeans, shorts, skirts, T-shirts, sweatshirt, and sweaters. For class presentations, job interviews and, other occasions, students may be asked to dress more formally. When attending a special event, you should ask the host of the event about appropriate attire.

Tipping

In the United States, it is expected that you tip for various services. Restaurants, taxis and ordering in (pizza delivery) are all situations that you would be expected to tip. Tipping is not an exact science and it is up to the customer to decide how much they are willing to tip, but there are some general guidelines to follow. If you are generally pleased with your service, a tip of 15 percent of your total bill is considered standard. If you are very impressed with your service, you might decide to tip 20 percent. Likewise, if you are dissatisfied with your service, you might consider leaving a 10 percent tip. It is considered extremely rude to leave no tip at all.



Dining

The formality of meals in the U.S. varies considerably. To be safe, follow the lead of the host and other American guests. Here are some general etiquette guidelines:

- Place your napkin on your lap before eating.
- It is not polite to pick up the plate from which you are eating.
- Food is generally eaten in small bites.
- Do not slurp soup or beverages.
- It is polite to converse during a meal unless you are attending a lecture or a toast is being made.
- Always chew with your mouth closed.
- Wait until everybody is seated at the table before you start eating.
- Use utensils, not your hands.

Religion

People may invite you to visit or join their church or religious organization. They may invite you to one of their organization's events or give you books or information about their beliefs. You are welcome to accept the invitation if you are interested. Otherwise, if you don't wish to attend their meetings or church services you can simply reply, "No, thank you." It is not rude and they shouldn't get upset with you. Even if the person is a good friend or helped you in some way, you have the right to decline their invitation.

Cultural Values

Americans place a high value on personal hygiene and cleanliness. Most Americans bathe daily, brush their teeth twice daily, use deodorant, change their clothes daily, and wash their clothes after wearing them once. This emphasis on cleanliness may seem strange; however, you should realize that this is an area that often causes problems

between Americans and international visitors. Americans are not used to body odor, and they are offended by it. You will find that supermarkets, drug stores, and department stores have hundreds of products that Americans use to keep themselves looking and smelling clean.

Americans are less formal than people from other cultures. This informality affects the way Americans dress and the ways in which they communicate and interact with others. Americans commonly call one another by their first names, even the first time they meet. In most situations, Americans dress casually. If you are in doubt about appropriate attire, it is acceptable to ask an American for advice. You will find that Americans do not devote as much time to “social niceties” as do those in other cultures. When formally introduced, Americans customarily shake hands; however, it is not common to shake hands with a person every time you see them. Many international visitors think Americans are abrupt. Unlike those from other cultures, Americans quickly get to the point. When they want something, they ask for it directly. When they offer a gift or extend an invitation, they usually do so only once.

By studying the unique history of the United States and by learning about this complex, multi-ethnic society, you may come to understand why Americans have these values.

Cultural Adjustment

Everyone who moves to a new country experiences a period of adjustment and adaptation to the new culture. This is sometimes referred to as “culture shock” because of the difficulty of leaving your home culture and living in a new culture. It includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people, and learning the ways of a different country. It also includes being separated from the important people in your life, such as family, friends, colleagues, or teachers

Participating in Campus Life

It is important to seek out fellow students with similar interests. You may find them in your classes and residential hall, but there are other options for meeting people, too. Bellevue University offers clubs and organizations representing a variety of student interests. Review the [Bellevue University academic and events calendar](#) and always check your email for updates!

U.S. Holidays

There are many different holidays in the United States, the most widely celebrated are:

- January 1 – New Year’s Day. Beginning on the evening of December 31, Americans celebrate the New Year.

- Third Monday in January – Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This holiday celebrates the life of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., a leader of the U.S. civil rights movement.
- Third Monday of February – Presidents’ Day. This is a day to remember past U.S. presidents George Washington, the first U.S. president, and Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president who led the country during the Civil War and is credited with abolishing slavery. Both were born in this month.
- March 17—St. Patrick’s Day. Named for the patron saint of Ireland, this day is often celebrated with parades and parties. Many people wear green clothing and put up decorations—even if they’re not of Irish decent! If you do not wear green on this day, classmates may pinch you—a very strange custom.
- Springtime (date varies)—Easter. This is a traditional Christian holiday, when people decorate eggs and children are visited by the Easter Bunny.
- Last Monday in May – Memorial Day. This holiday is a time that Americans remember all of those who died in war for the United States.
- July 4 – Independence Day. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, a document the United States used to declare its independence from England, was signed. Americans celebrate this holiday with picnics and fireworks.
- First Monday in September – Labor Day. This holiday recognizes the efforts of American workers.
- October 31—Halloween. People often celebrate this holiday by wearing costumes and carving scary faces on pumpkins. Children dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating to get candy.
- Last Thursday in November – Thanksgiving. According to legend, the first European settlers of the United States gave thanks for their first harvest season by eating a feast with Native Americans. This is a traditional time for families and friends to eat a big turkey dinner together.
- December 25 – Christmas Day. This holiday, traditionally Christian, is a time that most people exchange gifts, decorate homes, and attend church services, family gatherings and various parties during the month of December.

Sometimes there are classes scheduled on some of the holidays. Always refer to your syllabi’s course schedule to avoid missing class.

Tips to Being a Successful International Student

Everyone wants to be successful when they are studying in the United States. Here is a list of things to help you during your time here:

Maintain your immigration status. As an international student, it is very important for you to maintain your immigration status while you are in the US. If you are here on a student visa, it is important that you remain enrolled full time each term and follow all regulations pertaining to your immigration status. Please refer to our [Maintain F-1 Status Webpage](#) for tips and always contact ISS if you have questions or concerns.

Read everything that you sign. Your I-20/DS-2019, your cell phone contract, your dormitory or apartment lease, etc., all have your signature verifying that you have read the information and that you understand it. Be sure to take the time to carefully read all documents before signing them. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification! You are legally responsible for everything above your signature, so be careful!

Check your Bellevue University E-mail. All university, academic and international correspondence is sent to your my365.bellevue.edu email address, so it is extremely important that you check this email regularly. If you have a hard time remembering to do this, have it automatically forwarded to your preferred email account by going into BRUIN. It is very helpful to identify yourself with your first and last name along with your student ID in the body of your email when corresponding with Bellevue University staff and faculty. There might be another student with a similar name thus you could receive the wrong information.

Understand the University's policy of academic honesty. What you may think is simply "helping a friend" could be considered cheating and lead to academic dismissal from the University. Never speak to other classmates during exams nor use research project content that is not well documented. Never copy sections of someone's writing and use it in yours without giving credit to the author.

Watch your I-20/DS-2019 and passport expiration dates!! Follow the proper procedures for extending your I-20/DS-2019, when necessary. Contact your country's embassy in the United States about renewing your passport, and be aware of normal processing times. International students must always have a passport that is valid at least 6 months into the future.

Understand your insurance policy and know where to go in case of a medical emergency. The closest medical facility is not always the PREFERRED PROVIDER and therefore should not be your first choice. If you have Bellevue University's insurance, check your medical health care options with the [Dissinger Reed Insurance](#).

Time management. Time is one of the most important resources. Effective time management is a skill that most people should utilize out of their professional and personal lives. Time management can make the difference between a mediocre and a superior performance to a college student. Managing time in college can be challenging and yet it is very important to a student's success.

Participate in Off-campus Activities. Exposing yourself to a variety of social situations, whether it be joining a club, going to a party, or eating dinner downtown with your friends, allows you to develop relationships with people from other states, cultures, and countries. Expanding your social circle will help you form cross-cultural connections as well as develop a greater world perspective. Interacting with people who come from different backgrounds, will teach you more about life than any college course will. There is no better time to expand your social circle than in college.

Read the syllabus for each class. Class rules vary greatly from professor to professor; to receive the best grades it is important that you understand how you will be graded in each class. In each class, you will receive a syllabus. A syllabus is a document that outlines the course, rules and policies, and your responsibilities in the class. It is a teaching/learning contract between you and the professor. It is your responsibility to read it carefully and pay attention to the course schedule for assignment deadlines and due dates.

Note-Taking Skills. There are many methods and strategies to note-taking. It is important that students develop their own note-taking skills that best fit their learning styles.

How to Read a Textbook? College textbooks are great learning resources, but with long reading assignments, it's difficult to read everything word-for-word. Developing reading strategies allow you to read faster and understand and grasp concepts better when you read.

Group Work is an important element of learning in U.S. schools. While group work can be challenging, it teaches innovation through collaboration, problem solving, and leadership skills that are important to both academic and career development. In group work, remember to work together, communicate, have clear expectations, be fair and helpful, commit to the work, and share group responsibilities.

Do not be Afraid to Ask! It is normal for students to ask questions during class. You may not be the only one with a question, so you are encouraged to ask questions in class. If you are more comfortable, you may also ask your professors questions by email or during their office hours. Additionally, our DSOs at Bellevue University are here to assist when it comes to immigration questions. Never be afraid to ask any questions!

THANKS!

If you have any questions email:
iss@bellevue.edu



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