

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESOURCE BOOK 2026-2027



**MACALESTER**

## International Student Programs

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May 2026

Dear International Students,

On behalf of International Student Programs (ISP), we welcome you to Macalester College. We are looking forward to your arrival, and to facilitating your positive educational experience.

As ISP professional staff, we are available on a regular basis during your stay at Macalester to provide information and assistance in dealing with federal and state regulations affecting international students (e.g., immigration, visa, taxes). We are also here to support you academically, culturally, and personally. Over the course of your time here and definitely in the first year, we will have appointments to chat about any concerns you may have. Our hope for first-year appointments, in particular, is to start getting to know you, and for us to understand each other better.

Our office provides a diverse set of opportunities, including but not limited to orientation activities, a mentor program, and Forming Links Across the Globe (FLAG) program. We also provide a myriad of educational programs on topics related to employment options, health concerns, the arts, and understanding your new community, as well as other cultural and global issues.

To put it simply, don't hesitate to visit us. Come see us when something good happens, and not just during crises. In all sincerity, there are few things we enjoy as much as meeting new students. We hope that through visits, we can assist you in becoming an active participant and leader on campus.

The International Student Resource Book (ISRB) provides you with general information about the campus and special interests of international students. We welcome feedback on how to improve it next year.

Best regards,



**Luyen Phan**  
Director of ISP



**Britt Nelson**  
Associate Director



**Molly Rochon**  
Associate Director



**Laurie O'Brien**  
SEVIS Coordinator

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## 2026 Pre-Orientation for International Students (PO4IS)

PO4IS is required for all new first-year, exchange, and transfer students who are in the U.S. on F-1, J-1, or other non-immigrant visas. PO4IS is **August 25-31, 2026**, before New Student Orientation begins on August 31st.

## Macalester Academic Calendar 2026-2027

For subsequent academic years, the schedule can be found on the [Academic Calendars page](#). For Arts & Events, Athletic Events, Library Hours/Events, Student Organization Events, and Alumni Events calendars, please visit the general [calendar page](#).

## ISP Programming Schedule 2026-2027

ISP is still developing programming for the 2026-2027 school year. Please check our [Programs](#) page as we update the events calendar.

# Staff Who Work Directly with International Students

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

International Admissions: [internationaladmissions@macalester.edu](mailto:internationaladmissions@macalester.edu)

## NOW AND AFTER YOU ARRIVE

When you arrive at Macalester, among the first people you meet will be Luyen Phan, Britt Nelson, Molly Rochon, and Laurie O'Brien of International Student Programs (ISP). They are responsible for providing you with information, advice, assistance, and referrals relating to academic, immigration, cultural, financial, and/or personal matters.

|                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                              |                                                                 |                                                              |                                                                           |
| <b>Luyen Phan</b> (he/him)<br>Director<br><a href="mailto:lphan@macalester.edu">lphan@macalester.edu</a><br>+1 (651) 696-6849 | <b>Britt Nelson</b> (she/her)<br>Associate Director<br><a href="mailto:bnelson5@macalester.edu">bnelson5@macalester.edu</a><br>+1 (651) 696-6922 | <b>Molly Rochon</b> (she/her)<br>Associate Director<br><a href="mailto:mrochon@macalester.edu">mrochon@macalester.edu</a><br>+1 (651) 696-6360 | <b>Laurie O'Brien</b> (she/her)<br>Coordinator/SEVIS Specialist<br><a href="mailto:lobrien1@macalester.edu">lobrien1@macalester.edu</a><br>+1 (651) 696-6841 |

Luyen, Britt, Molly, and Laurie work closely together to support Macalester’s international students by advising on government regulations and organizing educational sessions, as well as various other programming throughout the year. All four are available for individual appointments or walk-ins. Their offices are in the Kagin Commons. To meet with them, call the phone numbers or email the addresses above. You can also set up an appointment with them using Google Calendar.

## STUDENT STAFF

|                    |               |                        |             |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Lily Li '27        | (China)       | Peggy Weng '28         | (Taiwan)    |
| Dariane Duarte '28 | (Brazil)      | Pacha Laplanche '29    | (Haiti)     |
| Chenhao Ma '28     | (China)       | Emilia Torrens '29     | (Argentina) |
| Fatima Wakili '28  | (Afghanistan) | Danielle Ahouetele '29 | (US)        |

The [student workers](#) assist with all programming in the ISP Office. They coordinate ISP programs and events, compose the weekly newsletters, assist in reviewing taxes, and maintain our ISP website. They are tremendous liaisons between international students and the ISP Office. You can contact the student workers at [isp@macalester.edu](mailto:isp@macalester.edu).

## 2026 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MENTORS & AMETRICA LEADER

|                      |                      |                        |                 |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Lily Li '27          | (China)              | Anh Nguyen '29         | (Vietnam)       |
| Ivy Lin '27          | (China)              | Caitlyn Moir '29       | (Eswatini & UK) |
| Sihaam Barre '28     | (US)                 | Dahlia Myers '29       | (US)            |
| Aliona Fedorovic '28 | (Lithuania)          | Danielle Ahouetele '29 | (US)            |
| Chenhao Ma '28       | (China)              | Emilia Torrens '29     | (Argentina)     |
| David Manguliti '28  | (Malawi)             | Fiona Xue '29          | (China)         |
| Kapinga Ngindu '28   | (South Africa & DRC) | Lucio Monga '29        | (DRC)           |
| Dowvince Pan '28     | (China)              | Pacha Laplanche '29    | (Haiti)         |
| Mira Steinberg '28   | (US)                 | Sean Huang '29         | (China)         |
| Fatima Wakili '28    | (Afghanistan)        | Siqi Weng '29          | (China)         |
| Peggy Weng '28       | (Taiwan)             | Tenzin Yongdu '29      | (India)         |
| Angel (Anqi) Yan '28 | (China)              | Terrence Odandi '29    | (Kenya)         |
| Agnes Chen '29       | (China)              |                        |                 |

## International Student Programs (ISP)

International Student Programs serves the educational and personal development needs of Macalester's international students by helping them reach their liberal arts education goals. ISP strives to create an environment that is intellectually and culturally supportive through collaboration with students, faculty, and staff.

ISP carries out the U.S. government-mandated functions that allow Macalester to issue documents for international students to attend the college. This includes assisting international students in maintaining their legal status. ISP grants students access to resources and opportunities allowed by U.S. law.

The goals of International Student Programs include:

- Promoting excellence in academic achievement
- Facilitating interpersonal relations across cultures
- Leading intercultural group learning
- Assisting with students' graduation and continued involvement with Macalester
- Assisting students' successful reintegration into their home country life (in addition to applying educational skills gained in the U.S.)

## The Programs

### MENTOR PROGRAM

International Student Programs selects returning students to serve as mentors to incoming international students and domestic America participants. Students new to Macalester will meet their mentors during pre-orientation and will consult with them regularly throughout the first semester. Mentors provide a student's perspective on both academic and personal life at Macalester. Their job is to help international students and those participating in America feel welcomed and comfortable at Mac. ISP mentors are there to answer questions about policies and procedures related to life in the residence halls, campus facilities, registration, academic procedures, as well as questions about U.S. culture and off-campus opportunities in the Twin Cities community. They also organize engaging activities for students to get to know each other and their surroundings. This program starts at the beginning of PO4IS (Pre-Orientation for International Students) and lasts until the beginning of November.

### AMETRICA

The America program aims to promote dialogue, intercultural sensitivity, and friendship between domestic and international students. A small, diverse group of ISP mentors lead and facilitate sessions for roughly 40 incoming students who complete an application to participate in America. America participants will arrive on **Tuesday, August 25, 2026**, and then meet **every Thursday from 4:30-6:30 pm** during the first two months of the fall semester. The central component is dialogue in groups of 5-8 students about a range of themes important to students from around the world, allowing them to examine topics through different lenses. Previous topics have included family, peace, current events, law and order, economics, health, race, and love. In place of or in addition to the weekly sessions, America participants also venture to off-campus locations a few times during the program. Previous activities have included a scavenger hunt, dinner at Macalester staff/faculty/alumni homes, dance lessons, and a trip to Chicago, or other activities over Fall Break. Participants will build valuable international relationships through America, which can be a critical stepping stone for the rest of their experiences during and after their time at Macalester College.

*This is not a program where domestic students serve as mentors to their international student peers.*

## FORMING LINKS ACROSS THE GLOBE (FLAG)

The Forming Links Across the Globe (FLAG) Program connects Macalester staff, faculty, local alumni and friends of Macalester with international students to engage in cross-cultural exchange. The program allows international students to meet local families and helps both FLAG hosts and students learn about different cultures and perspectives. FLAG hosts may invite students to visit their homes and will organize at least two meals/outings per semester with their group of international students. FLAG hosts, however, are not expected to help the students with issues such as finding a place to stay during the academic year or break periods, financial needs or difficulties, legal matters, immigration matters, or serious medical or personal problems.

ISP will send out application information through email in the summer to current and incoming students with details on participating in this program. More information at [www.macalester.edu/isp/flag](http://www.macalester.edu/isp/flag).

## COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT

Country Spotlight is an opportunity for international students to share their home country or region's traditions with the Macalester community. On a variety of topics, international students prepare engaging presentations about their culture, customs, food, politics, religion, and sports. Country Spotlights are held on selected Thursdays in the Loch (the student lounge in the basement level of the Campus Center). When students participate in the Country Spotlight Program, ISP displays a flag representing the country or region in the office area.

If you want to participate, let us know by emailing [isp@macalester.edu](mailto:isp@macalester.edu).

## TALK AND TEA

When classes are in session, join us at ISP **every Friday from 2:30-4:30 pm** for Talk and Tea (TnT), an informal, fun gathering after classes! Grab some snacks and tea, talk with friends, and meet new people. Occasionally, a special guest from the Macalester community will join us.

# BEFORE AND AFTER ARRIVAL

## Before Departure

### CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO

- ☐ Obtain a valid passport or renew yours
- ☐ Obtain and sign your I-20
- ☐ Obtain a student (F-1) or exchange visitor (J-1) visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate
  - ☐ (Note: Students from Canada and the Bahamas generally do not need to apply for a visa, but must present their I-20 (or DS-2019) upon entering the U.S. Contact ISP for assistance.)
- ☐ Bring copies of your admission acceptance letter, financial documents, including any Macalester financial aid award, previous school transcripts, and medical prescriptions on the plane (in your carry-on, NOT your checked bag)
- ☐ Pay tuition, room & board, and other fees to Student Accounts (via wire transfer or other methods)
- ☐ If awarded on-campus employment, submit an online Student Employment form for job placement
- ☐ Submit the class registration form on the orientation website
- ☐ Get a physical exam and submit the Health History Form online to the Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness (sent separately by Hamre Center)
- ☐ Read the information on the FLAG Program and, if you wish to join, complete the form
- ☐ Read the information on the America Program and, if you wish to join, apply online
- ☐ Make travel plans to arrive on **August 25, 2026**, and complete the online Arrival Form (available in summer)
- ☐ If you do **not** plan to attend Macalester this fall, please inform us immediately
- ☐ Please contact International Student Programs at [isp@macalester.edu](mailto:isp@macalester.edu) if you have any questions that must be answered before you leave home

### VISA AND IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

Before leaving your country, obtain a passport from your government and a student visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate. The U.S. immigration statute stipulates that anyone applying for a student visa must establish, to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for a visa, that they are entitled to non-immigrant status, i.e., that they are not intending to immigrate to the U.S. The statute also states that, to receive a student visa, applicants must have a residence in a foreign country (generally their country of origin) that they have no intention of abandoning after entering the U.S.

When applying for a student visa, it is well-advised to prepare carefully for the consular interview and to anticipate questions concerning economic, social, and/or family ties that will compel you to return after your studies in the U.S. are complete. As of June 1, 2019, you will be asked about your online social media presence. You should carefully assemble documents establishing these ties to your home country and prepare to discuss them with the consular officer without hesitation or uncertainty. You can practice this with a friend or family member beforehand. You should also present documentation of your economic ties to your parent(s) or family. Two new visa questions have been added to the interview process as of spring 2026. These questions are explained in this [CNN article with more details](#), which we encourage you to read. The questions are:

- Have you experienced harm or mistreatment in your home country/country of residence?
- Do you fear harm/mistreatment if you return home/country of residence?

Just like all questions and answers during the interview, your answers will be recorded. Take care to review the article linked above as you consider how to respond to these questions, and ensure you understand the consequences of your responses.

Also, applicants must submit their visa application in their country of citizenship or legal residency [unless otherwise noted in the December 2025 update](#).

## VISA APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Get a passport or renew one if it expires before you start at Macalester. Your passport should always be valid for at least six (6) months beyond your graduation date or program end date (if exchange student). If not, you may need to renew your passport while at Macalester.
2. Obtain Form I-901 receipt (<https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>). For exchange and most degree-seeking students, pay the \$350 SEVIS fee and print out the I-901 receipt. Exchange students through the ISEP program, please check with ISEP.
3. Obtain your I-20 from Macalester (ISEP exchange students contact ISEP for DS-2019). Upon receiving it, sign and date page one (1); read the information on I-20 (or DS-2019) which explains your legal responsibilities as an F (or J) student in the U.S. NOTE: Students from Canada and the Bahamas do not need to apply for a visa in most cases, but do need to present the I-20 when they enter the U.S. You must carry I-20 (or DS-2019) for entry into the U.S.
4. Apply for a visa at the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy in your country (a visa is a passport-sized sticker with your personal visa information on it. It will be invalid if you mark or write on it.) F/J visas cannot be applied for or renewed while in the U.S. Make an appointment for a visa interview (as required) and take your **passport, I-20 (or DS-2019), I-901 receipt, and supporting documents**. If the earliest appointment date you can schedule is after the start date for PO4IS, accept that appointment date, then take steps to change it. You can only schedule an expedited appointment after making an initial appointment. At your visa interview, a U.S. Consular Officer will review your papers. Upon approval and after your visa security clearance, the U.S. consulate will issue you an F-1 (or J-1) student visa. This will permit you to enter the U.S. to study at Macalester.

**CONTACT THE [ISP STAFF](#) IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS OBTAINING YOUR VISA.**

## VISA APPLICATION TIPS

There are numerous security checks with U.S. government agencies (including the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the CIA, and the State Department). Though rare, we have had student security checks take up to 12 weeks! Today, student visas are supposed to be the priority at consulates and embassies in July and August, but this is not always the case. Be aware that consulates have full discretion to deny visas, and they will. These can always be appealed (even though they may tell you that they cannot), but can cause serious inconveniences. If you are referred for a secondary inspection, remain calm and cooperative even if you have to wait a long time. Often, it is just a routine system referral for clarification when more information is needed to make a decision.

That said, if you go to the U.S. consulate prepared, you should have little or no problem receiving your visa. Of students who are denied visas, 99% are denied because of a law called 214b. This law stipulates that a visa applicant has the responsibility to prove that they have sufficient economic, social, and family ties, which will compel them to return home after completing their U.S. studies.

Prepare documents to prove you have economic, social, and family ties to your home country. Often, you won't need to provide all of the documentation, but keep it with you in the event that they are requested at the interview. Prepare to discuss with the Consular Officer how you intend to utilize your Macalester College education upon returning home. It is worth rehearsing this before the actual interview.

Show documented evidence that you have available funds to meet all expenses for the first year of study. The amount you will need to show is listed on the Form I-20, which the Admissions Office sent you (for exchange students I-20 is sent by Macalester's Study Away office or ISP). Generally, you should either bring a bank draft for the amount listed in the Certificate of Finance form or show funds in U.S. dollars that are already deposited in a bank in the U.S. or have been transferred to the College. If you are receiving financial aid from Macalester, have a copy of your financial aid award ready.

Show great respect when dealing with U.S. Consular Officers and Immigration Officers at the port of entry. They have incredible power with regard to your life. Politely answer all of their questions. Keep your answers short, but accurate and to the point. Immigration and Consular Officers repeatedly say that small talk is a red flag, so keep small talk to a minimum.

In short, **APPLY FOR YOUR VISA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** while keeping in mind that it is possible to apply too early! Nationals of some countries receive a visa that is valid for a very short duration and may expire before being able to arrive on campus. Check your country's [reciprocity agreement](#) before applying for your visa.

When all goes smoothly, all is well; if not, you should allow yourself time to straighten things out.

## ON-CAMPUS STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

More information about on-campus jobs is provided later in this resource book. However, for students who have work-study as a part of financial aid, the job application period is the summer before starting the first year. For this reason, we have the details below to ensure that before arriving on campus, if you need to apply for on-campus jobs, you are aware of the expectations and requirements.

Most on-campus job applications will require a U.S.-style formatted resume that is one page in length. Your resume is not limited to formal work experiences or jobs. Highlighting your high school/secondary school club involvement, volunteer experiences, interests, and skills is often included to help the reader understand you better. Macalester's Career Exploration Center has sample resumes in its [Resume Quick Start Guide](#). For an incoming first-year student, the first resume on that link is probably the most appropriate. Please note that the quality of your resume will likely affect your job placement. It is important to spend significant time writing and editing your resume and answering the questions on the online applications. You may want to change your resume for the different jobs you apply for. Check with ISP at [isp@macalester.edu](mailto:isp@macalester.edu) if you have more questions about your resume during the process.

## Traveling to the U.S.

- ✓ Carry your **passport (with F or J visa)**, **I-20** (or DS-2019), **I-901 receipt**, and supporting documents when you travel to the U.S.—DO NOT put documents in checked luggage or leave them at home with your family.
- ✓ When you arrive in the U.S., you must present your passport and documents (including your signed I-20 or DS-2019) to a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer at the port of entry.
- ✓ The Officer will stamp your passport and return it to you. The passport stamp indicates how long you may legally remain in the U.S. Some students may receive a stamp indicating D/S (Duration of Status) in their passport, while for many the stamp is electronic only (accessed in the I-94 record, online)/ D/S means you may remain in the U.S. as long as you are pursuing a full course load and have a valid I-20/DS-2019 document.
- ✓ Your arrival information is validated on your electronic I-94 (Arrival Card) and should be viewed and printed at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>. If you cannot find it, please let ISP staff (Luyen, Britt, Molly, or Laurie) know immediately. If you arrive in the U.S. by land, you might get a paper I-94; do not lose it.

## Travel Tips

- Put your name and address inside your bags and on the outside luggage tags. If your baggage is lost, immediately report it to an airline official. Overweight charges on airlines are expensive, so pack lightly.
- Watch your luggage and belongings at all times in the airports, buses, and train stations.
- Be sure your baggage is clearly labeled and tagged to your final destination; keep a list of the contents of the bags.
- Ask people for help. Airports, buses, and train stations in large cities often have a Travelers Assistance Desk that will be very willing to help you.
- It is worth carrying some money (\$5-\$15) in dollars to ensure that if you need a cart to carry luggage you can pay for it.
- In the U.S., you normally pay a tip or extra money above the total amount at a restaurant or for other services. Tips are not included in the price of a meal in a restaurant and are usually 15-20% of the bill.
- Taxi drivers usually receive a 15% tip in addition to the base fare. If you take an app-based taxi like Uber or Lyft to Macalester from the airport, you can expect to pay at least \$20. There are also taxis waiting at the airport, but fares are usually more expensive than Uber or Lyft.

## Arrival

### GETTING TO MACALESTER

The official arrival date for all new international students (and domestic students in the America program) is **Tuesday, August 25, 2026**.

Please fill out the International Student Arrival Form (found on [ISP's website](#)); it will also be **sent to your Macalester email address**, as soon as your travel plans are finalized. We will pick up those who complete the Arrival Form and need transportation. Notify the International Student Programs staff of any last-minute travel changes.

We strongly encourage you to arrive between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on arrival day to give you time to settle in and when most campus offices are open to assist you. If your flight arrives during the early hours of arrival day, before 8 a.m., please plan to wait at the airport or check into an airport hotel if your wait is several hours in length. ISP will provide transportation from the airport to campus for flights that arrive before 10:00 p.m. on arrival day. Students whose flights arrive after this time on arrival day should plan to be in communication with ISP. ISP will make all efforts to transport students to campus on arrival day, depending on availability of drivers. Students who arrive after 10:00 p.m. may need to stay at an airport hotel. The ISP mentors will meet you at the airport - the **Minneapolis/Saint Paul International Airport**, or "**MSP**" - which is located about 15-25 minutes from the College. ISP mentors will be carrying a Macalester College sign so that you can easily recognize them. More information will be sent during the summer about where to meet up with a Macalester representative.

If you have any difficulty finding us at the airport, bus, or train station, call International Student Programs at **+1 (651) 696-6992**. If your luggage is lost or delayed, please provide the transportation company with ISP's contact information and phone number.

New international students may move into their assigned residence halls only on August 25, 2026; you are responsible for finding a place to stay if you arrive before August 25th. We encourage you to arrive and move in on August 25th during the daytime so you can rest from your trip and unpack. During August 25th-31st, you are required to attend a mandatory **Pre-Orientation for International Students (PO4IS)** ⓘ. On August 31st, you join all new students, including first-year, exchange, and transfer, for all-student orientation. More information about all-student orientations can be found at [www.macalester.edu/orientation/](http://www.macalester.edu/orientation/).

### EARLY ARRIVAL

The College has **NO HOUSING** for students arriving earlier than August 25, 2026. Please make your own hotel or motel arrangements should you arrive earlier. One possibility near campus is below. For more accommodations, visit Macalester's website at <https://www.macalester.edu/about/visit/places-to-stay/>

There are also many hotels and motels available in the vicinity of the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. You can find information on these hotels upon arrival at the airport or online.

## UPON ARRIVAL AT MACALESTER

Your first stop should be at the International Student Programs Office (located in Kagin Commons). We will get you checked into your assigned residential hall room and give you a room key. You will also receive a welcome packet with a schedule for Pre-Orientation for International Students (PO4IS), a campus map, and other useful information. Additionally, if you are a student on a visa, we will need to scan some of your documents for our records.

## PRE-ORIENTATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (PO4IS)

All newly enrolled international students at Macalester College are **required** to attend a special pre-orientation (PO4IS), which begins on **August 25, 2026**, with your arrival. It is a good idea for you to arrive early on this day to complete the move-in process, such as arranging your belongings in your room and taking time to rest.

On Arrival Day of Pre-Orientation for International Students:

- As you arrive, have your passport, I-20/DS-2019, and other immigration documents ready for scanning. ISP will make copies of your documents. Afterwards, put your passport, I-20/DS-2019, and other important documents in a safe place. Don't carry them with you unless you travel.
- You will obtain a Macalester student ID. If you are employed on campus, ISP will help you apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). We hope to have officers from the Social Security office come to Macalester.

You can expect pre-orientation to include greetings from Macalester staff and faculty members. Additionally, you can open a bank account and obtain a phone with a SIM card (if necessary). You will also go to information sessions on immigration regulations, the nature of a liberal arts education and academics at Macalester, U.S. academic and cultural environments, and campus resources.

## ALL-STUDENT ORIENTATION

After the Pre-Orientation for International Students, you will join the general orientation with all new Macalester students on **August 31, 2026**. You can expect this general orientation to include academic advising, placement testing, book discussions, library tours, city and campus tours, shopping trips, receptions, financial aid information, information on extra-curricular activities, and social events. As you can see from this partial listing, orientation activities are a mixture of academic and social events, both serious and enjoyable.

## Other Logistics

### FINANCES

#### Bringing Money

Become familiar with currency exchange procedures. Difficulties and delays frequently occur in the transfer of funds from overseas to the U.S., so bring enough money to cover your initial school supplies and expenses. Transfer of funds may take several weeks or months, and clearance of checks or bank drafts is time-consuming. Nevertheless, we recommend transfers when dealing with a large amount of money.

If your home government or institution is providing funding for you, be sure to arrange a specific process with them for transferring money to you or Macalester for payment of your student account. Also, let International Student Programs and the Student Accounts Office know the contact name and institution to facilitate the transfer. International wire transfers are done via SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication).

For security purposes, we cannot give out Macalester's SWIFT Address, so please contact Student Accounts at +1 (651) 696-6161 or [studentaccts@macalester.edu](mailto:studentaccts@macalester.edu) if you need it.

## Tips

- Do not carry large sums of cash. Do bring some money, either as cash or as a debit/credit card you can use to purchase things you might need to start your life in the U.S.
- If you and your family are bringing funds into the U.S. **totaling \$10,000 or more** when added together on a family Customs declaration, you must declare the TOTAL amount. There is no penalty or fee if declared. The purpose is to separate legal money movements from unlawful activities such as drug smuggling, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- Be aware of and practical about your finances. Plan how you will finance your entire education at Macalester, not only your first year. In addition to tuition, room and board, and insurance costs, you will need funds for travel, books, clothing, and recreation. You must plan for your summer/winter break living and traveling expenses, as they are not included in your financial aid award. If you have been awarded **work study**, **be aware that you must work to earn that money, which may not be available right away to cover your settling-in expenses.**
- If you overdraw your checking account (meaning that you take out more money than is in your account), you will be fined for that withdrawal and every day that your balance is below \$0. If you write a check that bounces (where there is not enough money in your account to pay a check expense), you will be fined. You may have to pay a monthly fee or keep a minimum balance to maintain a savings account. ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) can charge \$2.00 or more per transaction. Money disappears fast, so be sure you know what your banking institution's fees are!

## Opening a Bank Account

- Choices for banks near campus include Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank (has ATM on campus), and a few others; no bank covers the entire U.S. We strongly recommend opening a U.S.-based bank account, especially if you will be in the U.S. for more than one semester and you will be working on campus. **We will help you open a bank account during pre-orientation for international students.**

## TRANSFERRING ACADEMIC CREDIT

If you are eligible for transfer credit from schools that you have previously attended, please bring original or certified copies of your transcripts or certificates with you. You can receive up to 20 credits using these documents. Visit the **Macalester Registrar**  for more information on AP or IB exam placement and/or credit.

## WHAT TO BRING

- ☐ Sheets, blankets, and pillows are not provided by the College. You can bring them with you. Note that the bed size is **Twin XL** or 203cm x 99cm. A better option is to purchase bedding when you arrive. **You can order most supplies online and have them shipped to Macalester.** If the schedule permits, we may organize a shopping trip during orientation for students to shop for bedding, items for your room, and anything else you need after arrival; this is not guaranteed.
- ☐ If you have space, bring items from home that you may not easily find here, such as musical instruments from your country, pictures of your country/home/friends and family, books, clothing, crafts and games representative of your country. These items will be useful if you make cultural presentations at Macalester, decorate spaces or gifting friends.
- ☐ If you plan on bringing any electrical items, please bring a voltage adaptor that converts to the U.S. voltage of **110 V** and uses a U.S. electrical plug, as these could be expensive or difficult to find in the U.S. See [www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/) for more information.
- ☐ If you wish to send suitcases or packages to the U.S. or buy things from Amazon or other online merchants before your arrival, you may send them to the address below **after August 8, 2026**. Be sure to purchase insurance against loss or damage for any packages you send.

Your Name (Legal/Passport Name)  
1600 Grand Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105 U.S.A.

## CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

Minnesota (MN) has four distinct seasons, all of which require different types of clothing. You will be arriving at the end of summer, which is typically a pleasant time of the year. However, it can get as hot as 100°F (38°C) and humid. Fall (autumn) days are cool and often rainy. Winter must be taken very seriously as the temperatures can drop as low as -5 to -20°F (-20 to -30°C), even before taking wind chill into account. After winter, the cool temperatures of spring, 32 to 55°F (0 to 10°C), seem almost balmy! On page 62 is a chart that gives some indication of what weather you can expect in the Twin Cities (Latitude: 44 degrees, 53 minutes north; Longitude: 93 degrees, 13 minutes west).

January is the coldest month in Minnesota, some of which you will be able to avoid if you go home during winter break. If you stay in Minnesota, be prepared for extreme cold that may last until April. It is very important to have adequate clothing to keep warm. Buying appropriate clothing for all these temperatures may seem intimidating, but it is not very difficult.

Students tend to dress very informally, with the most common attire being a pair of blue jeans, a shirt, a sweater, and a backpack (to carry books, etc). You will probably want to bring some formal clothes, which can be traditional/national/ethnic attire or a dress/suit for special occasions. Beyond these recommendations, reserve some money to buy clothes after you arrive in the U.S. You may need to buy a warm winter coat (\$50-200), sturdy boots (\$25-150), mittens or gloves (\$10 or more), a scarf (\$10-20), sweaters (\$20-50), turtlenecks (\$10-\$40) or long underwear (\$15 or more) for winter, and t-shirts (\$10-30) for summer. All prices in U.S. dollars are approximate. We recommend that you see what you can bring from home to save money as well.

You can also find second-hand clothes and supplies for your dorm room at the **Mac Free Swap**  and **1550 Summit/Free Swap Outlet** .

## MAIL

You will be assigned a personal post office box after you register for classes. You should check your mailbox regularly after you arrive on campus, and use this as your mailing address (not ISP's address). Once PO4IS starts any mail or packages should be sent directly to you and not ISP:

Your Legal or Passport Name  
1600 Grand Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105 USA

## CELL PHONES

If you do not already have a cell phone, you may purchase a phone online or at one of several stores nearby, such as

- T-Mobile St Paul (at the Midway Shopping Center, 1360 University Ave)— call +1 (651) 646-2000
- Metro by T-Mobile (at 1539 University Ave W)— call +1 (651) 646-8135
- Verizon (at the Midway Shopping Center, 474 Hamline Ave N)— call +1 (651) 760-8757
- AT&T (at 2132 Ford Pkwy)— call +1 (651) 690-4067

Nearby stores such as Best Buy, CVS, Target, Walgreens, etc., also sell SIM cards. Learn more at PO4IS or in the ISP office throughout the year. You can also refer to the [guide to buying phones in the US](#) from the ISP website. There are many [mobile virtual network operators \(MVNOs\)](#) who use the networks of T-Mobile, AT&T, or Verizon.

## PERSONAL PROPERTY INSURANCE

Students are encouraged to purchase personal property insurance to protect themselves against theft, fire, water damage, or vandalism of items such as cell phones, stereos, cameras, calculators, computers, and other personal property. One insurance company is recommended by Macalester Residential Life, and it is a cheap option for students: National Student Services, INC ([www.nssi.com](http://www.nssi.com)).

Contact **Residential Life**  at [residential-life@macalester.edu](mailto:residential-life@macalester.edu) / +1 (651) 696-6215 for information regarding personal property insurance.

## WINTER, SPRING, SUMMER BREAKS

Winter Break lasts from Dec 20, 2026, to Jan 24, 2027. Residential Life determines who is eligible to remain on campus during this period. Students who do not have another place to go during Winter Break are eligible to register for an exception to on-campus Winter Break housing, which allows them to stay on campus. Residential Life will communicate the process for students to be able to remain on campus during academic year breaks. Meal service will be unavailable for a portion of Winter Break. Students should begin to plan now for what they will be doing during Winter Break and plan to budget for meals when campus food service is unavailable.

During Spring Break, March 13 - 21, 2027, the residence halls will remain open, but there will be no food service. Similarly, students should plan to budget for meals during this time. Students who are not on campus during these break periods may leave their belongings in their dorm rooms.

During Summer breaks, older students who live off campus sublet (rent out) their rooms. This is a great option if you want a bit more flexibility than living on campus or if you don't want to be on a meal plan. The Residential Life office is the best source of information for summer housing.

More information about break housing can be found on [Macalester's Residential Life website](#).

## EMPLOYMENT

**F-1** Visa Students: You are NOT eligible for off-campus employment in the U.S. *until* you have been a full-time student in the U.S. for **one academic year**, and only then with special authorization. If you have student employment (as part of your financial aid), you are eligible to work **20 hours or less per week** on campus as soon as you arrive at Macalester. If you are going to work on campus, please check with ISP first.

**J-1** Visa Students: You may be eligible to work on or off campus, depending on your sponsoring agency's exchange requirements. Per Macalester policy, exchange students are not permitted to work on campus. Any on- or off-campus job must be authorized by your sponsor before engaging in work. Be sure to contact ISP and your sponsoring agency about authorization.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## Health Checklist: Before Leaving Home

- ☐ Complete your Health and Medical Forms through your [Macalester Patient Portal](#) by **Aug 14, 2026**. Enroll in the health insurance plan offered through Macalester by **Aug 14th** through your Macalester Portal. Review the health insurance policies.
- ☐ Bring a couple of months' supply and a doctor's prescription for any medication that you take regularly. If applicable, find healthcare providers in the area that will provide care for special healthcare needs (e.g. allergy shots, mental health, physical therapy, etc.).
- ☐ See a dentist to have your teeth checked and cleaned one more time at home. Dental care is typically not covered by U.S. medical or health insurance and the cost of these procedures in the U.S. may be more expensive than in your home country.
- ☐ See an eye doctor before leaving home, especially if you need prescription lenses. Vision care is typically not covered by U.S. medical insurance and the cost may be more expensive than in your home country.
- ☐ If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring a prescription and/or extra pairs in case of loss or accidental breakage.
- ☐ Put together a basic health care kit to take to school or purchase after arrival. Include basics such as adhesive bandages, non-stick gauze, antibiotic ointment, etc. Don't forget over-the-counter medications (i.e. acetaminophen and ibuprofen for headaches, antacids for stomach pains, and Benadryl for allergies). Do an online search for more detailed suggestions on assembling a college first aid kit.
- ☐ Parents/guardians and students should discuss how you will share information regarding health care needs, treatment and billing. Information about students who are 18 or over cannot be shared with parents/guardians without the written consent of the student. If students who are 17 years old meet certain requirements, their information cannot be shared with parents/guardians without the students' written consent. Work this out now to avoid confusion (especially around bills) later! Students, remember: the bills will be in your name!
- ☐ Optional: Make arrangements to get meningococcal, Hepatitis B, varicella, and/or HPV immunizations before coming to campus. Bring or send a copy of immunization records to Macalester. If you are unable to get these immunization shots in your home country, , you can reach out to [health@macalester.edu](mailto:health@macalester.edu) to inquire about vaccinations that you may be able to get for free on-campus.

If you forget anything, don't worry! There are several pharmacies near Macalester:

- [CVS](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [St. Paul Corner Drug](#)

## Required Health Information

Please return your completed Hamre Center paperwork by **August 14, 2026**. Macalester College and the State of Minnesota require proof that you have had the following immunizations to be enrolled for the 2026-2027 academic year:

- Tdap (Tetanus) Booster - received within the last 10 years
- 2 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) - first dose received after 1st birthday
- Meningitis Immunization - given after the age of 16

\*If immunizations are not complete by **August 14, 2026**, make sure to email [health@macalester.edu](mailto:health@macalester.edu). Failure to provide proof of required immunizations may result in a hold on your academic record or other actions. You will not be able to continue enrollment in the Fall semester until a record of these immunizations is on file at the Hamre Center for Health & Wellness. Note: Tuberculosis test is a requirement and can be done at the Hamre Center **or** by outside providers, including providers in your home country.

\*\*If you are on the Macalester-offered insurance plan, United Healthcare Student Resources, charges for the vaccinations are billed directly to the insurance and there is **no out-of-pocket (extra) cost to you**.

## Health Insurance

**Medical insurance that is Affordable Care Act (ACA) compliant is mandatory for all Macalester students** and must adequately cover your costs in case of accident and illness. Macalester offers an insurance plan in which **ALL** students are automatically enrolled.

The United Healthcare Student Resources / UHCSR insurance plan that is offered by Macalester provides students with coverage within the plan year, August 20, 2026, through August 19, 2027. Further information about medical insurance can be viewed at the [Health & Wellness website](#).

All students who enroll for UHCSR will need to create an online account to obtain an insurance card with their policy number on it. If you are treated off campus, you may have your health care provider directly submit claims to your insurance plan. **Always carry a copy of your insurance card with you**. The cost to purchase the UHCSR plan for 2026-27 is **\$3,329** for annual coverage.

International students are **required** to enroll in the UHCSR insurance plan through Macalester. It is no longer an option to waive out of the plan.

Remember: **ALL STUDENTS (new & returning) MUST ACCEPT THE POLICY ONLINE** before **August 14, 2026**. Otherwise, you will automatically be enrolled.

If you have questions regarding health insurance, how claims are submitted, etc., contact Nicola Michael-Tsai ([nmichael@macalester.edu](mailto:nmichael@macalester.edu)), the Insurance and Referral Specialist, or refer to the Laurie Hamre Center's [website](#) for more information.

## Where to Find and Get Healthcare

| Situation               | Not urgent                                                                                                                                                                         | Urgent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Emergency/life threatening                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Examples                | Cold symptoms<br>Runny, itchy nose and sinuses (unless it persists for several weeks)<br>Bruises, small scratches<br>Headache<br>Slight fever<br>Coughing, sore throat<br>Ear pain | Severe pain (chest, abdomen, head or ear), especially with fever<br>Asthma (when not responding to usual medication)<br>Possible fracture or dislocation<br>Laceration (a cut requiring stitches) Major bee sting reaction: hives, wheezing, or swelling (e.g. whole arm or leg swells)<br>Prolonged (24 hrs) vomiting/diarrhea | Difficulty breathing<br>Major injury (e.g. open chest wound with trouble breathing; spinal or neck injury with loss of responsiveness)<br>Unconscious or minimally responsive (e.g. drug or alcohol overdose)<br>Seizure that will not stop |
|                         | For mental health concerns, refer to the <a href="#">Mental Health Resources</a> section or Hamre Center's <a href="#">Mental Health Urgent &amp; Emergency Resources</a>          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| On campus               | <a href="#">Hamre Center for Health &amp; Wellness</a> * Office hours vary during semester and break periods.                                                                      | On-campus urgent/emergency services***<br>Macalester Public Safety +1 (651) 696-6555<br>Macalester Emergency Medical Services (EMS)                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Off campus/ after hours | <a href="#">Local general care physicians or clinics</a> **                                                                                                                        | <a href="#">Off-campus urgent resources</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <a href="#">Off-campus emergency resources</a><br>Call 911                                                                                                                                                                                  |

\* Same-day appointments are NOT guaranteed.

\*\* Average wait time for a non-urgent outpatient medical appointment in the U.S. can go up to **several weeks**. If you need to be seen sooner, go to **urgent care** .

\*\*\* Only life-saving procedures

## 1. LAURIE HAMRE CENTER FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS

 +1 (651) 696-6275

 [health@macalester.edu](mailto:health@macalester.edu)

 Leonard Center Room 53

The Hamre Center for Health & Wellness provides health care, short-term counseling and consultation, and health education. A more detailed description of services is offered on their [website](#). Students may call or stop by the office to schedule an appointment. The office is open Monday-Friday during business hours (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.). Same-day appointments are available on a limited basis for both medical and counseling.

**There are no fees for office visits at the Hamre Center** (including care provided by physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, visiting psychiatrists, licensed psychologists, mental health counselors, or certified health educators). Students are billed for immunizations, lab tests, physicals (i.e., study away, pre-op physicals) and medications, but all charges are covered 100% if you are under the Macalester-offered UHCSR insurance. **ALL additional costs will be discussed with you prior to being charged, and services that cost money will not be performed without your agreement.** See the [Hamre Center list of charges](#) document.

If you have questions about the insurance policy, please look through the insurance brochure that will be emailed to you or talk to [Nicola Michael-Tsai](#), the Insurance & Referral Specialist.

To schedule an appointment (medical or counseling), **call +1 (651) 696-6275 / go to the office.**

## 2. OFF-CAMPUS/LOCAL GENERAL CARE PHYSICIANS

- [MinuteClinic](#)
- Parkway Family Physicians
- [Open Cities Health Center](#)

## 3. ON CAMPUS URGENT SERVICES

Emergencies do not always occur conveniently during office hours. The following are some key off-hours emergency resources available to students on and off-campus:

- **Macalester Public Safety** (or Security) : Call **+1 (651) 696-6555** 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year. Save this number on your phone. Be prepared to give your name, describe the situation, and provide contact info. Security can also connect you with other campus response personnel. Security is the best place to start for issues of personal safety. Visit [www.macalester.edu/public-safety/](http://www.macalester.edu/public-safety/) for more information.
- **Resident Assistant (RA)** or the RA on Call: Telephone numbers are posted on the door of your residence hall office. RA's have special training to deal with personal and community concerns.
- **Resident Hall Director (RHD)** on duty: If you can't reach the RA on duty or Security, contact the RHD on duty. Contact information is posted on the doors of all residence hall offices.

- **Press 2** (ProtoCall Services): For urgent mental health support, use Press 2, a free 24/7 telephone crisis response service. Call the Hamre Center at +1 651-696-6275, and press option 2 when prompted to be connected with a trained call taker at ProtoCall Services. If it is during business hours, the front staff may answer the phone. In that case, please ask the front staff to connect you with Press 2. Press 2 call takers are familiar with the on-campus resources and will connect with Macalester Public Safety if needed. They provide the Hamre Center with a report of the call. You can even request a follow up from a Hamre Center counselor, so you have access to complete wrap-around care. You can either share your name when you call or can remain anonymous.
- **Press 3** (Access Nurse): For the medical triage nurse, use Press 3, a free 24/7 nurse line by calling the Hamre Center at +1 651-696-6275 to be connected to a registered nurse. If you call during office hours and reach a staff member, simply ask to be connected to the nurse line. This is a great place to start if you don't feel well and aren't sure what to do. Access Nurse is familiar with emergency referral resources in the area and will provide the Hamre Center with a report of the call. You can either share your name when you call or can remain anonymous.
- **Safety Escorts**: If you feel unsafe walking on campus, contact campus security at +1 (651) 696-6555 for someone to escort you home or wherever you need to be. Service is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

#### 4. OFF-CAMPUS URGENT SERVICES

These [resources](#) are for when your condition/illness is urgent, but not a life-threatening emergency. **Urgent care** services are usually walk-in clinics open during office hours (not available 24/7). When going to local urgent care: **Call ahead** to make sure that your insurance will be accepted and to ask if there are special instructions (especially if you have influenza symptoms or other communicable disease concerns).

#### 5. OFF-CAMPUS EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Emergency resources are for the most extreme conditions and are open 24/7/365. Visit an emergency room (ER) located at one of the hospitals or clinics above when other facilities (e.g. urgent care) are closed and you believe the medical condition is severe enough that it cannot wait until a clinic is open.

##### WHAT TO DO:

1. **Carry your insurance card** and give your **legal name (spelled correctly)**
2. As soon as you arrive, indicate why you think the problem requires emergency attention
3. State your main problem first, then report other symptoms
4. Report any past experience with the problem
5. If you have taken any medications for the illness or concern, take them with you. The closest hospitals are Regions Hospital and United Hospital. Refer to the [information above](#) on these resources.

Paying for Emergency Visits: Macalester College does not cover visits to the Emergency Room. They are billed to your insurance company.

## 6. CALLING 911

Remember, this is NOT for sore throats, nausea, or light fever - unless you are concerned that it is indicative of a more severe, life-threatening situation. If you call 911 from a cell phone while on campus, be sure to call Public Safety at **+1 (651) 696-6555** as well to let them know so that they can assist the ambulance.

## MORE ABOUT AFTER-HOURS MEDICAL RESOURCES

The odds are good that at some point during the year, you may feel sick over the weekend or at night when the Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness is closed. The best resource to get advice after hours is Access Nurse, a 24/7 free resource to all enrolled Macalester students. They will help triage your situation and give advice about next steps, which may include home care and OTC meds, seeking care within the week, or sending you to urgent or emergent care. In the U.S., the emergency room (ER) is the place to go for life-threatening emergencies or middle of the night urgent situations, so students are encouraged to consider other options first. A visit to an ER for non-urgent situations can translate into many hours in the waiting room and hundreds if not thousands of dollars.

## Mental Health Resources

The Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness offers counseling services for students during office hours (10:00AM-5:00PM) at no additional cost when school is in session . You can schedule individual counseling appointments or [Same Day Appointments](#)\* by calling the front desk at **+1 (651) 696-6275** and requesting an appointment.

**Press 2** is a free telephone crisis response service in partnership with ProtoCall Services. This brief and confidential service is available to all Macalester students 24/7/365 (including evenings, weekends, breaks, summer and weather closures). You can call Press 2 from anywhere in the world to speak with a trained and experienced call taker.

Press 2 call takers are familiar with the on-campus resources and can connect with Macalester Public Safety if needed. They also communicate with our Hamre Center counseling staff during business hours, so you have access to complete wrap-around care.

If you want to speak with a trained professional right now, simply call the Hamre Center at **+1 (651) 696-6275** and press option 2 when prompted to be connected. If it is during business hours, the front staff may answer the phone. In that case, please ask the front staff to connect you with Press 2.

\*Appointments that can be scheduled within 24 hours of the listed appointment time, if available.

## AFTER-HOURS MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES

If you or a friend are having thoughts of harming yourself or are feeling dangerously out of control after hours, you have several resources available to you. If residing on campus, we recommend you first contact your RA or RHD, who can help you determine the best option. If talking with a trained crisis counselor can help, use Press 2 by calling the Hamre Center office at **+1(651) 696-6275**, then press 2 when prompted to be connected. Finally, consider going to the nearest emergency room or calling 911.

If you or a friend are at risk of harming oneself, get help as soon as possible.

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>High</b><br>Imminent danger | Call <b>911</b><br>Go to the nearest emergency room**                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Moderate</b>                | Access <a href="#">urgent mental health care resources</a>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Low</b>                     | Live on campus ⇒ contact your <b>RA/RHD</b><br>Talk with a trusted friend, family member, or mentor<br>Engage in activities that help you tend to your difficult feelings (listen to music, exercise, go for a walk, journal, etc) |

\*\*The nearest emergency room from campus is **Regions Hospital** | 640 Jackson St, St. Paul, MN 55101 | +1(651) 254-3456. The full emergency/urgent mental health care resources can be found [here](#).

## SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

Jump to the [sexual assault resources](#) section to find resources specific to sexual assault.

# U.S. AND MAC CULTURES

## Transitioning to a New Culture

You may have heard the term “culture shock,” or the feeling of being disoriented after moving to a new cultural environment. International students adjusting to life at Macalester experience culture shock in a variety of ways, and it can take time to feel fully comfortable. Given time, most students will eventually adjust to life in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, and the U.S. Before long, it may even feel like home. In this section, we discuss ways you can navigate culture shock and adjust more easily.

## BEING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Everyone’s experience of being immersed in a new culture is unique, and international students navigate their transition to Macalester life in a variety of ways. However, it’s common for students to go through a set of “phases” as they adjust to a new culture. If you experience these phases, just know that you are not alone.

## COMMON PHASES OF TRANSITION

### Pre-departure

You are preparing to leave wherever you are and travel to Macalester. You may be feeling excited to start college, nervous about moving to a new place, or bittersweet about leaving home. It is common for people to feel more excited as they get closer to departure, but this can also be a nerve-wracking time. That is completely normal and okay.

### Orientation

This phase starts when you first step foot on campus and usually lasts through Pre Orientation for International Students and All-Student Orientation. You will meet lots of new people, which can be really fun but sometimes overwhelming. Some people may wake up feeling excited and happy, then feel drained by the end of the day. Enjoy this exciting time, but remember to take care of yourself if you start feeling down. You will have plenty of time later on to make friends and experience life at Macalester.

### Getting Involved

For most, this phase starts when classes begin. You will meet your professors, students in your classes, and people in your dorm. You may be making new friends, joining clubs, or navigating a roommate relationship. It is common for people to become more involved in the Macalester community during their first few months of school. As this is happening, you may feel frustrated at times when navigating spaces and cultures that are still new to you. You may start to get homesick. Towards the end of this phase, you may question if you belong or feel parts of your identity start to change.

## Culture Shock, Conflict

As you settle into life at Macalester and the initial excitement wears off, you may feel disconnected from your home culture and the new cultures you are experiencing at Macalester. Some people experience an identity crisis during this time, start to feel lonely or become more short-tempered and frustrated than usual. Some have a hard time retaining connections to their home culture. Take time to navigate this phase and pay attention to what you are feeling. Remember to reach out for help if you need it, especially if you start to feel depressed or anxious. Your ISP mentor and your Residential Assistant are there to help you if you need them. You can also seek help from counselors or staff at the **Health and Wellness Center (HWC)**, the **Center for Religious and Spiritual Life (CRSL)**, and the **Lealtad-Suzuki Center for Social Justice (LSC)**. It is important to remember you are not alone, and that many people go through this phase and feel more intense emotions as they navigate their first semester and year.

## Stability, Sense of Belonging

Not everyone feels a sense of belonging right away at Macalester, and it may even take a semester or two before you feel stable in your new community. This may happen at the end of the first semester as you leave the culture shock phase, or it might come later. It is often helpful to find people and communities you identify with from classes, clubs or identity collectives and engage in those communities and events. Throughout college, you will learn new things about yourself and experience personal growth. Remember that people are rooting for you and a huge part of what ISP mentors love in our work is to be able to make this process a meaningful opportunity for growth.

## Returning Home

Leaving Macalester to return “home” (whatever that means for you) can be an emotional time. You may be excited to go home or to have a break from Macalester, and those first few days after leaving campus might feel amazing. However, it can be difficult re-adapting to life away from Macalester, and you may feel reverse culture shock. You’ve probably changed during your time in college, and it can be hard to navigate these changes when you return to a place of familiarity.

## Coming back to Macalester

Travel and transitioning is an emotional time for many, and you may be feeling a mix of sadness and excitement to be returning to Macalester. However, you may be surprised by how smoothly you transition back into college life. This is not the case for everyone, but hopefully you’ll begin to see Macalester as a new home and place of belonging.

## Common Macalester Customs

The following description of Mac customs and behaviors is only a generalization; this information, although helpful, should be used as a guide and not as a prescription. One of the most helpful ways for anyone to learn about customs and behavior is by observing others and asking questions. It is important to realize attitudes and customs vary from person to person.

## CLOTHING

At Macalester, and on most U.S. campuses, students dress very informally. In spite of this informality, a great many U.S. students enjoy dressing up, and you may be asked to dress up for various special occasions. For example, you may want to wear business or business casual attire for interviews and academic conferences and wear formal or semi-formal dressy attire for events such as Fall Ball.

In addition to investing in some formal clothing, students should allocate enough money for warm winter clothing. Winter must be taken seriously in Minnesota, where the temperature sometimes drops to -30°F (-34°C). Having a warm winter coat, waterproof boots, and other warm layers is a necessity. There are many options to buy clothing locally that is well-suited for the weather and often is better than trying to get a bulky set of clothes from other climates and hoping that they will work well. ISP, other departments, and individuals are here to help answer any questions.

## CONVERSATION

Like in any place you are unfamiliar with, conversational phrases at Macalester may seem different at first. These are just a few common phrases and what they often mean: “How are you?” does not necessarily mean that the person asking wants to have a long conversation, and can sometimes just be a casual greeting. If you are passing each other on the way to class, or want to keep the conversation short, it is common to respond by saying something like: “I’m good. How are you?” Phrases said when departing can be equally confusing. For instance, “See you later” or “Let’s get together sometime” are often meant as a friendly goodbye, rather than an actual invitation. When in doubt, do not be shy to clarify whether it is an invitation or not and remember to be patient with yourself.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Communication can help you navigate relationships more smoothly and respect people’s needs. Terms referring to different kinds of relationships can be confusing or unclear, but communication can help to clear up that confusion and make sure that everyone involved is on the same page.

Before engaging in any sexual activity with someone, it is always important to get clear, enthusiastic consent. Those involved can also revoke consent at any time. In all situations, it is important to be vocal with a potential intimate partner about your expectations for the relationship and to respect each other’s expectations and comfort levels.

Participating in sexual activity in a safe and protected way is also essential. Sexual protection helps reduce the risks of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infection (STI). Please refer to the [Sexual and Reproductive Care](#) section of Laurie Hamre Center website. During PO4IS you will also get more information about this topic.

## GENDER & SEXUALITY

Some students at Macalester identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual. The "+" refers to other identities that don't fall into these categories. There are a couple of **Identity Collectives**  on campus that aim to support students who identify as LGBTQIA+ by creating space for support and engaging in critical and intersectional, life-sustaining dialogue. However, stereotypes against many of these groups still exist in the U.S. and on campus. Some students who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community choose to be open about their identity, while others choose not to share this with people openly, and that is their choice.

Email [lsc@macalester.edu](mailto:lsc@macalester.edu) for questions.

## USE OF NAMES AND PRONOUNS

First names are commonly used in the U.S. between peers. It is all right to use the first name of someone approximately your age or someone younger. However, some professors may want to be addressed as "Professor" or "Dr." by their last name. If you are unsure of what to call someone, it is appropriate (and a sign of respect) to ask what they would like to be called.

People at Macalester refer to each other with respect to their personal pronouns. Commonly used pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and ze/zir/zirs. The gender that someone is assigned at birth does not always line up with their gender identity. Some do not identify as "male" or "female" and instead identify as non-binary. The gender spectrum is nuanced, and how each person identifies on that spectrum is unique to them. At Macalester, it is common for people to say their pronouns when introducing themselves. If you are unsure of what pronouns someone prefers, it is best to ask what pronouns they go by. We also recognize that this can take time to get used to, and we all may make mistakes, but being intentional in showing respect is extremely important.

## INVITATIONS

Invitations are usually informal and verbal, but they usually specify a time and place. For example, "Will you come over Tuesday evening at 8:00?" If you say "yes," it is important that you keep the appointment. Casual verbal invitations such as "Come and see me sometime" or "drop by" are usually given with the understanding that you will call and make more specific plans before coming over. If you receive a written invitation that says RSVP (from the French phrase *Répondez s'il vous plaît*, meaning "please respond"), you should respond by telling your host whether you plan to attend. When responding to emails requesting you to RSVP, you should keep a record of what events you agree to attend. If you RSVP "yes" but cannot attend, be sure to email the host(s). In U.S. culture, it is generally understood that if you decline an invitation more than once or twice, especially without an explanation, it indicates you are not interested, and that person may stop inviting you to other things.

## CONCEPT OF TIME

The commonly used concept of time at Macalester and in the U.S. is somewhat rigid, especially with regard to classes and more strict appointments. When an appointment is made, you are generally expected to arrive within five minutes of the appointed time. If you have an appointment with your advisor at 10:30 a.m., for example, you should arrive at 10:30 a.m. or a little before. If a bus is scheduled to stop at 10:20 a.m., be at the bus stop five minutes early because the bus may arrive a few minutes early or late. In addition, when asking things of people, especially your professors or other staff members, it is customary to ask around two weeks before the date you need it. This will give professors and other faculty time to complete what you require without feeling rushed. When making an appointment with a professor or other staff member, you should typically email beforehand to figure out a time and place. Many people on campus, faculty (professors), staff and students, use [Google Calendar](#) to organize meeting times and appointments. **If someone sends you a Google Calendar invite, please respond if you can or cannot make the appointment.**

## GREETINGS

People usually shake hands when they first meet and introduce themselves. This is a formal means of introduction that will usually occur when you are meeting an adult but may occur with younger people. However, since the beginning of the pandemic, people are in general okay if you are not comfortable shaking hands.

# CAMPUS LIFE AND POLICIES

## Campus Life

### CAMPUS HOUSING

During their first three years at Macalester, students are required to live on-campus in residence halls. The [Residential Life Office](#) is responsible for the student housing program at Macalester and is located on the second floor of the campus center.

On-campus housing addresses different needs for students. For example, for incoming first years, single-gender spaces are available in Doty this academic year. In addition, there are language houses and specialty houses. These are not options for incoming first-year students but if there are specific living styles that can be supported by your hall, know that these options exist.

- 8 language houses on campus (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish).
- 3 special houses where students can reside and which are located in different parts of the campus (Cultural House, Veggie Co-op, Eco House).

### What kinds of rooms are available?

Most are double occupancy (two people), although there are single, triple, and quad rooms on campus. Some residential halls have a suite setup.

### How can I get help if I don't know how things work?

Adjusting to dorm life can be tough, especially when you feel that there is no one whom you can ask for help or that your questions are stupid. ISP mentors and Residence Hall Assistants (RAs) are people that you can turn to for such help; they are available for any questions you may have.

### What if, for some serious reason, I am not satisfied with my room or residence hall?

Prioritizing your success as a student holistically is really important and situations such as these work on a case-by-case basis. Since the circumstances may vary greatly from person to person, it is difficult to describe what is meant by a serious reason. What is important to emphasize is that if you are having serious problems with regard to your room or residence hall, you are not alone in figuring out the next steps. In situations like these, RAs, ISP mentors, and professional staff in these departments will help you work through steps and it may be possible to change your room or residence hall.

### What about breaks?

Many students travel, visit home, or simply stay on campus for Fall break (October 15 – 18, 2026). Residence Halls will be open during Fall Break, and Cafe Mac is open with modified hours. During Thanksgiving Break (November 25-29, 2026), most students from the U.S. will celebrate Thanksgiving with their families or with one another on campus. Your friends' families may invite you to celebrate Thanksgiving with them, and this usually involves a large meal. If you are staying on campus during these breaks, be aware that Cafe Mac hours usually change.

During Winter Break (December 20, 2026 to January 24, 2027), students who do not have an option for alternate housing will be able to apply for an exemption to stay. International students who are not able to make arrangements for a place to live (such as going back home, for example) will be eligible to apply. Dining services will not be open and other on-campus services will have modified hours. A system to let students have access to food is being developed. In general, students who are involved in academic, athletic, or student employment that makes it necessary to be on campus can return to campus in January.

During Spring Break (March 13-21, 2027), the residence halls will remain open, but there will be no food service on campus, except for the Grille.

During Summer breaks, older students who live off campus sublet (rent out) their rooms. This is a great option if you want a bit more flexibility than living on campus or if you don't want to be on a meal plan. The Residential Life office is the best source of information for summer housing.

For more information visit the [Residential Life website](#).

## Meal Plans

In their first semester, all students are automatically put onto a full, 19 meals/week meal plan, but there are other meal plan choices. This information is available on **1600 Grand**, which is the student portal. There are a variety of meal options on campus and during Pre-Orientation for International students, ISP mentors will take time to explain how to navigate eating on campus.

## OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

After completing their third year at Macalester, students are able to move off campus. Some students like living off campus because it is more independent, you can cook for yourself more freely, and it can be less expensive depending on your rent. Others choose to stay on campus to be closer to the community, because they like being on a meal plan, or to take advantage of Residential Life resources. Once the time comes for you to decide if you want to live on or off campus, you can access resources such as the [off-campus housing page](#) and the ISP [Current Students page](#).

## Student Organizations

Mac has a wide range of student organizations that you can join once you get to campus. [Student organizations](#), commonly referred to as orgs, are clubs which students can join outside of their academic pursuits at Mac. Some people love orgs and are part of multiple ones while some people aren't in any orgs at all; it's really your choice.

The **Involvement Fair** will take place on **September 17th**, 2026. All active organizations have a table for you to get more information and sign up to be on their mailing list. Don't worry though, signing up at the fair is not a commitment to be in the organization and you can always join later, too!

Many international students join cultural organizations, in which they get the chance to bond over shared cultural backgrounds or interests. A list of current cultural and other student orgs can be found at [the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement](#). There are many types of orgs that you can join based on your interests such as orgs dedicated to hobbies, sports, academic interests, religions, community engagement, or social justice.

## Campus Resources

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | <p><a href="#">CAREER EXPLORATION</a></p> <p>Equipped with resources and personnel to help students learn about various career options and aid them with individual job and internship searches.</p>                                                                            | <br><br>       | <p>Marcos Cruz Jinna Johnson</p> <p><a href="mailto:careereexploration@macalester.edu">careereexploration@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Kagin Commons 1st Floor</p> |
|             | <p><a href="#">CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE (CRSL)</a></p> <p>Coordinates religious activities for the Macalester community, often involving other religious communities within the Twin Cities.</p>                                                                 | <br><br>       | <p>Emma Kippley-Ogman</p> <p><a href="mailto:crsl@macalester.edu">crsl@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel 1st Floor</p>                     |
| C<br>E<br>C | <p><a href="#">COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER</a></p> <p>Organizes service and volunteer opportunities for students.</p>                                                                                                                                                           | <br><br>       | <p>Sedric McClure Ruth Janisch</p> <p><a href="mailto:cec@macalester.edu">cec@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Markham Hall, 3rd Floor</p>                             |
|             | <p><a href="#">STUDENT AFFAIRS</a></p> <p>Concerned with the general welfare and collegiate life of all students.</p>                                                                                                                                                           | <br><br>       | <p>Angela Walker</p> <p><a href="mailto:studentaffairs@macalester.edu">studentaffairs@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Weyerhaeuser, Room 119</p>                      |
| L<br>I<br>B | <p><a href="#">DEWITT WALLACE LIBRARY</a></p> <p>Provides study rooms and provisions new information technologies, as well as an extensive book and periodical collection</p>                                                                                                   | <br><br>    | <p>+1 (651) 696-6346</p> <p><a href="mailto:library@macalester.edu">library@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>DeWitt Wallace Library</p>                                |
|             | <p><a href="#">FINANCIAL AID OFFICE</a></p> <p>Provides information and services concerning financial aid and scholarships.</p>                                                                                                                                                 | <br><br> | <p>+1 (651) 696-6214</p> <p><a href="mailto:financialaid@macalester.edu">financialaid@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Weyerhaeuser, Room 031</p>                      |
|             | <p><a href="#">LAURIE HAMRE CENTER FOR HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS</a></p> <p>Provides resources for physical and mental health services on campus.</p>                                                                                                                               | <br><br> | <p>+1 (651) 696-6275</p> <p><a href="mailto:health@macalester.edu">health@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Leonard Center 53</p>                                       |
| I<br>T<br>S | <p><a href="#">INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES</a></p> <p>Manages the computing, network and telecommunications resources for all Macalester students, faculty and staff</p>                                                                                                    | <br><br> | <p>+1 (651) 696-6525</p> <p><a href="mailto:helpdesk@macalester.edu">helpdesk@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Humanities Building Room 316</p>                        |
|             | <p><a href="#">ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER</a></p> <p>Helps students achieve academically. Staff counselors and tutors are available for help in a variety of areas. Sci-Q is on the first floor and the Writing Center is on the third floor; both are located in the library.</p> | <br><br> | <p>Brigetta Abel</p> <p>+1 (651) 696-6121</p> <p>DeWitt Wallace Library</p>                                                                                     |
| L<br>S<br>C | <p><a href="#">LEALTAD-SUZUKI CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE</a></p> <p>Provide resources and support for students with marginalized identities and provide Social Justice education for the Macalester campus.</p>                                                                  | <br><br> | <p>Cornell Zbikowski</p> <p><a href="mailto:lsc@macalester.edu">lsc@macalester.edu</a></p> <p>Kagin Commons 1st Floor</p>                                       |

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C<br>S<br>L<br>E | <a href="#">REGISTRAR</a><br>Records students' academic records and facilitates the registration of classes                                                         |  +1 (651) 696-6200<br> <a href="mailto:registrar@macalester.edu">registrar@macalester.edu</a><br> 77 Macalester Street, Room 101               |
|                  | <a href="#">RESIDENTIAL LIFE</a><br>Manages student housing and board on campus.                                                                                    |  Beekah Madia Russell<br> <a href="mailto:residential-life@macalester.edu">residential-life@macalester.edu</a><br> Campus Center Room 239      |
|                  | <a href="#">PUBLIC SAFETY</a><br>Campus security and safety office.                                                                                                 |  +1 (651) 696-6555<br> <a href="mailto:publicsafety@macalester.edu">publicsafety@macalester.edu</a><br> Campus Center, Janet Wallace MUSIC 009 |
|                  | <a href="#">STUDENT ACCOUNTS OFFICE/CASHIER</a><br>Provide and coordinate all payments and student account information                                              |  +1 (651) 696-6161<br> <a href="mailto:studentaccts@macalester.edu">studentaccts@macalester.edu</a><br> 77 Macalester Street, Suite 102        |
|                  | <a href="#">STUDENT EMPLOYMENT</a><br>Coordinates student employment.                                                                                               |  Jaelynn Blenkush<br> <a href="mailto:studentemployment@macalester.edu">studentemployment@macalester.edu</a><br> 77 Macalester, Room 201       |
|                  | <a href="#">CENTER FOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT</a><br>Provides support and programming for student organizations, Campus Center operations and Forensics. |  Bess Bieluczyk<br> <a href="mailto:csle@macalester.edu">csle@macalester.edu</a><br> Weyerhaeuser Hall, Suite 103                         |
|                  | <a href="#">CENTER FOR DISABILITY RESOURCES</a><br>Determine/provide accommodations when academic and co-curricular barriers exist.                                 |  Becca Lewis<br> <a href="mailto:disabilityresources@macalester.edu">disabilityresources@macalester.edu</a><br> Kagin Commons            |

## Minnesota Laws and Macalester Policies

A lot of what follows in this section is also contained in the [Macalester College Student Handbook](#) which you may access online. The rules we highlight here are especially important for you to know, as they will apply to you as an international student. Remember that your actions are your own decisions, so you will be expected to take full responsibility for them. Please thoroughly read the Macalester College Student Handbook as well because the section below does not include all Macalester rules and regulations.

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Many drugs, except those sold in pharmacies or prescribed by a doctor, are illegal in the United States. In the United States, alcohol may not be consumed by people under 21 years of age. This does not mean that students at Macalester do not take drugs or do not drink alcohol. Some do and can get into trouble with the police, immigration officials (if they are international students), or school authorities. Consequences for breaking Minnesota and federal laws may lead to substantial fines, jail time (in serious cases), suspension or expulsion from the school, or even deportation.

Various mentor group activities during PO4IS will discuss the realities of drug and alcohol use at Macalester. The consequences of breaking rules and regulations concerning drugs and alcohol—especially for international students—are severe. For a complete discussion of Macalester's alcohol policy, see the Macalester College Student Handbook.

In addition to prohibiting them from consuming alcohol, Minnesota State Law also does not allow people under 21 to purchase or possess alcoholic beverages. It also prohibits anyone from selling or providing alcoholic beverages to someone under the age of 21. By law, establishments require legal proof of age (by a Minnesota ID card or another country's passport) in order to serve alcoholic beverages. These laws may vary greatly from your accustomed practices or your home country's laws. As an international student, you should know the laws and their consequences, as you will be held responsible for them.

Although, the state of Minnesota has passed legislation to allow the sale and consumption of cannabis-infused beverages and edibles as well as recreational marijuana, federal law classifies cannabis as a "Schedule I" controlled substance whose manufacture (which includes production, such as planting, cultivation, growing, or harvesting), distribution, dispensing, or possession may lead to **immigration consequences for international students on F-1 visas**. If an F-1 student is arrested with an offense related to cannabis, it is very common for the charge to be removed from the city, county or state records, but it is on the immigration record for life. The consequences can include revocation or extreme difficulty in getting visas and being considered inadmissible by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the port of entry. CBP may also check social media accounts so photos, posts, etc. related to cannabis could be a serious issue.

We recognize that these areas can be challenging to navigate and ISP is not here to moralize. This section aims to raise awareness of potential consequences so all students can make informed decisions.

## TITLE IX

Title IX is a section of the Education Amendments of 1972, a federal law that provides that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." At U.S. colleges and universities, sexual harassment and assault are treated as violations of Title IX, but Title IX also covers other forms of sex and gender discrimination that create barriers to students' educational experience at Macalester.

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct as defined by the Macalester Student Handbook “includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, sexual exploitation, dating/intimate partner violence, domestic violence, stalking, attempted and actual non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual assault.” Sexual misconduct is not only a violation of individual rights and dignity but also erodes the values that are important to the College community and will not be tolerated at Macalester. The College attempts to create and maintain a positive living, working and learning environment in which community members are aware of and respect the rights of others and individuals take responsibility for their actions. Sexual harassment and violence are not only violations of Macalester's policies but also can be prosecuted by Minnesota and U.S. law. Prosecution of these offences has strong implications for international students' status and their place within the Macalester community. Below are details on the most widely used terms; a comprehensive set of definitions is available in the Student Handbook.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment involves a wide range of verbal and non-verbal behaviors which includes any sexual or gender-based verbal, written, or physical conduct that is unwanted and/or unreasonably interferes with or deprives someone of academic, social or work-related access, benefits, or opportunities in the College community or creates an environment that interferes with the well-being and/or success of an individual. Sexual harassment can involve instructors and students, supervisors and students, students and students, and other relationships among colleagues or peers. If you are experiencing sexual harassment speak to your mentor, supervisor, the Title IX coordinator, or another staff member you feel comfortable with.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is any actual or attempted sexual contact with another person without that person's consent. Sexual contact includes intentional contact by the accused or coerced touching the victim's genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breasts, whether clothed or unclothed. Sexual assault includes, but is not limited to rape, fondling, incest and statutory rape (sexual intercourse with a person who is under the age of 16). Sexual assault does not only occur between strangers therefore consent must be given for all sexual interactions between any two individuals, regardless of their relationship.

## CONSENT

Consent is defined as conduct or words that indicate a person freely agrees to engage in a sexual act at the time of the act. It can only be given by individuals over 18 years old, as those under 18 are classified as “minors.” Moreover, consent must involve a clear, vocal “yes,” and it is NOT the same as the absence of a “no.” Consent can always be withdrawn, cannot be obtained by coercion, and cannot be given by anyone who is mentally or physically incapacitated (e.g., due to alcohol or drug use). You will learn about consent at New Student Orientation and throughout your time at Macalester, as consent is a highly valued and defended concept within our community.

## BE PROACTIVE IN PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Actively participate in Macalester's culture of consent.
- Take care of yourself and others. Do not leave individuals behind if they are intoxicated or if they are with strangers, especially at parties.

- Trust your intuition. If you feel ill at ease about a situation, speak up for yourself and others and remove yourself and others from the situation.
- Try not to walk alone at night and stay in well-lit, higher-traffic areas.

## IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Go to a safe place; your first priority is to take care of yourself and make sure you are safe from harm.
- Talk to someone: a friend, your roommate, your RA, Counseling Services (available at the Hamre Centre), Campus Security (they can help you contact the police), an ISP staff person, or the Title IX Coordinator; if you do not feel ready to make a report to a college administrator, make sure you are getting the support you need from others.
- Go to a medical facility for an exam, including a transmitted disease check, pregnancy test, and to deal with potential injuries as necessary. A medical exam is important for your health and will be very important if you decide to press criminal charges. Regions Hospital is best equipped to do an exam. The initial exam and follow-ups are free at Regions Hospital.
- Try not to disturb any evidence. Do not shower, douche, wash your clothing, or comb your hair before completing an exam.
- Take care of yourself. You can reach the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **+1 (800) 656-4673**, Macalester counseling services at **+1 (651) 696-6275**, and the Title IX coordinator **Laura Creech** is able to put you in touch with further resources and help you navigate reporting your assault or pressing criminal charges if you so wish.
- If you have experienced sexual misconduct or have been a victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault, seek help. It is highly encouraged to report any incident of sexual assault, as this allows the College to assist the victim. The anonymous Online Report Form can be filled out [here](#).

## RESOURCES

### On Campus

|                                                  |              |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Public Safety (will help you contact the police) | <b>x6555</b> |
| Hamre Center for Health & Wellness               | <b>x6275</b> |
| Residential Life Office                          | <b>x6215</b> |
| Title IX Coordinator                             | <b>x6258</b> |
| Dean of Students                                 | <b>x6220</b> |
| Safe Walk Program                                | <b>x6555</b> |

Dial **+1 (651) 696-x** (replace with 4 digits above)

### Off-Campus

|                                                       |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| National Sexual Assault Hotline (24-hour crisis line) | <b>+1 (800) 656-4673</b> |
| St. Paul Police Department Emergency                  | <b>911</b>               |
| St. Paul Police Department Non-emergency              | <b>+1 (651) 291-1111</b> |
| Regions Hospital Information                          | <b>+ (651)-254-3456</b>  |

# GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

## International Students

### WHO ARE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

Macalester students who are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent residents are categorized as international or foreign students, regardless of their visa classification by the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), or Department of State. Additionally, Macalester College considers an international student to be someone who has spent time living and/or studying in another country, regardless of citizenship and visa status. It is the responsibility of each international student to become familiar with the regulations which apply to their particular visa status. Students should consult [Luyen](#), [Molly](#), [Britt](#), or [Laurie](#) if questions or problems regarding immigration matters arise.

U.S. immigration regulations bring great restrictions and consequences for non-immigrants who do not enter the U.S. with a lawful status or who do not maintain their lawful status. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you enter the U.S. with the proper F-1, J-1, or other visa and documentation, and remain in legal status for the duration of your time at Macalester. The various aspects of maintaining status are defined in the following sections.

### IMMIGRATION STATUS

**U.S. Laws and Regulations:** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulates the activities of non-immigrants in the U.S., including international students. One of the duties of the ISP Director, Associate Director(s) and ISP SEVIS Coordinator at Macalester is to advise international students on non-immigrant visas, e.g, F, J, G, H, L, on how to remain in compliance with immigration rules and regulations.

**F-1 Student:** The most common student immigration status, the F-1, is obtained on the basis of a Form I-20 issued by the college upon admission. An F-1 student is admitted to the U.S. for the purpose of attending a specific school and must take a full course load every semester (at least 12 credits/semester).

**J-1 Exchange Visitor:** The J-1 Exchange Visitor classification is used by professors, researchers, students, trainees, and others who come to the United States for educational or training purposes under the sponsorship and supervision of a designated agency. J-1 visa holders must carry out the program described on the form DS-2019 issued by the sponsor to obtain the visa and carry a full course load every semester (at least 12 credits/semester).

**Immigrant/Permanent Resident:** Some students hold an immigrant status, technically referred to as a permanent resident. This status, indicated by the ownership of a “green card,” allows the person to remain in the country permanently and is the first step toward acquiring citizenship.

## STUDY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

F-1 and J-1 students must be registered full-time (**a minimum of 12 credits**) and attend classes for every semester that they are in the U.S. An exception can be made during a student's final semester before graduation; students only need to take the number of credits required in order to graduate. J-1 visa holders must comply with the requirements set by their sponsoring agency. Permanent residents have no special course load requirements other than those imposed by the College.

## REMOVAL (AKA DEPORTATION)

Removal is the expulsion of aliens who have been granted entry into the U.S. Below are examples of grounds for removal. Although stated in very general terms, they will give you an idea of how strict immigration rules are in the U.S.

- Failure to comply with the conditions of your visa/status (e.g., unauthorized paid or unpaid employment, failure to attend classes and to maintain full-time student status).
- Unauthorized employment, which includes baby/pet sitting and tutoring students for compensation outside of the Macalester tutoring services.
- Conviction of crime after entry, e.g., crimes of violence, moral turpitude, narcotics-related crimes (including marijuana/cannabis). Although there are provisions for some criminal convictions, there is no exception made for a narcotics or marijuana/cannabis offence—mere possession of a substance can lead to deportation. Under federal law, **marijuana/cannabis is illegal for non-immigrant visa holders even in states that legalize it.**
- Unlawful entry.
- Prostitution, or connection to this practice.
- False documents.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and international students are welcome to research this topic further and consult with ISP about any questions.

## PASSPORT

Your passport is the basic international document that identifies you as a citizen of your country. The spelling of your name given in your passport should be used for all records while you are in the United States. The name spelling on your visa will be used on your I-20 or DS-2019 record. If you need to apply for a new passport while attending Macalester, contact your nearest consulate or embassy for instructions and procedures. The Registrar's Office or ISP can provide you with a letter of recommendation stating that you are a registered student if such a document is required by your government. Always keep a copy of your passport in a safe place, and use the copy to provide documentation if you send it in for renewal. A passport should always be valid for at least 6 months beyond your program end date on your I-20, DS-2019, or similar documents.

## Passport Dos and Don'ts:

| DO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | DO NOT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sign your passport. It is not valid unless it has been signed by the bearer.</li><li>- Fill in the information required on the inside front cover of the passport. In case of an accident or other circumstances, it may be necessary to contact a designated agent or the next of kin.</li><li>- Register your passport if you mail it while abroad.</li><li>- Check the expiration date of your passport before you travel. Obtain a new one if needed.</li><li>- Check the visa requirements of all countries you plan to visit or transit (travel) through and obtain necessary visas from the appropriate foreign consular representatives. Keep a copy of your biographical, visa and other information pages.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pack your passport in your checked-in luggage. When traveling, keep it readily available, but safe.</li><li>- Lend your passport for use by a friend or stranger. Remember that it is an official government document for use only by the person to whom it is issued.</li><li>- Use your passport as collateral.</li><li>- Alter, insert, or overwrite any information or entry in the passport. If a change is necessary, it must be made officially by authorized government agents.</li><li>- Tear or substitute pages in your passport.</li></ul> |

## VISA

A U.S. visa is a passport page-sized sticker in your passport. It is used for entry into the U.S. and can only be obtained from a U.S. embassy or consulate OUTSIDE the U.S. The visa indicates what status you have upon entry to the U.S., as well as the date of issuance and expiration (the date by which you can use that visa for entry). After you enter the U.S., the visa is not important unless you leave and wish to re-enter. If you plan to travel outside the U.S., and your F, J, or other visa has expired, you should contact the ISP staff with any questions about applying for your new visa; plus make sure they sign your I-20. J-1 students see your exchange sponsoring agency. Never write on or tamper with your visa sticker.

## AUTOMATED FORM I-94 IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

When you enter the U.S., an immigration inspector (CBP Officer) determines how long you may stay in the U.S. A paperless electronic Form I-94 is created by the CBP Officer when you are admitted by air or sea travel. Every time you re-enter the U.S., always check your I-94 status and print out a paper copy later at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/>. If you can't find your I-94, contact ISP immediately. If you enter the U.S. by land from Canada, Mexico, etc, you may be issued a paper I-94 (DO NOT LOSE IT). Generally for F or J visa holders, your I-94 will show your Class of Admissions: F1 (or J1), and Admit Until Date: D/S (which stands for Duration of Status, that is until you complete your program or graduate). The I-94 is a record of your limited travel history to and from the U.S.

## TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES DURING ACADEMIC VACATIONS

Do not leave the United States without the proper I-20 documentation necessary for reentry. J-1 visa holders should contact their sponsors to obtain travel authorization on their DS-2019. If you leave for longer than five months and do not continue your enrollment at Macalester (with a leave of absence), you must have a new I-20 issued in order to re-enter. You must have your I-20 signed every year by ISP professional staff. They are able to sign I-20s electronically and for it to be considered valid, you need to physically sign it in pen. Keep copies of all your old I-20s (or DS-2019); you will need them in the future. Check with International Student Programs for study abroad exceptions to some of these rules.

## Employment

International students with F-1 status may not accept off-campus unpaid or paid employment unless they receive authorization from immigration. International students must be in valid student status for at least one academic year before being eligible for authorization to work off-campus. This is true of incoming first years as well as students returning from a leave of absence. Working without authorization is one of the most serious violations of visa status and can result in you having to return home to obtain a new visa. It can also result in immediate deportation. Please talk to an ISP staff member if you have any questions about employment authorization.

## ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

On-campus student employment is considered a form of financial aid. Students authorized to work on campus by the financial aid office may do so without any special immigration work authorization, but are governed by the following immigration rules:

- Employment is performed on the school's premises or is considered student employment by the Financial Aid Office.
- Employment must not exceed **20 hours per week** when school is in session.
- Employment may be full-time during break periods if the student is eligible and intends to enrol in classes the next term.
  - Summer Break is the only time when, for students with work-study as part of financial aid, compensation does not come from the work-study award set in your financial aid package.

## FINDING AND APPLYING FOR A JOB

Work-study eligible first-year students are given access to online job postings and may begin applying for positions in mid-May. [FAQs about student employment](#). There are many students seeking employment on campus and you may not receive your first choice of position, so you should apply for more than one position (five is recommended.) The majority of new student employees will work in departments employing the largest number of students, including Facilities Services, Food Service, Athletics, and the Library. Once you have been selected for a position, you are not able to switch to another position until the Spring semester. It is for the best to look for job openings and prepare your resume before departure. Make sure that you do not miss the deadline to apply for on-campus jobs.

## NON-AID (NO NEED) STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The Student Employment Program is designed for students who need employment to assist in financing college costs. Students with a student employment (work) award are given priority for positions. Student Employment may open positions for students without a work award (or financial aid) in the course of the year, depending on circumstances. Non-degree exchange students are not eligible for on-campus employment.

## CHANGING JOBS

On occasion, a student employee and their supervisor mutually agree to terminate the employment relationship. This may be referred to as a no-fault release. These releases are also referred to as full releases. The most common reasons are scheduling conflicts or obtaining off-campus employment. These should be readily apparent before or early in the semester and releases should be handled quickly so those positions can become available for students without job assignments. Because student employment positions are for the entire academic year, these releases are not expected to occur after the first two weeks of the semester. The no-fault policy is as follows:

- Releases must be mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor and the release form must be signed by both parties.
- Students who wish to formally apply for another posted work-study job must inform their supervisor of their intent to apply.
- It must be understood that the supervisor is not required to release a student, and in many cases is not able to release the student.
- A supervisor may require a student to find a replacement prior to signing a release. Signed release forms are to be forwarded to the Student Employment Office.

A partial release may be approved under certain circumstances. A partial release would allow a student to work in two departments simultaneously. A clear division of student work-study financial aid between the positions will be required. Both partial and full releases require the signature of both supervisors and the student on the release form.

## PAY RATE

Macalester's pay rate is **\$16.97/hour** (as of 2026). Students are paid bi-weekly according to the [Bi-Weekly Payroll Schedule](#). First-year students generally work 9-10 hours per week to reach their maximum student employment award.

## STUDENT EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to providing students with financial assistance and skill development, Student Employment helps students learn basic responsibilities associated with employment. This important part of career development can be enhanced by any job, on- or off-campus. Student employees will assume normal employee responsibilities as follows:

- Participate in a job search.
- Report promptly to your work site and supervisor.
- Become familiar with job duties, quality, and quantity of work expected.
- Adhere to the mutually agreed upon work schedule and be on time.
- Submit your timesheet to your supervisor bi-weekly (for most positions).
- Keep your supervisor informed of any schedule deviation.
- Report all on-the-job injuries or illnesses promptly to your supervisor.
- Maintain good work performance.
- Complete the appointment period, not to exceed the total award nor work beyond the appointment period.
- Participate in the employee performance evaluations.

## SUMMER AND WINTER BREAK EMPLOYMENT

The Summer Employment Program is administered by the Student Employment Office for the months of June, July, and August. Employment may be full-time or part-time. Not every office hires winter or summer workers, but you can find open positions on the student employment website or by talking to your supervisor. **Employment during summer and winter break is NOT part of your work-study award.**

## Off-Campus Employment

### GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for off-campus employment, you must currently be on an F-1 visa and have studied at least nine months in the United States at a higher education institution on a valid non-immigrant visa (e.g., F, J, H, E, L, M). Off-campus unpaid or paid employment may be referred to as an internship, research, fellowship, etc., but it is all considered employment and **must relate to your major(s)**—not minor(s) or concentration(s). Always consult with ISP to make sure you are eligible and have employment authorization.

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** CPT is the employment authorization used for a paid or unpaid internship, fellowship, research position, etc., in which you receive academic credit related to your major(s) - not minor(s) or concentration(s).

**Limits:** You must complete one academic year before you are eligible for CPT. Authorization is per academic term. It allows you to work 20 hours or fewer while school is in session and full-time (more than 20 hours) during breaks (i.e., between semesters, winter break, spring break, and summer break). One year or more of full-time CPT, in total, cancels Optional Practical Training (OPT).

**Optional Practical Training (OPT):** Students generally apply 90 days before graduation to begin OPT afterwards. This authorization allows you to work up to 12 months full-time in your major; however, if you file for H-1B (temporary worker) status, cap-gap extensions may be available. Generally, OPT must be completed within 14 months of your graduation. You cannot work on campus after you graduate unless you have OPT work authorization.

**STEM Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT):** STEM OPT extensions for 24 months are available, if qualified, in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields of study. The qualifying STEM OPT majors at Macalester are **Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Data Science, Economics, Environmental Studies, Geography, Geology, Mathematics, Media Cultural Studies, Neuroscience, Physics, Psychology, Statistics**, and rare Individually Designed Majors. Also, during the STEM OPT extension period, you and your prospective employer can file for H-1B working status during the annual April 1st lottery.

The time needed to complete the authorization process for optional practical training is approximately 90-150 days, so plan in advance! Information explaining the application process is available on the [International Student Programs](#) website.

In March 2018 the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) introduced a portal where students approved for OPT/STEM OPT can update the required data **within 10 days** of any changes: U.S. home and mailing address, U.S. telephone number, foreign telephone number, employer name and address, and supervisor name and contact information.

## OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT EMPLOYMENT (through Macalester CEC)

Through the off-campus work program, students with financial aid work awards are able to earn their awards through community service work experience. Federal guidelines restrict placements to non-profit, non-partisan, and non-religious organizations. The program's policies are as follows:

- Only students with work awards may participate.
- Only sophomores, juniors and seniors are eligible.
- Students should plan on earning their entire annual award at an off-campus site.
- The program can currently accommodate approximately 35 students per year.
- There are no funds for summer participation.
- Because funding is limited, students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. For more information and application materials, go to <https://www.macalester.edu/community-engagement/> or contact the Civic Engagement Center at [cec@macalester.edu](mailto:cec@macalester.edu).

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) ⓘ

In order to be employed at Macalester or anywhere in the U.S., students must have a valid U.S. government-issued Social Security Number and the proper employment authorization. A Social Security card is necessary in order to be employed in the U.S., but it is only valid for employment if you (as an F-1 student) have employment authorization granted by the Immigration Service or ISP (see previous sections). Students who have been granted permission to work are not required to pay Social Security or Medicare taxes during the first 5 years they are in the U.S. on F-1 status as they are considered a Non-Resident Alien (NRA) for tax purposes.

The Social Security Number application process will take place at Macalester during the Pre-Orientation for International Students. If you find work later after PO4IS, contact ISP for help with applying for your SSN. Remember to keep your Social Security card safe once you get it. The number is assigned to you for life and if you lose the card you can get a replacement. It is not an ID, so keep it somewhere safe and share it wisely.

## TAXES

Most international students on F-1 visas who work on campus are required to pay taxes to the state (usually Minnesota) and to the U.S. (federal) government. Taxes will be withheld from your Macalester paychecks. If you are a Non-Resident Alien (NRA) for tax purposes, Social Security and Medicare taxes should not be withheld from your pay usually during the first 5 years in the U.S. In February, the payroll office will send you your W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) and/or 1042-S (given to students with taxable financial aid or to those students who work on campus and whose country has a tax treaty with the U.S.). You may also access W-2 on your 1600 Grand account and 1042-S on GLACIER Tax Prep (GTP) software.

All students are required to file income tax forms by April 15 and some students, as a result, will receive a tax refund from the U.S. or state government for the taxes they have overpaid. Other students may have to pay taxes if they made more money than expected and did not pay enough taxes during the previous year. It is a good reminder to set aside some part of your paycheck in case you owe additional taxes after completing your tax return. All international students, whether or not they receive financial aid or work in the U.S., must file a tax return for every year they are in the U.S. Usually the deadline is April 15. When you receive your tax forms (W-2, 1042-S, 1099's, etc) DO NOT THROW THEM AWAY, they are necessary for filing your tax return. It is important to keep tax documents for FIVE years after filing taxes.

Macalester College issues you a password so you can access an online tax service to help you file federal taxes. Additionally, ISP holds tax filing sessions during office hours in March and April to help you complete your state and other tax returns. At tax sessions, you will be required to bring your federal tax form (printed out from the online software), W-2 and 1042-S forms (and any other pertinent forms you may have received in the mail), your passport and U.S. visa, your I-20, and your Social Security Number. Depending on the kind of income and software being used, filing a federal and state return can take at least several hours. Not filing taxes is not an option and failure to file may affect future visa status.

## Driving/ID Cards

### DRIVER'S LICENSE / IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT (ID)

As an international student, you have at least two forms of picture identification - your passport and your Macalester student ID card. To establish their lawful presence in the U.S. all international students should carry their passport, signed I-20, and I-94 with them at all times, especially when they leave campus.

If eligible, we recommend that you also get a Minnesota (MN) REAL ID compliant identity document or a driver's license. These state government-issued documents are the standard forms of identification in the U.S. They are usually required when making financial transactions, especially when writing checks, and at some other times, such as when an age check is necessary (e.g., purchase of cigarettes and alcohol, restricted movies at the cinema). Unfortunately, some places will not accept your passport as a valid form of identification, especially when checking to see how old you are.

Be aware that if you are applying for a visa to another country while in the U.S. and you have to leave your passport at that embassy, you will not have a valid ID to board a domestic flight to fly back to the Twin Cities. A REAL ID-compliant document is necessary to travel in these cases; neither I-20 nor your country's national ID will serve as proper documentation.

Every Minnesota resident who operates any motor vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle) must have a driver's license. The operation of an automobile without a valid operator's license is illegal and is punishable with a fine and possible jail sentence. It is also illegal to permit another person without a valid license to drive an automobile.

Obtaining a Minnesota driver's license is fairly simple. First pass a written exam that covers traffic and safety rules, laws, rules of the road, allowable speed limits, road signs and symbols. You can take the written exam at the ISP office; all you have to do is email [isp@macalester.edu](mailto:isp@macalester.edu) to let us know that you would like to take it. Once you have successfully passed this test, you will be given a permit, which allows you to practice driving with a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older. Three months after obtaining your permit if you are 19 or older, and six months if you are 18 and under, you may take the driving portion of the exam during which you will be tested on your driving skills and knowledge of traffic laws. Obtaining a driver's license will cost you around \$50 while a driver's permit costs around \$30 (subject to change), not including any driving school courses.

If you possess an International Driving Permit (IDP) we would strongly recommend you apply for a Minnesota driver's license. The IDP, often (incorrectly) referred to as an International Driving License, is a document that, along with your valid home driver's license, allows you to legally drive a motor vehicle while not in your home country. The IDP does not replace a U.S.-issued driver's license but acts as a translation of a valid driver's license from one's home country. Each state has its own regulations about holding an IDP as a short-term visitor versus a non-citizen resident, and it is best practice in MN to obtain a state driver's license once you have resided in the state for more than 60 days.

## CAR INSURANCE AND ACCIDENTS

The Minnesota No-Fault Automobile Insurance Act requires that every motor vehicle which is operated in Minnesota be covered by proper no-fault and liability insurance coverage. Under this law, insurance companies must offer insurance coverage which provides for the payment of basic economic loss benefits resulting from injury or death regardless of the fault of the insured. A driver of a motor vehicle must carry evidence of insurance in their immediate possession. The operator must present the evidence to a law enforcement officer upon request.

A driver involved in an accident should seek advice at once. At the time of the accident, someone should telephone for police assistance. The police will arrange for tow trucks and ambulances if they are needed. Be sure to write down the name, address, phone number, car license plate number, and automobile insurance company of any other persons/cars involved in the accident. At the very least, the police will require that you fill out a written report within five days following the accident. Do not leave the scene of an accident until told to do so by the police. Notify your insurance company immediately.

## When Things Go WRONG

Got really sick and need to go to the hospital? Got caught by the police doing something inadvisable? Got into trouble at Macalester? Got charged \$2,000 for income taxes when you should have gotten your money back? It could happen to you. It is possible for things to go wrong for international students, and the consequences can be different from those faced by domestic students. If something goes wrong, talk to ISP who will be able to advise you on the best plan of action. Professional staff have a lot of experience in supporting students through a range of situations.

## Controlled Substances: Legal Consequences

As of July 1, 2022, the state of Minnesota began allowing the sale of cannabis (THC) infused edibles and beverages. As of May 30, 2023, the state of Minnesota legalized the use of recreational marijuana. ISP wants to make sure you understand that federal law classifies cannabis as a “Schedule I (one)” controlled substance whose manufacture (which includes production, such as planting, cultivation, growing, or harvesting), distribution, dispensing, or possession may **lead to immigration consequences for international students in F, J, and other non-immigrant visa status**. You could purchase THC edibles in a store, but **it is federally illegal for an international student** to do so. Here is an example of how it has affected students who thought it was legal; the text below is excerpted from the form used by USCIS for green card (permanent resident) interviews in Seattle.

Some states legalize limited use of marijuana. However, the Federal law still renders marijuana offenses illegal. I am now going to give you a copy of a federal statute: Title 21 of the United States Code, Section 844. I will now read the pertinent section of the statute regarding the penalty for simple possession of a drug or controlled substance. [officer reads the statute as follows:]

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly or intentionally to possess a controlled substance unless such substance was obtained directly or pursuant to a valid prescription or order, from a practitioner, while acting in the course of his professional practice.

Any person who violates this subsection may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of one more than 1 year, and shall be fined a minimum of \$1,000, or both. The imposition or execution of a minimum sentence required to be imposed under this subsection shall not be suspended or deferred. Further, upon conviction, a person who violates this subsection shall be fined the reasonable costs of the investigation and prosecution of the offence.

Individuals who answered "yes" that they have tried it and purchased it legally were denied green cards (permanent residency). We have also heard stories about how U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) checks social media accounts. So, if there were a photo or post related to cannabis it could be a serious problem. Students could also run into issues being underage or driving after ingesting THC.

If an international student is arrested with an offence related to cannabis, it is very common for the charge to be removed from the city, county, or state records, but **it is on their immigration record for life**. This means that it would be very difficult to get a future visa or to be admitted by CBP at the port of entry. Typically in these instances, you are allowed to stay in the U.S. to complete your status, but your visa would be revoked and you would not be able to return. ISP has worked with students in these circumstances. You don't want to be in this situation. If you ever were arrested for a charge related to cannabis, we recommend you speak with ISP. We would recommend that you retain what's known as a “crimmigration” attorney – one who works with both criminal and immigration cases, because otherwise, you need two attorneys who are less experienced in the comprehensive nuances of working with these offences.

Additionally, please be aware that cannabis, as it is still federally illegal, is not allowed on any college campus that accepts federal funding. (As we know, that's pretty much every college campus). So, it will continue to be against College policy and could put the College's federal funding at stake and/or subject Macalester to fines under the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act (DFSCA).

Federal laws take precedence over state laws.

The U.S. Government issues your visa, not Minnesota.



International students are required to follow  
**ALL federal (U.S. Government) laws.**

# ACADEMICS

A lot of information concerning academic life can be found in the Macalester College Student Handbook, especially in more specific and formal situations, such as academic policies. For further details on any topic, please consult the online [Student Handbook](#)

## LIBERAL ARTS

A liberal arts education is synonymous with a well-rounded education. It is regarded as beneficial for the overall intellectual and interpersonal development of students, and for attaining the variety of skills necessary to live and work in an ever-changing global society. At Macalester, students must take a certain number of credit hours in the various distribution areas: social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, humanities and fine arts, internationalism, and U.S. multiculturalism in order to gain a liberal arts education. The breadth and depth afforded a liberal arts education, unlike educational systems where one only studies one's major, allows students to explore a wide variety of fields in addition to their own major.

## ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Academic advisors are faculty members (or professors) who are ready to help you plan your academic life and make you think about personal and career goals so that you plan a program of study which enables you to achieve those goals. The instructor (or professor) of your first-year course is typically assigned to be your advisor. Your advisor is knowledgeable about general education requirements and grading systems. You should develop a good working relationship with your advisor to set academic goals, discuss your academic progress/grades, plan a major, select internships, discuss study away options, etc. All discussions and records are confidential. You may change your advisor after the first semester as you see fit; for instance, if you feel that someone else is more aligned with your academic interests. However, it is recommended to discuss this with your current advisor and the one you plan to take on.

## COLLEGE CATALOG

The College Catalog is an important guide to your education at Macalester. It contains a thorough description of graduation and curriculum requirements, including majors, minors, concentrations, cores, and honors in the various disciplines. It also gives a description of each course offered by all the departments, along with the semester that they are offered. College Catalogs are available at the [Registrar's Office](#), or you can view the [digital version here](#).

## STUDENT COURSE LOAD

Students are required to complete 128 credits in order to graduate. The majority of Macalester courses are 4-credit, so in order to graduate in four years, students usually enroll in four 4-credit courses during each of the fall and spring semesters, a total of 16 credits per semester. Up to 18 credits may be taken at no additional charge. Students may register for 19 or 20 credits, but there is an additional tuition charge per credit. No student may register for more than 20 credits. International students are required to take at least 12 credits per semester in order to fulfill the requirements for the F-1 (with the exception of the final semester before graduation) and J-1 student visa status. Always speak with ISP before dropping below 12 credits.

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Macalester does not offer ESL (English as a Second Language) courses; however, if you feel you could benefit from additional language work, or if a professor or advisor recommends it, there are courses available at the other Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities (ACTC) schools. Consult the ACTC site for more information. Another good resource is the Academic Success Center (located in the Library), where tutors can help you with a range of disciplines and skills, and provide support in various ways, from navigating your first-year, first-semester experience, to mastering the writing traditions of your chosen major(s), to completing your honors theses and other upper-level projects.

## GRADING

Macalester's grading system uses the letter grades A, B, C, D, NC and a notation of plus or minus (e.g., A-, B+). An A is the best grade; B is very good; C is average; D is the lowest passing grade, except for courses in a student's major field of study, where students must earn a C- or better to pass. NC means no credit and indicates failure for the course. Students are encouraged to read carefully the information on grading options in the current College Catalog.

Note particularly the limitations of S/D/NC grades, also known as the pass/fail option. The S/D/NC option was established to allow students to take a course without the pressure of earning a regular letter grade. When students select a grading option of S/D/NC, they forego the possibility of receiving an A, B, or other grade. They are instead assigned the grade S for having satisfactorily completed the course, grade SD for having completed the course with an overall grade of D, and grade N for no credit and therefore, failure of the course.

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated by the Registrar's Office and assigned a point value:

| Grade  | A   | A-  | B+  | B   | B-  | C+  | C   | C-  | D+  | D   | D-  | NC  |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Points | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.0 |

The GPA is calculated by dividing the total grade points by the number of courses attempted on the regular grading system. Courses taken on the S/D/NC grading option (pass/ fail), or courses with a grade of W (withdrawal), will not figure in the GPA. Transferred courses and grades are not included in the GPA. Students need a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in order to graduate.

## HOW CLASSES ARE CONDUCTED

Macalester's classes are usually small and informal (the average class size is 17 students). Professors and students dress casually, and the general atmosphere in the class is relaxed. In small classes, professors may expect questions and discussion from everyone in the class. Sometimes, class participation and attendance count toward one's final grade. Different types of Macalester classes include:

**Lectures:** The most common method of instruction is the classroom lecture. Lectures are supplemented by classroom discussion (especially in small classes), reading assignments in textbooks or library books, and periodic written assignments. It is important that you contribute to the discussion in the classroom as this is viewed as a healthy sign of interest, attention, and independent thinking. In many classes, your grade will be determined in part by your contribution to class discussion.

**Office Hours:** When the class is too large to permit questions and discussion, or if for some reason you do not have the opportunity to raise questions, you may see your instructors privately during their office hours or make an appointment for another convenient hour to discuss any questions you may have. Instructors usually announce their office hours at the first meeting of the class and often will have them written on the class syllabus. It is highly suggested that students make use of this opportunity.

**Laboratories** (usually referred to as **labs**): Many courses require work in a laboratory, where theory learned in the classroom is applied to practical problems.

**Preceptors/Tutors:** Most classes are assigned with preceptors, who usually have taken the course before and are familiar with the learning content. Preceptors assist the instructor by preparing class materials or grading homework. They also hold office hours to answer students' questions regarding class content, homework, and exam preparation. In the language departments, tutors help students enhance their language skills by practicing conversations, proofreading essays, and more. These resources are highly accessible and students are encouraged to make the most out of it.

## TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Term Research Papers:** In many courses, you will be required to write a comprehensive paper based on the research you have done throughout the semester. Your teacher will usually assign such a paper in the early part of the course. You are expected to work on it during the term and submit it near the end. The grade you will receive on the paper may carry significant weight in determining your grade for the course. In doing research for term papers, you are likely to use library resources very often. Macalester Library has trained employees who are happy to answer your questions about its organization, the location of books, reference materials, periodicals, online resources, and so on. The Academic Success Center is another good resource that can also help you with developing ideas, structures, and citation formats (MLA, APA, etc.)

**Projects:** Projects are often done individually or in groups. They can be assigned in a variety of forms, depending on the class you take. For instance, it can be a policy proposal, a field research work, an art design, a writing portfolio, or a podcast. The purpose of assigning projects is often to let students apply what they have learned from the class to something creative or practical, to enhance students' learning experiences and understanding of the subjects.

**Class Presentations:** In many classrooms at Mac, class presentation is a common assignment where you get to explain and display your research and projects to your professors and your classmates. Oftentimes, you are required to prepare for the presentation, for example, by making a slideshow or writing a script. Usually, your class presentations will be graded toward a part of your research and projects. In some cases, class presentations are conducted in groups.

**Examinations:** Many classes have exams in the middle and at the end of a semester. Additional tests or quizzes may be given with different levels of frequency. All exams are designed to ensure that students are doing the work assigned and to measure how much they are learning.

Note that these are generalizations, as every professor and class is different.

## STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Academic honesty is expected of Macalester students. Academic standards and practices are influenced by culture, and what is considered appropriate academic behavior in your home country might be different from what is appropriate in the U.S. Thus, it is important to understand U.S. standards and practices. Not meeting the standards can result in academic dishonesty charges and possible expulsion.

The U.S. definition of academic honesty is based on the cultural values of individualism, fairness, the idea that individuals must think and work independently, and a strong value on original thinking, creativity, and invention. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, cheating on assignments and examinations, plagiarizing, representing as your own work any part of work done by another, or unauthorized use of library or computer materials.

It is common in many countries for students to study and work together to prepare for exams. This is okay in the United States as well; however, once in the classroom, students are on their own. Students cannot copy or discuss answers with each other during an exam unless told otherwise. It is important in the U.S. education system that all students be evaluated individually on their own work.

Cheating is copying someone else's work or taking prohibited information or tools to an exam. Plagiarism is copying someone else's work and not noting them as your source. In the United States, this will be perceived as an attempt by you to utilize the ideas or words of another person as your own. Plagiarism is one of the most serious violations of academic conduct standards in the U.S. and it can ruin your academic career. Of course, when you are writing a paper, you research many sources and then present or summarize other people's ideas. But you must name and identify your sources. This also applies to the work of other students including your own previous work. Discussing ideas for a paper with friends is okay but it is not acceptable to hand in papers that are the same as your friends' or to let someone else write your paper for you, even if the ideas are yours. (Standards of Academic Conduct was taken from The University of Minnesota International Student Handbook, 1994).

## ACADEMIC PROBATION

At the end of every semester, the Director of Academic Programs and the Academic Standing Committee review the grades received by each student and the number of courses passed. If students have taken fewer than the number of courses required, or if their grades include D's and No Credits, they will be placed on probation for one semester and expected to improve their academic records according to the written terms set forth by the Committee. See the Macalester College Student Handbook for more details.

If students do not succeed in improving their academic record after the semester, they may be placed on a required one-semester leave of absence. This situation is particularly serious for international students who cannot travel outside the U.S. or work in the U.S. unless they are in good academic standing. Therefore, international students should maintain a 2.0 GPA at all times to avoid being placed on academic probation and to comply with visa regulations. If a student is not maintaining a satisfactory GPA, a visit to International Student Programs (Luyen, Britt, Molly, or Laurie) for suggestions and advice would be helpful.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A break from your studies is called a Leave of Absence (LOA) and not a “gap year.” The Macalester Student Handbook provides comprehensive information regarding the procedures for taking a leave of absence from your studies at the College. If an international student chooses to take a leave of absence, special regulations apply. First, an international student on an F-1 or J-1 student visa must be taking a full load of courses each semester (at least 12 credits) during their studies in the U.S. If you take a leave of absence and therefore do not take a full course load during a semester, you must either leave the U.S., change visa status (to something other than a student status) or enroll at another institution full-time on your I-20 or DS-2019. In either case, additional considerations must be made. If you leave the U.S. for longer than five months, a new I-20 must be issued for your re-entry. In the event that you do not have a valid visa when you leave the country, there is no guarantee that the U.S. embassy will issue another student visa for re-entry, even with a new I-20. If you choose to stay in the U.S. and change your visa status, be aware that an adjustment to student status again at the time you wish to resume your studies is not guaranteed, and the process can take months. A leave of absence will also affect your ability to work off-campus or do an internship, research, etc, through CPT employment authorization. If you take a leave of absence during your final year at Macalester, that may affect your OPT employment authorization.

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

To succeed in the U.S. academic system, you will need to learn how it is organized and how it works. You should also try to understand some of the underlying fundamental values of the education system. Below are some suggestions to keep in mind as you prepare to register and begin your studies. You will learn more about the informal rules for academic success as you take courses and talk with advanced students in your field of study. The more you discuss such topics with experienced students, the better and sooner you will understand how your academic department functions.

## EXAMINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Keep in mind that you will need a period of adjustment to a new academic system before you are able to prove the best of your abilities. Sometimes, international students earn lower grades than their U.S. counterparts during their first term. Then, as the newcomers' English and knowledge of the system improve, so do their grades. Do not be discouraged if, despite your best efforts, your first term's work is not outstanding.

## **SELECT YOUR COURSES WISELY**

Especially during your first term, do not take more than the usual load of courses (generally four classes). Make sure you have a combination of more demanding and less demanding courses, rather than only difficult ones requiring unusually heavy amounts of work. When arranging your course schedule, consult not only your academic advisor but also experienced students familiar with available courses and professors. You may be tempted to take more courses than you need to earn your degree sooner. The usual result of taking too many courses is discouragement and poor academic performance.

## **WORK HARD FROM THE START**

It is not possible in the U.S. system of higher education to wait until halfway through the term to begin studying. If you do not begin on the first day of classes, you are likely to experience increasing difficulty and fall behind. You are required to attend classes.

## **TALK WITH YOUR PROFESSORS**

Professors expect students to ask questions in class or immediately after it. They expect students to consult them in their offices when there are problems. If you are not doing well and you do not see the professor about the situation, they may assume that you are not really interested in the class. In other words, most professors will evaluate the attitude of a student as negative or at best indifferent if the student never raises questions either in or out of class. If you feel unsure of what is expected of you in a class or are troubled by some aspect of the work, ask the professor and some of your fellow students about it. If at first you don't feel comfortable addressing the professor, many classes have preceptors who are juniors or seniors who can help you with questions or problems.

## **OPEN YOUR MIND TO THE VALUES OF THE SYSTEM**

From your experience in other academic systems, you have developed certain assumptions about the purposes and methods of education and about the way your field of interest should be studied.

For example, you may assume that it is important to be able to memorize large quantities of information, or that the way to study your field is to concentrate on a very limited aspect of it in great depth. At Macalester, on the other hand, you may find that memorizing material is considered less important than synthesizing ideas from a variety of sources and that a field of study can be approached by contemplating the works of a variety of scholars from different disciplines. It is important for you to realize that differences of this kind exist between the educational systems of the U.S. and other countries, and that in order for you to be academically successful, you will have to adjust your thinking. Whether or not you personally accept the values of the system, you will have to work in accordance with them to succeed in it.

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

As an international student at Macalester, you are an important part of this institution's efforts to create cross-cultural understanding and community. Macalester's internationalism is defined by this challenge: to create an ambience that requires our students and faculty to bring together the eternal quest for self-knowledge, constitutive of liberal education and the growing trans-nationalization of human life. Internationalism at Macalester aspires to encourage students to be confident in who they are, cognizant of the preciousness of creative intelligence, skillful in analyzing and understanding complex problems and willing to assume leadership in a multi-civilization yet transnationalizing world. The following programs and activities are among the key elements of Macalester's internationalism:

- **International Student Program** serves the educational and personal development needs of its diverse international student body.
- The **Kofi Annan Institute for Global Citizenship** provides educational programming, activities, and funding in order to advance scholarship, personal and community development on a local, national, and international level, in an ethical manner.
- A significant percentage of the student body are international students and from as broad a representation of cultures and regions as possible.
- An academically rigorous interdisciplinary International Studies major.
- Area studies, including American Studies, Asian Studies, French and Francophone Studies, German Studies, Latin American Studies, and Russian Studies.
- Majors in five foreign languages and in linguistics, as well as language houses for students of French, German, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish.
- The Macalester **International Roundtable** is held every October on campus. A community-wide intellectual forum, the Roundtable explores crucial global issues with students and prominent international scholars.
- Ongoing international student orientation through workshops focused on international and cross-cultural topics.
- Special courses offered by visiting international faculty under the auspices of the Macalester Visiting International Faculty Program, the Hubert H. Humphrey Professorship, and the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program.
- The **Center for Study Away**  offers opportunities to study abroad and within the U.S. Study abroad is allowed for all international students and all financial aid (except work-study) will be applied.

# POINTS OF FURTHER CONTACT

Ametrica → [ISP](#)✉  
Counseling care coordination → [Jon Vaughan-Fier](#)✉  
Course registration (Exchange) → [Katie Kelly](#)✉  
Course registration (First-year) → [Academic Programs and Advising](#)✉  
Credit transfer → [Registrar](#)✉  
Dining, food, break housing → [Residential Life](#)✉  
Disability accommodations → [Disability Resources](#)✉

Exchange students → [Britt Nelson](#)✉  
General questions (pre-arrival) → [Admissions](#)✉  
Housing, roommates → [Residential Life](#)✉  
Health insurance → [Nicola Michel-Tsai](#)✉  
Immigration (I-20, visa, etc) → [ISP](#)✉  
Immunizations, tests → [Health & Wellness Center](#)✉  
Pre-orientation (PO4IS) → [ISP](#)✉  
SEVIS transfer → [Molly Rochon](#)✉  
Technology & Email → [ITS](#)✉