Welcome and thank you for choosing our state to further your studies. On behalf of the people of Michigan, we wish you the very best in your academic pursuits and trust you will find much beyond them to bring you enjoyment and enlightenment. Take some time to meet the people and places that make our state so special, what we call Pure Michigan.

Rick Snyder
Governor of Michigan

On behalf of the staff of the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS), I welcome you to Michigan State University. OISS serves as your primary contact for many issues you will face during your stay on campus and we look forward to getting to know you. A lot of information will come at you quickly in the days ahead. Do not be alarmed if you do not absorb it all.

New students face understandable confusion during their first days on campus and we hope you will not be too shy to ask questions. This Welcome Handbook provides useful information on many of the issues that are common to new international students.

OISS hosts a number of special programs throughout the year and you can find a listing of all programs on the OISS web site: www.oiss.msu.edu. Because information can change, we hope you will visit this site regularly.

OISS hosts a weekly International Coffee Hour that has become a popular tradition for gathering, networking and making friends. We invite you to join us every Friday afternoon in the International Center. The coffee is free!

We hope you will visit OISS any time we can be of assistance to you. Please accept our best wishes for a successful and productive year.

Peter Briggs
OISS Director
Meet THE OISS TEAM

Peter Briggs
Director
Peter has more than 30 years experience in the field of services to international students and scholars. Peter holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington and a master's in Education Policy and Management from the University of Oregon. His extensive professional travels have taken him throughout Europe, Latin America and Asia.

Chris Bargerstock
Assistant Director
Chris completed her B.S. degree in Social Science at Michigan State University. Chris has her M.P.A. (Masters of Public Administration) at Wayne State University. Chris works with faculty and staff and she processes the H-1B petitions for MSU. According to Chris, OISS is unique because “working in OISS brings the world to me.”

Ravi Ammigan
Assistant Director
Originally from Mauritius, Ravi first stepped foot onto American soil as an international student himself. He holds a BA in Business and Database Management from Kendall College and a MA in Communication from Michigan State University. At OISS, his time is also dedicated to managing the communication and programming efforts of the office.

Nancy Rademacher
Sevis Coordinator
Nancy is the SEVIS Coordinator at OISS. Her functions include office management, SEVIS reporting, computer technical support, knowledge of university policies and procedures, and immigration regulations. Nancy has worked at MSU since 1980, and has been at OISS since 1987. She is an avid sports fan and supports MSU teams. Go Green!

Brooke Stokdyk
Advisor
Brooke hails from Indiana University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Germanic Studies and a Master of Science in Student Affairs Administration. She also spent three and a half years working with international students and scholars at Indiana University. Brooke has traveled to Europe several times and is looking forward to traveling around the world.

Mary Gebbia-Portice
ISSP Coordinator
Mary received her Bachelor's degree in 1986 from MSU. Prior to joining OISS, she worked in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at MSU. Throughout the years, she has worked closely with International students, scholars, faculty, and staff. At OISS, Mary works primarily with international sponsored students.

Neringa Tuyilingire
Advisor
Neringa was born and raised in Lithuania, and came to the U.S. in 1999 to pursue a college education. She graduated from MSU’s James Madison College with a degree in International Relations. Prior to MSU, she spent two years working with international scholars at Rutgers University. Neringa works with international scholars on H-1B and J visas.

Hersh Sisodia
Advisor
Hersh was born in India and raised in the United States. He works primarily with F-1 students and SEVIS-related issues. He graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Intercultural Communication. Prior to joining OISS, Hersh worked for the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives at MSU.

Courtney Poles
Advisor
Courtney’s duties are centered around J Students, as well as liaising between OISS and Social Security Administration/Secretary of State offices. She is a first generation Arab-American who has been working in the field of International Education for three years. She holds a Master of Public Administration from Central Michigan University. 

Brooke Stokdyk
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Brooke hails from Indiana University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Germanic Studies and a Master of Science in Student Affairs Administration. She also spent three and a half years working with international students and scholars at Indiana University. Brooke has traveled to Europe several times and is looking forward to traveling around the world.

Nicole Namy
Advisor
Nicole graduated from MSU with degrees in English and Education. She was born in Lebanon and is fluent in Arabic. As Community Outreach Coordinator, Nicole hopes to utilize the extensive knowledge and expertise of the MSU international community to share with those within the greater Lansing and East Lansing area.

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The international student orientation takes place in August before the beginning of fall semester. Less extensive orientations are offered at the start of spring and summer semesters. International students have found the orientation program to be valuable both for making new friends as well as understanding academic requirements, immigration regulations, and support services available. We urge you to participate in the orientation. The program will give you the basic information you need to get started in your new life at MSU. Many current MSU students serve as orientation volunteers, help with academic advising, lead campus tours, and introduce new students to the community. The orientation program also gives you a good opportunity to become acquainted with some of the staff with whom you will associate during your stay here.

Please refer to the Orientation Schedule Book for information specific to your semester of admission.
Mission Statement
The mission of the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) is to provide support services to MSU’s international students and scholars. Services include:

- Advising on and facilitating compliance with U.S. immigration regulations.
- Conducting orientations and other special programming that help international students and scholars integrate into and adjust to the academic, cultural and social life of MSU.
- Serving as a liaison with U.S. government agencies, foreign embassies, sponsors and educational foundations that support international students and scholars.
- Contributing to the internationalization of MSU by providing opportunities for growth through cross-cultural interactions.

Office for International Students and Scholars
105 International Center
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: (517) 353-1720
Fax: (517) 355-4657
Email: oiss@msu.edu
Web: www.oiss.msu.edu

General Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 12:00pm;
1:00pm - 5:00pm

Walk-In Hours
Fall and Spring Semesters
Monday - Friday
1:00pm - 3:00pm
Summer (June 1 - July 29)
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
1:00pm - 3:00pm

Walk-in hours are generally reserved for individuals who have short 15-minute questions. No appointment is needed for walk-ins. If you want to meet with an advisor for a longer time, we suggest that you call and make an appointment.

We hope this handbook will help you adjust to life at MSU and in our community. We invite you to contact us anytime you have questions.
Your Passport
Your passport, issued by your country of citizenship, should be valid at least six months into the future. To renew your passport, contact your home government or consulate in the United States (www.travel.state.gov).

Your I-20 or DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility)
This certificate is an immigration document that correlates with the particular immigration status you hold. A form I-20 is used for F-1 students and F-2 dependents. A form DS-2019 is used for J-1 exchange visitors and J-2 dependents.

These documents are very important documents and should be kept safe while in the U.S. Even after you have left the United States, you should retain these documents as they serve as an official record of your immigration history. They can also be useful for tax purposes. Please DO NOT DISCARD your old I-20 or DS-2019 forms.
Your Visa Stamp
The visa is the most commonly misunderstood immigration document. It is a stamp that the United States consulate or embassy gives foreign nationals in their passports and which they must use to enter the United States in the particular classification they request (e.g.: J-1 or F-1). The validity of a visa stamp pertains only to the period during which it may be used for admission or re-admission to the United States. It does not indicate how long you may stay in the United States. Some visa stamps are only issued for 3 months or 6 months. Visitors may remain legally in the United States with an expired visa stamp as long as their form I-20 or DS-2019 is valid and the proper immigration status is indicated on the I-94 card. On the visa stamp, there is also an indication of the number of entries permitted, usually One, Two, or M (for multiple). If a student or scholar has an expired visa stamp or uses up his or her entries and wishes to enter the United States again during the same validity period, he or she must obtain a new visa.

Your Form I-94
This is the small white card (Arrival/Departure record) given to foreign nationals at the port of entry to the United States, and which an immigration officer validates. This is a very important document as it indicates the visa classification you are given upon entry to the United States and the length of time you may stay. This document is your proof of inspected legal entry into the U.S. It is very important.

J-1 Exchange Visitors
The J-1 visa is used for exchange visitors. At MSU, this visa status can be used for visiting faculty, research scholars, short-term scholars, non-degree and degree-seeking students.

Maintaining Your Legal Immigration Status
The United States has laws governing foreign nationals living within its borders. It is vital for you to take the responsibility to learn about these laws.

- You are responsible for maintaining your visa status. Your passport must be valid at all times.
- Make sure you understand exactly how long you are allowed to stay in the United States based on your certificate of eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019). If you need an extension, apply in a timely manner.
- Notify OISS (Office for International Students and Scholars) in advance if you terminate your study, employment, or your affiliation with MSU earlier than the date indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Prior to traveling outside the United States make sure that your form I-20 or form DS-2019 has been endorsed for travel by an advisor in OISS in the last six months.
- Do not work at other institutions or off campus unless authorized by OISS.
- If employed, file annual income tax returns by April 15 of each year.
- Consult OISS for immigration advice.

F-1 Students
The F-1 visa status is used for students pursuing a full course of study at an academic or language institution. This visa is used solely for the purpose of study.
We also suggest that you visit OISS first before you decide to call the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or any immigration attorney. If you have ANY QUESTIONS in regards to immigration laws and regulations, PLEASE CONTACT OISS. We are happy to help you understand what you need to know so that you do not jeopardize your current visit or any other future plans that you may have for returning to the United States.

SEVIS and Immigration Regulations
SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System) is an internet-based system in which DHS maintains information on non-immigrant visitors holding F, M and J visas.

The Role and Responsibility of International Students
Students must be aware of and comply fully with the following:

1) You must maintain a valid passport at all times.
2) You must maintain a valid I-20 or DS-2019 at all times. This includes correct level and major, current funding and a program end date in the future.
3) You must enroll and attend classes in fall and spring to maintain status. You don’t have to attend classes during summer if you were enrolled in spring and intend to enroll the next fall. If you plan on taking a semester off other than summer, come in to OISS for more information. You must obtain prior approval from an advisor in OISS if you will not enroll for any semester other than summer.
4) If summer is your first semester at MSU, you must be enrolled full time.
5) You must enroll in a full-time course of study during normal enrollment periods (fall & spring semesters). Full-time is: 12 credits per semester for Undergraduates, 9 credits per semester for Master’s and 6 credits per semester for PhD students. If you are a graduate student with an assistantship, full-time is then reduced to 6 credits for a Master’s student and 3 credits for a PhD student. Finally, if you are a PhD student and you have passed your comprehensive exam, full-time is 1 credit per semester.
6) You must attend the college/university on your I-20 or DS-2019. Prior approval is needed if you are going to dual enroll at another institution (example: Lansing Community College). You must take at least half of your full-time credits per semester at MSU if MSU has issued your I-20 or DS-2019. Only one online course can count toward your full-time credit requirements.

Please Note:
You must be enrolled for your courses by the beginning of each semester. OISS is required to report under enrollment to DHS through SEVIS within thirty days of the end of the registration period. Any student who is less than full-time at that point will be reported to DHS as under enrolled. If you drop a class at any time during the semester and you fall below full time, this will be reported to DHS. Please contact OISS prior to dropping below full time.

7) You MUST check your MSU email account regularly, as required by university policy. OISS uses MSU email as the primary mode of communication for visa-related issues. It is highly recommended that you check your email once a day.
Enrollment/Reporting Information:

- If you will not be enrolled full-time, you must receive prior approval from the Designated School Official in OISS. You and your academic advisor must complete the OISS form, “Reduced Course Load,” and submit it to OISS prior to registering for less than a full course load or prior to dropping below a full course load.

- You can carry a reduced course load for an academic reason for only one semester per degree level. Academic reduced course load reasons are limited in scope. Please consult with OISS for more information.

- You may carry a reduced course load for medical reasons for two semesters per degree level. Medical reasons must be substantiated by a medical doctor or a board certified psychologist in the U.S.

- You may carry a reduced course load in your last semester before graduating if you need less than a full course load to graduate. OISS approval is required, and your I-20 expiration date will be shortened to the end of your final semester.

- You are only allowed to count one online course per semester toward your full-time status.

- You must report any change of address or residence and/or any change of name to the Office of the Registrar within 5 days of the change. This information will then electronically notify DHS of the change via SEVIS within 21 days, as required by Federal regulations. You may report address changes to the Registrar through their web site: www.reg.msu.edu. Name changes are also reported to the Registrar; however, you must go in person or send a legal document that reflects the name change. Name changes for dependents must be reported to OISS directly.

- You must apply for an extension of your program of study prior to the expiration date on your I-20 or DS-2019 if you cannot complete your program by that date. Requests for extensions should be submitted 30-60 days prior to the expiration date of the I-20 or DS-2019 so the extension process can be completed prior to the expiration date on the document.

- You must obtain a new I-20/DS-2019 if you change your academic program from one degree level to another (e.g., from Bachelor’s to Master’s level), one school to another (e.g., from the College of Arts and Letters to the College of Engineering), or one major/field of study to another (e.g., from Chemical Engineering to Physics). You must also obtain a new form I-20 or DS-2019 if your source of funding changes (e.g. from scholarship to parents).

- Prior to traveling outside the United States make sure that your form I-20 or form DS-2019 has been endorsed for travel by an advisor in OISS in the last six months and reflects all current and accurate information.

Employment:

You are NOT allowed to work in the United States without authorization. F-1 students are pre authorized to work on campus up to 20 hours per week when school is in session, and more than 20 hours per week on campus when school is not in session. You are also eligible to apply for employment related to your course of study through Curricular Practical Training (CPT) during your degree for off-campus employment, and Optional Practical Training (OPT) for one year of full-time employment after graduation. J-1 students are only allowed to work on campus up to 20 hours per week with their J-1 program sponsor’s authorization. J-1 students may also conduct off-campus internships and/or accept full-time employment after graduation with Academic Training authorization. An OISS advisor can provide you with more information about these employment options.
Transfer: You must complete an official immigration transfer whenever you change educational institutions. F-1 students must notify their current institution of their intent to transfer, obtain a form I-20 from the new institution, and report to the Designated School Official at the new school within 15 days of the program start date listed on the form I-20. J-1 students must notify their current institution of their intent to transfer, and report to the Responsible Officer at the new school within 30 days of the transfer date. The new DS-2019 will be issued upon arrival at the new school.

- If you wish to withdraw from your courses, you must report this to OISS prior to withdrawing. If you report to OISS prior to withdrawing, you will be pre-authorized and allowed 15 days to leave the U.S. If you do not report to OISS, your visa status ends on your withdrawal date.

- The normal grace period to remain in the United States following degree completion is 60 days for F-1 students and 30 days for J-1 students. To remain up-to-date on changes to United States immigration law and/or changes to OISS policies and/or procedures, to be informed about workshops and training sessions offered by OISS, and much more, please check your MSU email regularly and visit the OISS website at: www.oiss.msu.edu.

Departure/Check-out
When your program is finished, you must give a written departure notice to OISS. OISS is required to report your program end date to the federal government. This could be the end date on your DS-2019 or it could be a prior date if you complete your program early.

Extension of Stay
- A request for extension must be made by your host department using the J-1 Extension Request form which can be downloaded from the OISS website.
- Your program must be extended before the end date on your current DS-2019. If the end date lapses, no extension is possible; if this occurs, please contact OISS to discuss your immigration status. To ensure that this process runs smoothly, have your host department send OISS any extension paperwork at least 30 days prior to the program end date. OISS will then verify that you are eligible for an extension and issue a new DS-2019 for you.

The Role and Responsibility of Visiting Scholars
Scholars must be aware of and comply fully with the following:

Maintaining Status
- You and your dependents must have valid passports at all times. An expired passport makes you out of status. If you as the J-1 are out of status, so are your J-2 dependents.

- You must always be in possession of a valid DS-2019, which accurately reflects your purpose for being at MSU. When the DS-2019 is about to expire, you will need an extension and need to contact your host department.
- You must come to OISS to have your DS-2019 signed if you will travel outside the United States. Travel signatures are valid for 6 months. Any change of legal name for yourself or your dependents must be reported to OISS.
- You must report any change of address to OISS within 5 days. Please report your address change via email: oiss@msu.edu.
- If you are working at MSU, you will need a Social Security Number. If you do not have a Social Security Number, please see the OISS website for application instructions.
Transfer to Another J Program

- J-1 scholars who wish to transfer to another institution in the United States must inform OISS of their intent prior to transferring. You must complete the OISS Transfer Out form and your MSU department supervisor must endorse it. MSU and the new institution will then work together to complete the J-1 SEVIS transfer process. This can be a lengthy process, please initiate the transfer process with OISS at least 30 days before you plan to transfer.

Other Issues of Concern

- J-2 dependents may apply for work authorization from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. J-2 dependents may also attend school while they are in the United States. Please see the OISS website for more information on J-2 work authorization.
- If you are being paid in the United States, you must file tax forms no later than April 15 of each year.
- Use of the J-1 visa often impacts your eligibility for other visa categories. If you anticipate living and/or working in the United States after completing your J-1 program, please consult an OISS advisor to learn about your options and limitations.

Important Note:
The following information is not exhaustive and is subject to change without notice. International students and scholars should contact OISS at: (517) 353-1720 to arrange an appointment to discuss any changes in your program or questions or concerns related to your legal status in the United States.
Advising on course selection, graduation requirements, and registration is done by academic advisors. Graduate and undergraduate students with declared majors will have an academic advisor assigned to them. Undergraduates who have not declared a major can obtain academic advising from staff in the Student Academic Affairs Office of the University Undergraduate Division: www.msu.edu/~uud. Undergraduate students will meet with academic advisors during the Academic Orientation Program (AOP). Graduate students should plan to confer with their academic advisor several days before the start of classes.
Student Number

**PID:** This is your MSU Personal Identification number (PID). For degree-seeking students, your PID is included in your MSU admissions letter.

**PAN/PIN:** This is your confidential Personal Access Number that authorizes your network access. For newly admitted undergraduate and lifelong students, your PAN will be included in your admissions letter. All others will receive their PAN and PID via mail from the Computer Center.

*Note:* If you lose your PID or PAN, contact the Registrar’s Office at (517)-355-3300.

Email Account

As a student of Michigan State University, you will utilize various electronic resources and email. You should activate your email account before orientation after receiving your Personal Access Number (PAN). It is very important to do this even if you already have another email account. You can activate your email account online at: [www.netid.msu.edu](http://www.netid.msu.edu).

Messages regarding immigration and federal regulations will be sent to your MSU email account only. If you use another email service, please forward your MSU emails to that account so you do not miss information that can affect your legal status in the United States. You may activate your MSU NetID and email at: [www.help.msu.edu/newstudent](http://www.help.msu.edu/newstudent).

If you have problems or questions about your MSU NetID account/email, consult this web page for help: [help.msu.edu](http://help.msu.edu) or contact the ATS Help Desk by email: help@msu.edu or phone (517) 432-6200.

Students with Disabilities

Michigan State University provides accommodation to students with documented disabilities for access to university programs, activities, and services. If you have a disability and need accommodations, contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at MSU at: (517) 884-7273 to make an appointment to meet with a Disability Specialist. For more information, please visit their website at: [www.rcpd.msu.edu](http://www.rcpd.msu.edu). Information concerning computing accessibility and assistive technology can be found at: [www.msu.edu/webaccess/computing.html](http://www.msu.edu/webaccess/computing.html).

English Language Testing

The MSU English Language Test (MSUELT) is administered every semester before the international student orientation. It is required for students provisionally admitted to an academic program. Newly admitted students should have signed up for the MSUELT online, 2 months before the semester of admission. For more information about English language testing, visit [www.elc.msu.edu](http://www.elc.msu.edu).
Moving to a new country often brings about culture shock. This feeling is experienced when a person is taken out of a familiar environment and becomes integrated into a completely new environment. People often feel disoriented, dissatisfied, or perhaps even frustrated because this new culture is completely different than that of their home country. During the first few weeks of your stay in the United States, many things will happen as you adjust to the customs of the United States and participate in activities at Michigan State University. There are generally several phases that new international students experience during the period of adjusting to a new culture. Please note that different people will be affected by the transition to a new culture in varying degrees. Listed below is a general pattern of cross-cultural adjustment. Your own experience might be weaker or stronger based on a variety of personal characteristics and previous life experiences.

STAGE ONE: Cultural Surprise

The first days in a new culture are filled with observing all the things that are new to you. These differences are perhaps superficial, but they are the basis of your first impressions. People dress differently, signs are in a different language, and people’s nonverbal communication is different (gestures, eye contact, touching behaviors, etc...an example of this might be that people smile or are friendly to you even though you do not know them – what does this mean?)
STAGE TWO: Cultural Stress
After a short time, the feeling of everything being new fades into a period of more in-depth encounters with the culture. You find yourself more involved in the activities of the “new” culture and you are forced to respond to the behaviors of people whose actions you do not fully understand. It is often easier just to blindly follow and do what you are told even though the activity may not make sense to you. Examples include finding out what is expected of you both in and out of class, registering for classes, and shopping for yourself. Just speaking the language that is not your native language all the time can be exhausting and adds to your fatigue of trying to understand other parts of the culture.

STAGE THREE: Culture Shock
Over time the stress of living in an environment that is unfamiliar to you wears you down both physically and emotionally. As with any stressful situation, it is normal to either want to withdraw into yourself, or resist what you perceive to be threats to you (reactions called “flee” or “fight”). Culture shock does not come at one shocking moment, but is a gradual process both leading up to it and coming out of it. Culture shock is a normal psychological reaction to the stress of living in another culture.

You experience feelings of tension and anxiety because you have lost familiar cultural signals. The behavior of those around you may not be predictable based on your life’s experiences. Your actions do not always get you what you want and your inability to communicate effectively with others is frustrating.

STAGE FOUR: Confidence Regained
At some point you find out how to become effective and regain your self confidence that can be lost during the period of culture shock. At this point, you not only know how to get around your own culture, you have acquired the confidence and ability to get around in the new culture as well.

Some Helpful Suggestions for Dealing with Culture Shock:
- Try to avoid isolation- talk to your friends, campus staffs, professors or others you trust about what you are feeling. Remember, these are normal reactions to stress and are nothing to be ashamed of.
- Keep your sense of humor. Try to laugh off situations that are confusing.
- Try to withhold judgment on something until you understand it.
- Don’t be afraid to ask people about situations you do not understand.
- Take care of your health, get enough sleep, exercise, and eat well.
- Do things you enjoy doing: paint, play music, etc.

Some Signs for You to Consider Seeking Help from a Professional Counselor:
- Persistently feeling sad
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Excessive worries
- Sleeping/eating too much or too little
- Feeling physically tired/exhausted
- Lack of energy, motivation and interests
- Thoughts of hurting yourself
- Feeling extremely lonely and socially isolated
- Big changes in your behaviors (e.g. decreasing academic performance)

The Counseling Center at MSU is located in 207 Student Services Building. You can call 517-355-8270 or directly walk-in during our office hours. For more information: www.counseling.msu.edu/
It is very important that you carefully plan your budget to meet all your anticipated educational and living expenses. The first few weeks in a new community can be the most expensive period of your stay. A number of items must be purchased and several one-time deposits are due at the start of the academic year. If you bring a bank draft from your country to open an account in a local bank, you may not withdraw funds from the account until the check has been approved for collection. Since this process generally takes about 10 to 15 days, do not rely upon a bank draft for immediate cash. If you have money wired directly from your home bank to an East Lansing bank, you may draw upon it immediately after establishing an account.

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are located on campus and throughout the community. You may be able to use your own bank card in these ATMs but we recommend that you check with your home bank, and ask about the possibility of additional charges.
Funds from home can be transferred in your name to MSU to the extent that funds cover your tuition and university housing charges only. Money for personal expenses should not be wired to MSU. For more information, please contact the Student Accounts and Cashier Services at: (517) 355-3343 or (800) 775-4323 (toll-free). MSU only accepts the following types of credit card payment: Mastercard, Discover and American Express. Visa is not accepted.

Social Security Number
A Social Security number (SSN) is required to work in the United States. If you are employed by MSU, the Payroll Office must have your SSN. To apply for a social security card, you must present the following documents at the Social Security Office no earlier than 2 days after your check-in with OISS and 10 days after your arrival in the U.S.:
- Original passport with I-94 card
- Original I-20 or DS-2019
- An endorsement letter from OISS (except for F-1 students with CPT or OPT).

F-1 students must secure employment to be eligible for an SSN. If you accept on-campus employment, your SSN endorsement letter must be signed by both your employing office and OISS. If you have F-1 CPT or OPT work authorization, the documents that prove your authorization are sufficient for your SSN application (No endorsement letter is needed). J-1 students and scholars always need an endorsement letter signed by OISS.

Individual Taxpayer Identification Number
An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), is a tax processing number only available for certain nonresident and resident aliens, their spouses, and dependents who cannot get a Social Security number (SSN). It is a 9-digit number, beginning with the number “9”, formatted like an SSN (NNN-NN-NNNN). To apply for an ITIN, you must contact the MSU Tax Clinic at (517) 336-8088.

Income Tax Information
As an international student in the United States, you must know and meet your obligations under applicable federal, state and local laws. For tax preparation assistance, you can contact the MSU College of Law Tax Clinic at: (517) 336-8088 or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) at: (517) 353-4400. Tax forms and instructions are available from the IRS website at: www.irs.gov. Updated information is also available on the OISS website: www.oiss.msu.edu

Social Security Taxes
Social security taxes are generally not withheld and earnings are not reported for F-1 and J-1 visa holders who have been given employment authorization. If social security taxes were withheld in error, you should contact the employer for reimbursement. If MSU is your employer, please contact the Payroll Office. If a refund cannot be obtained from the employer, a claim for a refund should be filed on Form 843 or 1040X with the IRS office where the employer files tax returns.
Students admitted to MSU are eligible to live in university residence halls or (delete university) apartments. If you have not submitted your housing application and appropriate fees, please do so immediately. Housing applications may be found at: http://liveon.msu.edu/pdf/10212080Contract11_12Fillable.pdf (First year housing) and http://liveon.msu.edu/pdf/10212106OwenHallApp.pdf (Owen Hall housing). Please visit the Campus Living Services website for additional housing information: http://www.liveon.msu.edu

Residence Halls

MSU’s Residential and Hospitality Services operates the largest residence hall system in the country, with 24 undergraduate halls one graduate hall, and apartments on the 2,200-acre park-like campus. Each residence hall is a unique living community, typically housing about 1,000 male and female students with continuous food service from 7am to midnight, 7 days a week, and 24-hour-a-day reception desk service.
Each hall has coin-operated laundry facilities. Cable television and ethernet for your computer are provided in each room. Sparty’s Convenience Stores, for quick-stop shopping, are located all around campus.

**University Apartments**

University Apartments provides a unique housing option that offers the convenience and affordability of campus living in a quiet academic setting in Spartan Village.

More than 1,400 apartments are available, all owned and operated by Michigan State University. Spartan Village has a distinctly communal feel, with a diverse mix of people from around the world, and on-site staff to attend to problems and coordinate a wide range of social activities. In many respects, Spartan Village is ideally suited to students with children. Spartan Village Apartments offer a clean and comfortable environment, with a wide range of services. Please note that Spartan Village provides a bed, chest of drawers, desk and desk chair in each renovated apartment.

To be eligible to live in Spartan Village Apartments the following requirements must be met:
- You must be enrolled in a degree granting program
- The academic year begins during the fall semester and ends at the end of summer. To be eligible you must be enrolled in two out of three semesters.
- Your student account must be in good standing. This means you must have no holds and no outstanding balance.

For more information about first year housing requirements and policies, please visit: [http://www.liveon.msu.edu/futureStudents](http://www.liveon.msu.edu/futureStudents)

If you are not a student, you must hold an appointed position as a visiting scholar at MSU to be eligible for on-campus housing.

For more information, including floor plans and rental rates, please visit the Campus Living Services website at: [http://www.liveon.msu.edu/apartments](http://www.liveon.msu.edu/apartments)

**Off-campus Housing**

Students who want to live off-campus have many choices. Apartment buildings close to campus offer one and two bedroom apartments for about $500 to $700 per month. For more information about living in East Lansing and the surrounding area, visit The ELmanac’s website at: [www.elmanac.msu.edu](http://www.elmanac.msu.edu).
MSU Lending Center
The Lending Center is a place where students and faculty from other countries can borrow items such as lamps, dishes, and household goods. A small fee is collected to cover the cost of cleaning and/or repairs. Please be sure to return all items before leaving MSU so others may use them. This program is managed by Community Volunteers for International Programs (CVIP).

MSU Lending Center
1434 F Spartan Village
Phone: (517) 351-4538
www.cvip.isp.msu.edu/lending

MSU Student Food Bank
The MSU Student Food Bank is an organization whose mission is to provide supplemental food and necessities to students and families who are in need of this type of support. Generally during the academic year, the MSU Food Bank is open biweekly on Wednesdays, from 5:30pm to 7:00pm in the Olin Health Center Dining Room (West Entrance).

Students are asked to check in at the front table with their MSU Student IDs and then have a short interview. This interview allows the student to choose which products are most useful for them, and not receive products for which they have no use. The amount of food that students are given will be adjusted according to the number of family members or roommates the student has.

To receive food, students must present their MSU student ID every time. At the beginning of each semester, students must present proof of current enrollment that includes their name, MSU ID number, and number of credits (bill stub, schedule, etc.). All clients are eligible to come to the Food Bank on each distribution date. To verify distribution dates, call the Food Bank and listen to the outgoing message at: (517) 432-5136. For more information or to volunteer to work a distribution night as a service project, email: foodbank@msu.edu.
All international students are required to carry health insurance as a condition of enrollment at Michigan State University. The insurance premium for student coverage is included on the tuition and fee statement every fall and spring semester. Graduate assistants and teaching assistants receive student health insurance at no cost. If you purchase health insurance in your home country that will cover you in the U.S., it is possible to waive the mandatory insurance policy if your coverage is equivalent. You will need to present an English version or English translation of your policy information when applying for a waiver.

Dependent Health Insurance

Given the high cost of medical care in the United States, MSU advises you in the strongest possible terms to be sure that all accompanying family members carry health insurance at all times. The U.S. government does not subsidize any health care costs for international visitors. If an uninsured family member needs medical care for any reason, your family could end up with an unmanageable financial burden.
You may purchase health insurance for your dependents through the MSU Benefits Office. However, it may be possible to find a lower-cost health insurance option in your home country or through an internet search. For additional information on MSU’s health insurance policy, please visit www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth or contact the MSU Benefits Office at (517) 353-4434 or studentinsurance@hr.msu.edu. The MSU student health insurance plan is provided by Aetna Student Health. For more information, visit their website at: www.aetnastudenthealth.com.

Health Care
MSU’s Student Health Services provides medical and health education services for students and their spouses during their enrollment at Michigan State University. Olin Health Center is the primary location for Student Health Services, and is staffed with board-certified physicians and other certified health care professionals. Medical clinics include: Primary Care, Women’s Health, Orthopedics, Psychiatry and Sports Medicine. Clinical services are available by appointment. To schedule an appointment, please call (517) 353-4660.

Other services available at Olin include: pharmacy, laboratory, physical therapy, and radiology. Health Education services include: nutrition counseling; fitness testing; HIV/AIDS counseling, testing and education; outreach programming for student groups; and a variety of resources online at: olin.msu.edu. Additional services include the Pharmacy Delivery Service, and the 24-Hour Phone Information Nurse at (517) 353-5557. Olin also provides a courtesy van that picks up and returns students who live in campus residence halls, University Apartments, or within one mile of the campus.

Student Health Services Neighborhood Clinics are conveniently located, and are available for minor injuries, as well as colds and flu, STI screenings (sexually transmitted infection), and other minor health concerns. These clinics are located in 148 Brody Hall, and 127 S. Hubbard Hall. (G-17 Holden Hall will open mid-October.)

Visit www.olin.msu.edu for more information, including hours, phone numbers and an overview of services.
MSU is located in East Lansing, a city of about 50,000 people. East Lansing is a strong community of close knit neighborhoods, excellent public schools, extensive neighborhood parks, and exceptional recreational facilities. The city’s public library is one of the finest in the state and is used regularly by students to study and do internet research. Students also use the city’s many recreation facilities including the outdoor family aquatic center, biking and hiking trails, and championship soccer and softball fields. The East Lansing Hannah Community Center provides fitness facilities and a pool that many students use regularly. The Hannah Center can be reached via CATA bus service or a short walk from north campus. East Lansing’s downtown is a bustling social and commercial center where students mingle with residents, shop, dine and have fun.
One of the city’s biggest assets is the MSU campus. It is a giant arboretum whose beauty can be enjoyed year round. The university offers students and residents a rich cultural life of symposia, concerts, theater, museums, and, of course, Big Ten sports. The city works hand-in-hand with the university to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students. For more information, please visit the City of East Lansing’s website at: www.cityofeastlansing.com.

Driving in Michigan

If you plan to drive a car in Michigan, you must possess a valid Michigan driver’s license. Because you will stay in Michigan for more than 6 months, you are considered to be a resident of Michigan for licensing purposes and must therefore obtain a license as soon as possible after your arrival if you intend to drive.

Until you are able to obtain a license, citizens of many countries are allowed to legally drive with a valid license issued by their home country and a certified English translation. Consult the OISS website for more information on which foreign licenses may be used in Michigan and how to obtain a certified English translation. The International Driving Permit may not be used by itself in place of the Michigan license; however, it can be used as a certified English translation of a foreign license.

You may apply for a Michigan driver’s license at a Secretary of State branch office. You must first pass written, vision, and road skills tests before your license will be issued. You can go to the branch office and pick up a booklet that will help you study for the written test. You must also provide proof of your legal visa status in the U.S., proof of residence in Michigan, and proof of Social Security. Please see the OISS website for more information on these requirements.

Recreational Activities

There are many places on campus where you can go to do something new or different or participate in some of your favorite activities. For more information regarding activities available, please see the following websites:

- MSU Union
  www.hfs.msu.edu/union
- Abrams Planetarium
  www.pa.msu.edu/abrams
- Forest Akers Golf Course
  www.golfmsu.msu.edu
- Intramural Sports and Recreative Services
  www.imsports.msu.edu
- MSU Athletics
  www.msu.edu/athletics
- University Activities Board
  www.uabevents.com
- Breslin Student Events Center
  www.breslincenter.com
- Wharton Center
  www.whartoncenter.com
- Kresge Art Museum
  www.artmuseum.msu.edu
- MSU Museum
  www.museum.msu.edu
- Department of Theatre
  www.theater.msu.edu
- W. J. Beal Botanical Garden
  www.cpp.msu.edu/beal
- Horticultural Demonstration Gardens
  www.hrt.msu.edu/our-gardens
Dependent Health Insurance
Given the high cost of medical care in the United States, MSU strongly advises you to carry health insurance for all accompanying family members at all times. The U.S. government does not subsidize any health care costs for international visitors. If an uninsured family member needs medical care for any reason, your family could end up with an unmanageable financial burden. You may purchase health insurance for your dependents through the MSU benefits office. However, it may be possible to find a lower-cost health insurance option in your home country or through an internet search.

For additional information on MSU’s health insurance policy, please visit: http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth/index.htm or contact the MSU Benefits Office at (517) 353-4434 or studentinsurance@hr.msu.edu. The MSU student health insurance plan is provided by the Aetna Student Health. For more information, visit their website at: http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/stu_conn/student_connection.aspx?groupid=711130.
Public School Information
All children in Michigan between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school by law. Children may begin attending public Kindergarten at age 5. Public schools are free of cost and books and supplies are provided. Children younger than age 5 may attend preschool; however, preschool is not free - be prepared to pay tuition if you wish for your child to attend preschool.

To enroll your child in public school, you must provide information about your child's health, including immunization records. By law, the school must have an immunization record in English for each student. If such a record does not exist for your child or is inadequate, you will be asked to have the child immunized before he/she attends school.

The school may also request that your child have a physical exam prior to enrollment. In addition, please be prepared to show your child's birth certificate, prior school records (if any) and/or passport.

There are typically three levels of public school education and are referred to as follows:
Elementary School: Kindergarten through 5th grade
Middle School: 6th grade through 8th grade
High School: 9th grade through 12th grade

Each school district is required by law to provide free and appropriate education for all children. If you have a child who has a disability or a problem other than a lack of English proficiency that makes it difficult for him/her to be in an ordinary classroom without help, contact the Special Education Department of the East Lansing School District at: (517) 333-7424 or chapman_ka@elps.k12.mi.us. This office will find the right program for your child and provide whatever help he/she needs. Education is the right of every child.

Family & Child Care
The MSU Family Resource Center assists staff, faculty, and students in their search for quality child care (or elder care) services on campus or in the surrounding areas. The staff is available to consult with you about your particular child care needs. For more information on family services, please visit the Family Resource Center website at www.frc.msu.edu.

English Language Training
Volunteer English Tutoring Program (VETP) is a non-profit volunteer organization, which aims to provide free English lessons for Michigan State University's international students, scholars, friends and family. To meet your specific needs, VETP offers a wide selection of tutors, class schedules, locations, and course work.

To register: Students may enroll for September-December and/or January-April sessions.

Office Address:
Volunteer English Tutoring Program
Michigan State University
310A Delia Koo International Center
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035
Phone: (517) 351-2812
www.isp.msu.edu/vetp

VETP courses cannot be used to meet the university minimum proficiency requirement in English. Consult with the English Language Center, A714 Wells Hall, (517) 353-0800 for information regarding this proficiency requirement.

Please visit the OISS website for a list of other English language programs offered in the community.
Community Volunteers for International Programs (CVIP)

Community Volunteers for International Programs (CVIP) exists to increase international understanding among international visitors, scholars, students and their families, and members of the American community by participation in mutually enriching educational and cross-cultural activities. Many local residents are eager to welcome and assist international students and scholars at MSU and in the East Lansing community. CVIP volunteers organize a variety of programs during the year. For more information about various programs, please visit the CVIP website at: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu

E.T. (Every Tuesday): Community volunteers meet with international women to share friendship and culture while enjoying crafts, cooking activities and sociable conversation. Every Tuesday (E.T.) members celebrate special days and holidays and share their traditional handicrafts, recipes and customs with one another. Every Tuesday is open to the spouses of MSU international students and scholars. Pre-school children are welcome. For more information visit http://cvip.isp.msu.edu/everytuesday/

Speakers Bureau: Speakers Bureau places international students and scholars in area schools and community organizations for cultural presentations or performances. MSU's international speakers can provide firsthand knowledge of and experience from countries all over the globe. Through its presenters, Speakers Bureau hopes to strengthen our community's understanding of and respect for cultural differences and similarities. Speakers Bureau is open to all members of MSU's international community who wish to share their culture with American school children and community groups. For more information, please visit: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu/speakers/

International Friendship Program: This program allows international students and scholars the opportunity to meet and spend time with American Friendship hosts for special occasions, holidays, or outings. This is NOT a home stay program but an excellent opportunity to share friendship and culture! For more information please visit: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu/friendship/

Global Festival: Travel around the world at the Annual Global Festival! MSU students, representing dozens of countries around the world, will share their culture and talents with exhibits and demonstrations, exciting and colorful performances, and an entire floor of children's activities. For more information visit: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu/globalfestival/

Lending Center: The Lending Center lends used household items in good condition to international students and scholars living in University Apartments. Items that can be borrowed from the Lending Center include: tableware, cookware, bake ware, plastic ware, food preparation items, table linens, bed linens, lamps, waste baskets/buckets, throw rugs, décor items, etc. For more information and hours of operation, please visit: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu/lending/

For more information about other programs and services offered, please visit the CVIP website at: http://cvip.isp.msu.edu
Always dial 911 first in case of an emergency.

On-campus Safety Contacts

MSU Department of Police and Public Safety
24-hour Police phone line
Phone: (517) 355-2221
www.police.msu.edu

East Lansing Police
24-hour non-emergency phone line
Phone: (517) 351-4220
www.elpolice.com

Night Owl
An overnight dial-a-ride bus service.
Phone: (517) 432-8888
Monday-Friday: 2:00am-7:00am
Weekends: 2:00am - 9:00am

Olin Health Center
Phone Information Nurse:
(517) 353-5557

Sparrow Health System
Sparrow Hospital: (517) 364-1000

St. Lawrence Hospital:
(517) 364-1000

Counseling Center
Phone: (517) 355-8270
www.counseling.msu.edu
MSU Contacts

Academic Advising
Phone: (517) 355-3515
www.msu.edu/unit/uud/advising.html

Office of Admissions
Phone: (517) 355-8332
admis@msu.edu
www.admissions.msu.edu

Associated Students of MSU (ASMSU)
Phone: (517) 355-8266
www.asmsu.msu.edu

English Language Center
Phone: (517) 353-0800
elc@msu.edu
www.elc.msu.edu

Office of Financial Aid
Phone: (517) 353-5940
finaid@msu.edu
www.finaid.msu.edu

Graduate Employees Union
Phone: (517) 332-2824
geu@msu.edu
www.geuatmsu.org

Internationalizing Student Life
Phone: (517) 355-8286
www.studentlife.msu.edu

Olin Health Center
Phone: (517) 884-6546
www.olin.msu.edu

Office of the Registrar
Phone: (517) 355-3300
reg@msu.edu
www.reg.msu.edu

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities
Phone: (517) 884-7273
TTY: (517) 355-1293
rcpd@msu.edu
www.rcpd.msu.edu

Student Accounts / Cashier Services
Phone: (517) 355-3343 or
(800) 775-4323 (toll-free)
student.receivables@ctlr.msu.edu
www.ctlr.msu.edu/COSTudentAccounts

Student Health Insurance
Phone: (517) 353-4434 or
(800) 353-4434 (toll-free)
student.insurance@hr.msu.edu
http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth

Testing Office
Phone: (517) 355-8385
www.testingoffice.msu.edu

University Housing
Phone: (517) 355-9550
Housing-info@uh.msu.edu
http://www.liveon.msu.edu

Banking
MSU Federal Credit Union
(Main Branch, MSU Campus)
600 E. Crescent Road
East Lansing
Phone: (517) 33
www.msufcu.org

Citizens Bank (Brookfield Plaza)
1331 E Grand River Ave.,
East Lansing
Phone: (517) 337-4208
www.citizensbanking.com

Bank of America
2731 E. Grand River Ave.,
East Lansing
Phone: (517) 336-7038
https://www.bankofamerica.com

Fifth Third Bank
2501 Coolidge Rd., East Lansing
Phone: (517) 351-3742
www.53.com

Lodging
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center
South Harrison Rd., East Lansing
Phone: (517) 432-4000
www.kelloggcenter.com

The Marriott
300 M.A.C. Ave., East Lansing
Phone: (517) 337-4440
www.marriott.com

Candlewood Suites
3545 Forest Rd., East Lansing
Phone: (517) 351-8181
www.ichotelsgroup.com

Travel and Transportation
Capital City Airport
4100 Capital City Blvd., Lansing
Phone: (517) 321-6121
www.flylansing.com

Amtrak Train Station
1240 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing
Phone: (517) 332-5051
www.amtrak.com

Local Buses
Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
4615 Tranter, Lansing
Phone: (517) 394-1100
www.cata.org

Bus Service
East Lansing - Detroit Airport
Michigan Flyer
Phone: (517) 333-0400
www.michiganflyer.com

Big Daddy Taxi
624 N. Larch St., Lansing
Phone: (517) 367-7474
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International Students - A Michigan State University Student Health Insurance Plan Customized For You!

Aetna Student Health, a leader in student health, has been providing Michigan State University International Students with a customized health insurance plan for 15 years. Benefits for International Students include:

- Lifetime maximum of $250,000 per condition
- Immediate coverage for pre-existing conditions
- Coverage is available on a worldwide basis
- Medical coverage is coordinated with MSU’s Olin Health Center
- Prescriptions can be filled at both MSU campus pharmacies, in addition to participating local and nationwide pharmacies
- Meets J1 Visa requirements
- Unlimited Coverage for Emergency Medical Evacuation and Medical Repatriation
- Access to Aetna’s nationwide network of more than 563,000 doctors and 5,300 hospitals*

Compare your current insurance plan with the Michigan State University Student Health Plan. Look at deductibles, copays, coinsurance and benefit maximums. Make an informed decision about your health insurance plan.

For questions about enrollment visit: MSU Human Resources Benefit Office, Nisbet Building, Suite 140
To learn more go to www.aetnastudenthealth.com/msudirect.htm or call Aetna Student Health at 800-859-8452.

*as of March 31, 2011
The Michigan State University Student Insurance Plan is underwritten by Aetna Life Insurance Company (Aetna) and administered by Chilson Claim Administrators, Inc. Aetna Student Health™ is the brand name for products and services provided by these companies and their applicable affiliated companies. This material is for information only. Discount programs provide access to discounted prices and are NOT insured benefits. The member is responsible for the full cost of the discounted services. Discount programs and travel assistance services may be offered by vendors who are independent contractors and not employees or agents of Aetna. Providers are independent contractors and are not agents of Aetna Student Health. Provider participation may change without notice. Aetna Student Health does not provide care or guarantee access to health services. Health insurance plans contain exclusions, limitations and benefit maximums. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change.

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¹ Bank of America does not charge for Text Banking. However, your mobile service provider may charge for sending and receiving text messages on your mobile phone. Check with your service provider for details on specific fees and charges that may apply. Accounts located in WA and ID must be enrolled in Online Banking to use Text Banking.

² Alerts received as text messages on your mobile access device may incur a charge from your mobile access provider. Alerts are not available for accounts in Washington and Idaho.

³ For accounts located in ID or WA, certain restrictions may apply to third party Online Banking transfers. Please speak to a Bank of America associate for details. Some accounts and services, and the fees that apply to them, vary from state to state. Please review the information for your state in the Personal Schedule of Fees (at www.bankofamerica.com/feesataglance) and in the Online Banking Service Agreement at www.bankofamerica.com/serviceagreement.

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CASID and the Gender, Development and Globalization Program (GDG) within the Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen) at MSU have been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Resource Center in International Studies and receive funding under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965. CASID also serves as the host unit for the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program at Michigan State University.

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- Creating Inclusive Excellence Grants
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- MLK Endowed Scholarship

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**Some research resources for graduate students (see links at grad.msu.edu):**

- Responsible Conduct of Research Workshops
- Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships
- Career Development Workshops

Research opportunities for undergraduates:
- See www.urca.msu.edu/

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MSU research is conducted around the world:

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- Geography professor Robert T. Walker travels the Transamazon Highway to document the impact of logging and development in the **Brazilian Amazon**. Results will help Brazilians form environmental policy.

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- Entomologist Zhiyong Xi found a bacterium can stop dengue virus from replicating in mosquitoes, blocking the transmission that infects millions annually, primarily in **Africa** and other tropical areas, and carries the risk of death.

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- Career Development Workshops

Research opportunities for undergraduates:
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