New International Student Welcome Guide

January 2015
Welcome to Kent State University! We are pleased that you have chosen to continue your education here and we want you to succeed. This document contains some basic information that will help you better prepare for your arrival and initial weeks in Kent, Ohio. Specifically, you will learn:

1. what to do now that you have your I-20 or DS-2019
2. information about airports and planning your arrival
3. about International Student and Scholar Services
4. essential immigration information
5. information about Kent, OH
6. on- and off-campus housing information
7. health insurance and immunization requirements
8. how to prepare for, and what to expect during, international student orientation

1. SEVIS Fee and Visa Interview

Before you apply for a visa, you must pay a one-time fee called the “SEVIS fee.” SEVIS is the student database that we use to keep your record. Your SEVIS ID is the number in the top right-hand corner of your I-20 or DS-2019 that begins with “N00.” Visit www.fmjfee.com and follow the instructions. Print your receipt at the end and take it with you to your visa interview. The fee must be paid at least three (3) business days prior to the scheduled date of your interview. Your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate can provide you with a specific list of the documents that will be required during your visa interview, but in general, be prepared to have:

a) an unexpired passport, valid for at least six more months
b) your I-20 or DS-2019, signed by you on page 1
c) your admission letter from Kent State University
d) proof of financial support for one year of study that matches what is listed on your I-20 or DS-2019
2. **Airports and Arrival**

Most students choose to fly into Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport (airport code: CLE). Cleveland-Hopkins is approximately 50 minutes by car from Kent. There is a smaller airport, Akron-Canton International Airport (airport code CAK), which is approximately 30 minutes by car from Kent. When making your travel arrangements, you should check the fares to each airport to find the best deal.

We have negotiated a lower rate to get from the airport to Kent State University, using Go2Go Elite Transportation as your airport shuttle service. You will make your reservation online and reserve your pickup using PayPal. Visit [http://www.go2goelite.com/ksu-international-step-by-step-instructions.html](http://www.go2goelite.com/ksu-international-step-by-step-instructions.html) to get started.

You must arrive before or on your Program Start Date. For Spring 2015, your Program Start Date is January 7, 2015. You may arrive in the United States up to thirty days before your Program Start Date, which means the earliest date you could arrive is December 8, 2014. If, for some reason, you are not able to arrive by your Program Start Date, contact International Student and Scholar Services by email at isss@kent.edu. We strongly recommend you arrive between January 2 and 7. Many campus offices are closed between December 24 and January 1 for the holiday break.

3. **International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)**

During your time at Kent State, you will have access to a dedicated team of advisors in the Office of Global Education. These international student and scholar advisors can help you with your adjustment to life in the United States and provide you with accurate immigration advice so that you maintain your student status while you are studying with us. Visit [http://www.kent.edu/isss/staff/index.cfm](http://www.kent.edu/isss/staff/index.cfm) for a current listing of ISSS staff.

International student and scholar advisors are not the same as your academic advisor. You should meet with your academic advisor to discuss
any academic issues, problems, or questions (including changing your major).

An international student and scholar advisor can help you with:

a) updating your Form I-20 or DS-2019  
b) issuing a travel signature before you travel internationally  
c) assisting you with cultural adjustment  
d) answering your questions about life in the United States  
e) helping you apply for certain immigration benefits  
f) giving you expert immigration advice

The ISSS Forms Library is a valuable source of information, giving step-by-step instructions for a variety of issues. Please bookmark www.kent.edu/issss/forms on your computer so that you may refer to the PDF Guides. All of the forms that ISSS uses are electronic, and they can all be found in the Forms Library.

ISSS offers walk-in advising and advising by appointment every day. Specific times will be provided to you during International Student Orientation.

4. **Essential Immigration Information**

Your student visa comes with a number of rules and regulations that you need to observe in order to maintain your student status. We do not expect you to be immigration experts; international student and scholar advisors are available to help explain immigration regulations and give you good advice based on your situation. Commit these to memory:

**Always be registered full-time.** You are on a full-time student visa. ESL and undergraduate students need to be registered for at least 12 credits during the entire fall and spring semester. Graduate students need to be registered for at least 8 credits every semester. You may only count one online course (3 credit hours) toward this full-time requirement.
Bookmark the Forms Library. You can read more information about a variety of immigration issues in the ISSS Forms Library. Reading all of the Guides carefully will save you a lot of time and confusion. The Forms Library can be found at www.kent.edu/isss/forms.

Check your Kent State email address frequently. From time to time, ISSS will need to contact you to ask you for information or make a time-sensitive request. We will try to contact you via your Kent State email account. Add isss@kent.edu to your Safe Senders list. We cannot help you if we cannot get a hold of you!

Do not accept an internship or job without authorization. You are allowed to work on-campus for up to 20 hours per week while school is in session. If you want to work off-campus, you need authorization from ISSS in the form of Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training. Working without authorization is illegal.

Each time you travel internationally, let us know first. When you travel internationally and then attempt to re-enter the United States, you need a travel signature on page three of your I-20 (or page one of your DS-2019) that is less than one year old. International student and scholar advisors are the only ones who can issue these travel signatures. It is a good idea to visit ISSS before you travel so that we can check your documents and make sure everything is in order. Your passport and visa also need to be unexpired. The best practice is to come and see us before you travel so we can make sure that all of your documents are in order and that you are prepared.
5. **Introduction to Kent and Northeast Ohio**

Downtown Kent, Ohio.

Kent, Ohio is a traditional American small town with a population of approximately 30,000 residents. It is located on the Cuyahoga River and was founded in 1805. It has a walkable downtown area with many small shops, restaurants, bars, theaters, and other attractions.
Downtown Cleveland is less than an hour away and offers endless possibilities for entertainment.

Kent is located in the area of the United States known as the Midwest, in the U.S. state of Ohio. Kent experiences spring, summer, fall and winter. Average high temperatures in Kent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>1°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>9°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>29°C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>23°C</td>
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Kent enjoys all four seasons.
Northeast Ohio is also home to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which is the only national park in the state of Ohio. Hiking, biking, swimming, photography, birdwatching, fishing, and kayaking are only a few of the activities that you can enjoy in the National Park.

ISSS organizes yearly trips to Brandywine Falls, in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Kent State University’s main campus is large (1,347 acres or 545 ha) and spacious, with state-of-the-art facilities and a park-like setting with walkways and trees.
6. **On- and Off-Campus Housing**

Are you 20 years old or older?

Are you at least a junior (do you have at least 60 credit hours)?

Are you married?

If you answered **YES** to any of the above questions, you may choose to live on or off campus. If you answered **NO** to all of the questions above, you are required to live on campus until you meet one of the above conditions. Contact Daniel Shonk at dshonk1@kent.edu to tell him when you are arriving so he can help you with early arrival housing arrangements (on-campus residents only).

If you are subject to the residency requirement (you said **NO** to all three questions above) or prefer to live on-campus, you need to complete the housing application. Visit the Residence Services website here: http://www.kent.edu/housing/index.cfm and click on “Online Housing Application (New Residents)” on the left-hand side.
If you answered **YES** to at least one of the questions above and would prefer to live off campus, visit [www.kentercribs.com](http://www.kentercribs.com) to search for off-campus housing.

### 7. Medical Insurance Requirement; Medical History and Immunization Forms

You should purchase medical insurance, which will help to cover your expenses if you are injured or become ill during your time at Kent State University. We recommend, in the strongest possible terms, that you obtain medical insurance.

Kent State offers its students an affordable and valuable medical insurance plan that can be purchased easily by visiting [https://www.uhcsr.com](https://www.uhcsr.com) and clicking “Buy College Student Insurance.”

Additionally, the Health Center at Kent State University needs you to complete an immunization form and submit it to them when you arrive on campus. To print the form out and complete it, visit: [https://cmsprod.uis.kent.edu/studentlife/health/uhs/Immunizations/upload/KSU-Immunization-Form-2014.pdf](https://cmsprod.uis.kent.edu/studentlife/health/uhs/Immunizations/upload/KSU-Immunization-Form-2014.pdf)
Please also complete the Medical History Form and submit to the Health Center when you arrive on campus. You can download the Medical History Form here: https://cmsprod.uis.kent.edu/studentlife/health/uhs/medical-forms.cfm

If, for some reason, you cannot access these forms, contact isss@kent.edu and request that they be faxed or scanned and emailed to you.

8. **Preparing For International Student Orientation**

Your first responsibility as a new international student at Kent State University is attending International Student Orientation. For Spring 2015, Orientation is **Thursday, January 8** in the Kent Student Center.

**Unconditionally admitted undergraduate and graduate students report at 8:00 AM; anyone taking ESL classes reports at 2:30 PM.**

During Orientation, you will meet the staff of the Office of Global Education and attend informational sessions that will help you understand your responsibilities as an F-1 or J-1 student. You will also be familiarized with important parts of campus like the Student Center and the University Library.

In addition to receiving immigration information, you will learn about on-campus employment, find out where to eat in Kent and how to buy a cell phone, and other practical information. You will get to meet students from all over the world and make new friends. You will feel comfortable and ready to begin your studies upon completion of Orientation.

Orientation will be fun, helpful and informative; attendance is mandatory. If you do not attend Orientation, a registration hold may be placed on your student account, which means you would not be able to register for classes.

There are several things you can do to prepare for Orientation:
1) **Arrive on time.** If you are able to arrive in Kent one or two days before January 7, 2015, you will be adjusted to the local time and will feel well rested. You are allowed to enter up to thirty days before your Program Start Date; book your flight anytime after December 8, 2014. We recommend arriving during the first week of January. Make sure you have housing arrangements in place before you arrive. Daniel Shonk (dshonk1@kent.edu) can assist you with this process (on-campus residents only).

2) **Read the Pre-Arrival Newsletter.** This Welcome Guide is only the first of several communications from our office that will help you prepare for your studies at Kent State University. Make sure you are checking your email account frequently and reading any newsletters, announcements, or messages from International Student and Scholar Services.

3) **Bring your immigration documents to the Office of Global Education to check in.** We will scan in copies of your passport, U.S. visa, and I-20 or DS-2019 and ask you to report your local address.

4) **Read this Guide again.** This Guide contains extremely useful information to help you feel informed and prepared. Read through it several times, especially Section 4, which explains important immigration regulations.

5) **Ask questions.** ISSS exists to help you. Contact isss@kent.edu if you have a question or need reassurance about a particular concern. We are well trained and have the expertise necessary to answer your questions.