



..... *University of Missouri*

EXCHANGE STUDENT orientation handbook



International Center
University of Missouri

N52 Memorial Union
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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER

The MU International Center is located in N52 Memorial Union on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, Mo. The center houses study abroad staff and international student and scholars services staff. As a center, we work together to coordinate, support and promote the internationalization of MU, which includes providing support services to international students coming to MU.

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

N52 Memorial Union
Columbia, MO 65211
phone: +1 573-882-6007
international.missouri.edu

EXCHANGE STUDENT ADVISER

AnDrea Jackson
phone: +1 573-882-6007
email: exchanges@missouri.edu

For general questions about your courses, campus resources or individual concerns, make an appointment with the exchange adviser or come to walk-in advising 1:30–4:30 p.m. Wednesdays when classes are in session.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

For questions about visa issues, immigration or travel, you should speak with an international student adviser. Please make an appointment or come to walk-in advising (international.missouri.edu/advising).

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Refer to the [International Student Welcome Guide](#) and make sure to complete all tasks on this checklist:

- Do not pay the MU enrollment fee (not required for non-degree seeking students)
- Make travel arrangements so you arrive in Columbia by the mandatory arrival day
- Complete the arrival information form
- Complete the housing request form
- Obtain any needed immunizations and send copies of your records to exchanges@missouri.edu and SCHimmunizations@health.missouri.edu
- Log in to your MU email account (see [page 8](#)) to communicate with your adviser and receive information and updates about your stay

VISA APPLICATION

Your DS-2019 has been mailed to you — it is only one page and is to be used when applying for an exchange visitor (J-1) visa to enter the United States. Read the enclosed information concerning your application carefully, as well as all other immigration information you receive from MU. Follow all instructions carefully and bring all documents with you. Refer to the [International Student Welcome Guide](#) for information about the visa application process.

PRE-DEPARTURE HEALTH TIPS

You should undergo physical, dental and eye exams to ensure you are in good health. Talk to your health care professional about any ongoing medical condition and what special accommodation you might require. Make sure all of your immunizations are up to date; talk to your health care professional about getting Hepatitis A and B, and any other necessary immunizations.

ARRIVAL IN COLUMBIA

You should plan to arrive on the mandatory arrival date, scheduled for the Sunday before International Student Welcome. If you plan to live off campus, you may want to arrive earlier than that and stay in a hotel to have extra time to search for an apartment.

ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE

The International Center provides limited arrival assistance for exchange students who arrive in Columbia between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. on the designated arrival date and will be living on campus. To request arrival assistance, complete the arrival information form by the designated deadline. Completion of this form is mandatory, even if you are not requesting assistance.

Arrival assistance includes:

- Picking you up from the Columbia Regional Airport. We cannot pick up students from the St. Louis or Kansas City airports. If you fly into either of those airports, you should use an airport shuttle service (international.missouri.edu/arrive) and request door-to-door service to be dropped off at your residence hall or hotel.
- Helping you check in to your residence hall.
- Assisting you with obtaining your MU ID card.

Be sure to contact the International Center with any changes to your travel plans.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELCOME

[International Student Welcome](#) is held the week before classes start each semester. Orientation sessions during this time include information about health concerns, health insurance and immigration issues; campus tours, group meals and other activities.

A mandatory **exchange student orientation session** will cover information about issues specific to exchange students, course registration assistance and shopping trips. Exchange students are required to participate in all activities on their schedules during International Student Welcome.

CHECK-IN

All international students are required to check in at the International Center upon arrival at MU. You must sign up for a check-in session online at international.missouri.edu/welcome. Bring the originals of your official documents with you (DS-2019, passport). You **do not** need an acceptance letter for your check-in — your name will be on the list of exchange students.

DURING YOUR FIRST DAYS AT MU

- Attend all International Student Welcome activities — they are mandatory — and check in at the International Center
- Check in to your residence hall or finalize off-campus housing arrangements
- Get your MU student ID
- Print your health insurance card (see [page 10](#))
- Register for classes and obtain your textbooks
- Set up your computer
- Update your **local** address in myZou

Remember, you are not on your own. Many of these things will be taken care of during International Student Welcome.

ACCOMMODATIONS

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Complete the housing request form by the deadline to be guaranteed housing in an MU residence hall. Indicate your room preference on the form, but note that Residential Life cannot guarantee placement in your preferred accommodations.

Residence halls offer double- or single-occupancy rooms with basic furnishings (bed, desk, drawers/closet) and shared bathrooms. Hall feature 24/7 Internet access and linen packets that can be rented on a short-term basis.

Things to bring include laptop, adapter/converter and pictures to personalize your room. Kitchen and cooking equipment is not recommended, and there are restrictions about what types of equipment are allowed in residence halls. Ask former exchange students at your host university for recommendations of what to bring.

The International Center will organize a shopping trip as part of International Student Welcome, so you will have an opportunity to buy things you might need within your first few days in Columbia.

Housing contract

Complete the housing contract online at reslife.missouri.edu/contract prior to arrival. Completion of this contract is mandatory to secure housing in a residence hall. **Do not** select your room preference — your room assignment will be finalized when your housing request form and housing contract are completed. Room assignments and roommate information may not be available prior to your arrival. Expect to receive it when you arrive.

Signing the housing contract is a firm commitment to live in the residence hall for the full year. Breaking the contract carries a stiff monetary penalty. An exception is made for single-semester students — you can sign the full-year contract and be permitted to break the contract prior to the spring semester without penalty.

Upon arrival, you will get a temporary key card that is valid for four days and serves as key to your room and residence hall. As soon as you get your MU ID, you will use it to access your residence hall and room.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

If you plan to live off campus, it is your responsibility to make your own housing arrangements. For more information about off-campus housing, go to offcampus.missouri.edu.

Rental prices vary widely in Columbia (approximately \$300–\$700 per month for shared housing).

Apartments closer to campus are typically more difficult to acquire and are often more expensive.

Apartments usually require deposits for rent and utilities, as well as the purchase of some furnishings, linens and cooking utensils. You should begin looking for an apartment prior to arrival — your first few weeks will be very busy and the more desirable apartments and roommate situations go quickly.

Yearlong lease agreements are not recommended for single-semester students. Subleasing your apartment upon departure can be complicated and not a good solution for meeting the terms of a 12-month lease. If you leave before the conclusion of a signed lease agreement, you will remain responsible for all terms therein, including the listed duration.

ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

For information about start and end dates, holidays and breaks, go to provost.missouri.edu/academic-calendar.

COURSES AT MU

All courses are identified by department and number. Courses with numbers 1000–4999 are for undergraduate credit. Courses 5000 and above are for graduate credit.

Courses typically take place several times each week. Most courses meet Monday/Wednesday/Friday for 50 minutes or Tuesday/Thursday for 75 minutes. Check the course schedules in myZou for specific times.

You should **attend every class session**, as missing even one class can put you behind. If you are ill, you should inform the instructor via email and ask a classmate for the notes and assignments you missed.

You will receive a syllabus for each course from your instructor. The syllabuses contain information about the course, including contact information for the instructor and a detailed overview of in-class activities, homework assignments and exams.

If you want to improve your English writing skills, enroll in an English 1000 writing and composition course. This course will help you learn to manage written assignments and papers from other courses more easily.

Course types

- **Lecture:** Usually in big classrooms with hundreds of students; taught by professors to give an overview of a subject. Typically graded based on a series of exams.
- **Discussion or lab:** Smaller groups of students within a lecture course. Meeting times are in addition to regular lecture meetings. Topics from lecture are discussed in more detail and active participation is encouraged.
- **Seminar:** Typically about 25 students and have more interaction between students and instructors. Most have reading and writing assignments and an attendance policy. Students are encouraged to actively discuss and express your own point of view.

Course assessments

In general, course assessments take place throughout the semester and may include any of the following:

- Regular homework assignments (readings, papers)
- Group projects
- In-class quizzes
- Pop quizzes (no notice given by instructor)
- Mid-term exams (after first half of semester)
- Final exam (at end of semester, often cumulative)

COURSE ENROLLMENT

The MU course catalog is available online at myzou.missouri.edu. To enroll in courses, select the courses you would like to take and place them in your “shopping cart.” Be sure to evaluate how the courses will fit into your schedule and transfer back to your home university.

Course registration assistance will be available during International Student Welcome (see your schedule for details). Your course schedule should be finalized before classes begin. Your schedule must show enrollment in 12 to 15 undergraduate credit hours (nine to 12 for graduate students). For step-by-step instructions on using myZou to register for courses, go to international.missouri.edu/myzou.

Attempting to enroll in certain courses may require meeting individually with professors (or emailing them prior to your arrival) to discuss courses you have completed at your home university that may serve as prerequisites for an MU course. Be sure to have alternate selections for each course you want to take. Some MU colleges, schools or departments may require you to seek permission once you arrive in order to enroll in courses in that particular academic division. You are responsible for obtaining permission numbers.

TRANSCRIPTS

After you leave MU, you will receive one official transcript from the International Center as long as you complete the required release forms prior to departure. The transcript will be mailed directly to your home institution; it is your responsibility to retrieve it from there once you have returned home.

All outstanding bills must be paid in full before you leave MU in order to receive your transcript. If you need more than one transcript, you must order it from the University Registrar online at registrar.missouri.edu/transcripts-records/official-transcripts.php.

CAMPUS LIFE

CAMPUS MAP

The MU campus is located in the heart of Columbia. Each building on campus has a three-character code, and these codes are used on maps to help you find the corresponding building. There are directories all over campus, and your orientation folder will contain a copy of the campus map. An interactive map is available online at map.missouri.edu or through the GoMizzou mobile app (international.missouri.edu/gomizzou).

DINING PLANS AND OPTIONS

MU offers three flexible plans from which to choose. Each provides a block of meals allocated at the beginning of each semester. As you use your plan for purchases, the available balance decreases. There is no refund for unused meals at the end of each semester. You should wait to purchase a dining plan until you arrive at MU and have reviewed the options.

Students living off campus: You can purchase a block of 25 meals. If you need additional meals, you can purchase another block of 25 meals.

Dining plan locations

Campus Dining Services is located at 900 Virginia Avenue. You can choose a meal plan, apply for a job or find menus online at dining.missouri.edu. There are several dining plan locations on campus open to all students.

Retail dining locations

There are multiple retail dining locations across campus that range from coffee shops to cafes. You cannot use your dining plan at these locations, but you can use E.Z. Charge to make purchases.

In addition, there are numerous dining options in downtown Columbia that are within easy walking distance of campus.

E.Z. CHARGE

You have the option to deposit funds into an E.Z. Charge account, which allows you to purchase meals at any dining location, as well as merchandise at other shops and vendors on campus. E.Z. Charge also offers the benefit of swiping your student ID in vending machines on campus.

At the end of your exchange term, you must request a refund of any remaining funds in your E.Z. Charge account before you leave MU.

TEXTBOOKS

In order to purchase the required books, you should:

1. Enroll in classes
2. Print your class schedule from myZou or at the Mizzou Store
3. Ask a staff member at the Mizzou Store for assistance
4. Look for used books or rental options that are less expensive

You can also make a list of the books required for your courses and look for them online or at other stores in town. At the end of each semester, you will have the opportunity to sell back unwanted textbooks at the Mizzou Store or other buy-back stores in Columbia or online.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

If you need help setting up your computer and connecting to campus WiFi, you can take your laptop to the TigerTech Service Desk in the lower level of the Mizzou Store. Staff members there can assist you; be sure to go during orientation week to avoid long lines. For more information, go to doit.missouri.edu/tech-support/the-mizzou-store-tigertech-service-desk.

Your MU PawPrint and password are your key to access numerous technology resources on campus, including myZou, email and campus computers. Utilize the TigerTech Service Desk if you need help accessing your account.

Computer labs are available across campus, including the libraries and student unions. All on-campus residence hall rooms have Internet access via Ethernet ports, and wireless access is widely available on campus.

MU email

Access your MU email account by logging in at webmail.missouri.edu. Your email address will be your PawPrint followed by @mail.missouri.edu (e.g., abc123@mail.missouri.edu). You will receive your PawPrint when you are officially accepted as an exchange student at MU, and this account will be the primary way anyone from MU communicates with you.

To access your MU email account for the first time:

1. Go to webmail.missouri.edu
2. Click “log in” under Student Email
3. Enter your PawPrint and the temporary password provided to you and click “log in”
4. Set the time zone
5. Go to “Options” > “See all options” > “Change your password” and click “change”
6. Enter your temporary password and then create your own permanent password

This account will be used for all correspondence with your MU exchange adviser and others at MU. Please be sure to activate and use this account while you are enrolled at MU.

USING MYZOU

Log in to myZou (myzou.missouri.edu) using your PawPrint and password, then select “self-service” and “student center.” From this page, you can add or drop classes, view your bill, handle financial aid and more. For help using myZou, go to help.missouri.edu or call the IT Help Desk at 573-882-5000.

When you first log in to myZou, be sure to complete these three tasks:

- **Register for the emergency mass notification system.** Select “emergency mass notification” from the left hand navigation bar and fill out the appropriate fields. This will allow MU to send you a text or email if there is an emergency situation on campus.
- **Grant e-consent to access financial information.** Select “UM e-consent” and choose “accept e-consent” if you agree to conduct university financial transactions online. (You will have to re-log in to continue.)
- **Update your emergency contact.** Under the personal information section select “emergency contact.” Select “add emergency contact,” then enter your contact’s name and information.

Managing finances in myZou

- **Set up direct deposit of financial aid proceeds.** Under finances, select “manage direct deposit,” then enter your bank’s routing number and your account number.
- **Maintain authorized users (add a parent).** Under finances, select “maintain authorized users,” then “continue.” Select “authorize payers” and then “add new.” Setting up authorized users allows a parent or someone you designate to view your monthly billing statement and make electronic payments on your student account.
- **View your bill.** Under finances, select “view bill” and “continue,” then select “view accounts.” You must first grant e-consent to access your financial information online.

Registering for classes

- **Add a class.** For step-by-step instructions, go to international.missouri.edu/myzou.
- **Drop a class.** Under academics, select “drop a class” and the appropriate term. Choose the course you want to drop, then select “drop selected classes” and “finish dropping.”
- **View your grades.** Under academics, select “grades” and choose the button to the left of the desired semester, then “continue.”
- **Request an unofficial academic record.** Under academics, select “unofficial academic record” from the drop-down menu and follow the prompts to receive a copy of your record via email.

MONEY AND FINANCES

ACCESSING YOUR HOME BANK

Before you leave, set up online or phone banking so you can review and access your accounts while you are in the United States. It is also a good idea to provide banking access to a family member or close friend back home in case of an emergency.

CAMPUS PAYMENT METHODS

Cash (USD) and debit/credit cards are widely accepted across campus. You can also use your MU student ID for student charge or E.Z. Charge. Student charge is available at the Mizzou Store and dining halls — if you have a meal plan, dining hall purchases will be deducted from your balance; if you don't, it will charge your student account. You can charge up to \$1,000 per month and will be shown on your monthly billing statement. For more information about E.Z. Charge, see [page 7](#).

EXPENSES

Exchange students pay for international student health insurance (Aetna), information technology fee, living expenses (room and meal plan, including early housing costs), international student services fee and residence hall social fee. Additional expenses include books (expect to pay \$350–\$500 per semester), transportation, entertainment and other personal expenses. For detailed information about estimated expenses for international students, go to international.missouri.edu/expenses.

Exchange students do not pay educational, student activities, student health, non-Missouri resident tuition and recreation center fees. These fees may show up on your account initially, but will be removed once the add/drop period has passed.

Living expenses

Living expenses vary widely according to your habits, customs and circumstances. The U.S. government suggests an individual will need about \$1,000 per month to meet average living costs in this region. You may spend more or less, depending on your spending habits and personal needs. Expenses to keep in mind include food, transportation, travel, shopping, entertainment and cell phone.

PAYING YOUR MU BILL

For detailed information about how to pay your MU bill, refer to the [International Student Welcome Guide](#). Note that initially you may be charged for some fees that exchange students do not have to pay. It can take some time for these to be credited to your account, but if you incur a late fee because of these charges it will be removed.

STUDENT HEALTH

HEALTH INSURANCE

MU requires all international students to purchase the Aetna student health insurance plan provided through the university. Detailed information about this plan can be found at international.missouri.edu/insurance.

MU has a strict hard-waiver policy in place that limits waivers of the mandatory insurance enrollment. As an exchange student, you can request to waive coverage through Aetna by submitting a signed waiver along with proof of outside coverage that must meet MU requirements.

All exchange students who do not submit a waiver and detailed information of outside coverage, as well as students whose outside policies do not meet the coverage requirements, will be automatically enrolled in Aetna student health insurance. A new insurance waiver form must be submitted each semester within three weeks of the beginning of classes. If you wish to submit a waiver, please contact your exchange adviser for more information.

Obtaining your insurance card

To prove that you have health insurance, you will have to carry your health insurance card with you at all times. To print your card, follow these steps:

1. Go to aetnastudenthealth.org
2. Type "University of Missouri" into the "find your college or university" search box and select the "Columbia (MU)" campus
3. Select "print ID card" on the right hand side
4. Enter your student ID number and date of birth, then select "view card" and "print card"

For additional information about your insurance card, contact the Student Health Center (studenthealth.missouri.edu).

IMMUNIZATIONS

Please review the MU immunization policy at studenthealth.missouri.edu/forms&policies/immunization.html. Students must provide documented proof of required vaccinations **before** the first day of classes. This can be the [MU immunization form](#) or official medical records (in English) certifying immunization by a licensed health care professional in your home country.

MU requires all students to be immunized for measles, mumps and rubella. If your home country only requires one MMR vaccine (rather than the twin series required by MU), you must receive the second upon arrival. Visit the Student Health Center after arriving on campus and completing your mandatory health screening. If you do not receive the full MMR vaccine series, a health hold will be placed on your myZou account and you will not be able to enroll in courses.

Immunizations have varied durations of validity. If one of your vaccinations has surpassed the recommended years of duration, you may be required to obtain another after you arrive at MU. If you do not have proof of current immunizations, you may be asked to obtain some vaccinations upon arrival. You will be required to pay for these vaccinations, but they may be partially covered by your MU student health insurance policy. If you cannot locate your immunization records, contact the Student Health Center (studenthealth.missouri.edu) at least one month prior to your departure, as it may be better to obtain some vaccinations in your home country.

Students may be exempted from required immunizations **only** for medical, religious or philosophical reasons. All students who have not been immunized will be required to leave campus for 14 days in the event of any outbreak of measles or rubella and will be responsible for making up any missed coursework during that period.

STAY CONNECTED

Mizzou is home to more than 35,000 students. International students make up about nine percent of the student body, including 30 to 40 reciprocal exchange students each semester. There are lots of opportunities to get involved on campus, which is a great way to meet new people and experience American student life outside the classroom.

MU has more than 600 student organizations with focuses that range from sports to cultures to special interests. For more information, go to mizzoulife.missouri.edu/orgs or getinvolved.missouri.edu.

The International Center also organizes special events for international students — go to international.missouri.edu/calendar for a list of upcoming events.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways to volunteer on campus or in the local community. Through the International Center, you can volunteer with Kaleidoscope (international.missouri.edu/kaleidoscope), a program where international students visit local schools or organizations to teach others about their home culture.

You can find an office on campus that fits your area of interest and ask about their volunteer opportunities. The Office of Service-Learning (servicelearning.missouri.edu) also offers numerous volunteer opportunities.

LANGUAGE PARTNERS

If you would like to focus on improving your English language skills, go to mizzoulife.missouri.edu/language-partners for more information about being paired with a native English speaker. You can also contact the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures or Asian Affairs Center to be matched with Americans or other international students interested in learning to speak your native language.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE MU

ACCOMMODATIONS CHECK-OUT

If you live in an on-campus residence hall, you will receive a list detailing the steps of the check-out process. Be sure to follow these steps to avoid additional charges to your MU student account. If you live in an off-campus apartment, contact your landlord to ask about the check-out process.

PAY OFF STUDENT ACCOUNT

Before you leave MU, your student account must be paid in full. If there is still a balance due on your account, your transcript will not be sent to your home institution.

DINING PLAN AND E.Z. CHARGE

You will lose any remaining meals on your dining plan when you leave MU, so be sure to use them up. You will not receive a refund for any remaining balance.

You can request a refund of any unused funds in your E.Z. Charge account. Go to the Office of Cashiers to make this request before you leave MU.

TRANSCRIPT AND ACADEMIC RECORDS

Upon completion of your exchange program and once all MU bills have been paid, you will receive a transcript request form — complete it and return it to your exchange adviser before you leave MU.

You should locate or request any exam records, papers and syllabuses that you may need for verification of course completion and credit transfer back to your home university.

FAREWELL PARTY

Don't forget to attend the exchange student farewell party hosted by the International Center. We hope you make the most of your time at MU and wish you safe travels home!