



**NORTH PARK
UNIVERSITY**
CHICAGO

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

**OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

REVISED FALL 2018

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WELCOME

Dear International Student,

We are pleased to have a part in what will probably be one of the most important educational experiences of your life. While you are here, you will learn not only from your academic work, but also from your contacts with people and institutions in the United States. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunity you have to learn about a society and culture different from your own, and to teach others about the society and culture you represent.

Located on the first floor of the brand-new Nancy and G. Timothy Johnson Center for Science and Community Life, North Park's Office of International Affairs works with international students to help them transition to life at North Park and in the United States. The Office of International Affairs will be your first stop for a variety of information and services. Please feel free to meet with office staff or one of our student ambassadors, whether you have a specific question or just want to talk. We hope to make your time at North Park and in Chicago a rewarding experience!

Sincerely,

Sumie Song, Ph.D.

*Director of Global Education - The Office of International Affairs
Faculty Adviser – Global Studies*

Tessa Zanoni, M. Ed.

*Assistant Director of the Office of International Affairs
Study Abroad Advisor*

This handbook is intended to supplement the North Park University Student Handbook: <https://www.northpark.edu/campus-life-and-services/student-success-and-wellness/student-handbook-and-community-standards/>

Thanks to Benedictine University, Macalester College, and North Central College for their contributions to this handbook.

PAYING THE SEVIS FEE (Form I-901 Fee)

1. Check whether you must pay the SEVIS fee

- You must pay the SEVIS fee if you see either of the following on your visa form:
 - **Initial Attendance** - #3 on the Form I-20
 - **New Program** - #2 on the Form DS-2019
- You do not have to pay the SEVIS fee if one of the following is true:
 - You are transferring from another school in the U.S.
 - You are extending your program
 - You are applying for an F-2 or J-2 dependent visa
 - You paid the fee and were denied a visa within the last 12 months

2. Pay the SEVIS fee online: <https://www.fmjfee.com/ig01fee/index.html>

- Enter your name exactly as it appears on your Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Enter your **SEVIS ID number** (starts with N and appears at the top of the Form I-20 or DS-2019)
- Enter North Park University's **SEVIS code** (CH1214F01106000 on the Form I-20 or P-1-05545 on the Form DS-2019)
- Input your credit card information, including the security code (the 3-digit number on the back of your card)
- Print a copy of the receipt to take to your visa interview. Be sure to make copies!
- For step-by-step instructions on how to pay the SEVIS fee watch this [tutorial](#)
- Check the status of your fee payment, receive updates, and get answers to frequently asked questions regarding the I-901 fee at <https://www.fmjfee.com/ig01fee/index.html>

APPLYING FOR A VISA – F or J

1. Contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy

- Follow their instructions on how to apply
- You may also check the U.S. Department of State's [website](#)
- Apply as far in advance as possible. Many consulates require that appointments be made no more than 90 days prior to the intended dates of travel, but some can schedule interviews earlier.

2. Complete visa application Form DS-160 online: [DS-160](#)

- Pay the visa application fee
- Print a copy of the receipt to take to your visa interview

3. Schedule an in-person interview at your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate

4. Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following documents:

- A passport valid for at least 6 months after your intended period of stay
- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 (**sign** your name in **blue** ink)

- Acceptance letter from North Park University
- Completed visa application form DS-160
- A receipt for the visa application fee
- A receipt for the SEVIS fee (I-901 fee)
- One 2” x 2” photograph in the prescribed format
- Evidence showing you have sufficient funds to cover your expenses for a full academic year. Your financial documentation should match the amounts and types of funding on the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.
- Any information indicating why you have chosen to study at North Park University. You should be prepared to talk about your choice of school, even if you don’t have paper documentation.
- Any information proving your intent to return home after finishing your studies. You should be prepared to talk about how studying in the United States will help you make a difference in your home country. Forms of proof may include:
 - Property ownership
 - Job responsibilities
 - Family ties
 - Ties to the community
- Remain calm and answer all of the Visa Officer’s questions openly and honestly.

PACKING FOR TRAVEL

1. Bring the following documents - keep on your person, not in checked luggage!

- Passport
- Form I-20/DS-2019
- North Park University acceptance letter
- Proof of finances
- Photocopy of insurance policy

2. Contact information for person meeting you at your destination

3. What you can and cannot bring into the U.S.

- For detailed information on what you can and cannot bring into the country, restrictions on food items, and traveling with prescription medications, consult [U.S. Customs and Border Protections](#) website

4. What you can and cannot bring to campus

- If you will be living on campus, consult [Residence Life](#)’s list of items to bring
- **Bed linens:**
 - Sheet sizes vary by country, so it is best to purchase bed linens in the U.S.
 - If you will be living on campus, bedding can be purchased [online](#) and mailed in advance to your campus mailbox. See [Residence Life](#) for which size sheets you will need; these will vary according to residence hall.
 - You will have opportunities to go shopping for things you need or may have forgotten during orientation.

ARRIVING IN THE U.S.

1. Clear U.S. Customs

- Most North Park students fly into O'Hare International Airport (ORD), which is located 17 kilometers from campus.
- Watch this video by [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#) for information on what to expect when going through customs.
- During your flight you will be given customs and immigration forms to complete. Fill them out before you disembark.
- You must first go through **Passport Control/Immigration**. If you are not a U.S. citizen you will go through the lane marked "Foreign Citizens." A CBP official will check your travel documents:
 - Passport
 - Visa stamp in passport
 - Form I-20/DS-2019
 - **If you are attempting to enter the United States without a valid I-20 or DS-2019 form, CBP officials are not required to let you in.** (If permitted to enter, you will be given a Form I-515A. Bring this to the Office of International Affairs immediately upon arrival; if you do not file this in a timely manner, your F-1 or J-1 status may be automatically cancelled!)
- The official will ask you questions. If there are any questions about your visa status or your ability to enter the United States, you may be sent to "**Secondary.**" If this happens:
 - Do not panic.
 - Answer all questions truthfully.
 - Explain why you have chosen to study at North Park and how studying in the United States will help you when you return to your home country.
- Claim your baggage
 - If you have any difficulty locating your baggage, ask for help from the customs office or check at the airline counter of the airline you flew just outside customs.
- Clear Customs
 - Go to the lane marked "Nothing to Declare" or "Goods to Declare."
 - Show your customs declaration form to the official.
- Before you exit a CBP official may ask you some questions and/or ask you to open your suitcase for random inspection.

2. Travel to Campus

- **Airport Pick-Up** - If you are a new student you may arrange to be picked up at O'Hare Airport by North Park Admissions by filling out the [International Arrival Form](#). Someone from International Admissions will be waiting outside customs to greet you.
- **Public Transportation/Taxi/Ride-Share** - If you are a returning student, or a new student who didn't request an airport pick up, you can get to campus by public transportation (El Train), cab, or Lyft or Uber.
 - **O'Hare Airport to North Park** on public transportation:
 - The train station is on the lower level of the airport. Look for signs for the CTA: Chicago Transit Authority.
 - Take the Blue Line.
 - Exit the train at the Jefferson Park.
 - Exit the station and head toward the bus terminal.

- Take the #92 Foster bus, heading east.
- Get off at Foster and Spaulding, next to campus.
- **Midway Airport to North Park** on public transportation:
 - The train station is just outside the airport.
 - Look for signs for the CTA: Chicago Transit Authority. Take the Orange Line toward the Loop.
 - Exit at the Clark and Lake stop.
 - Transfer to a Brown Line train toward Kimball.
 - Exit at Kimball (the end of the line), three blocks south of campus.
- **Taxi/Lyft/Uber:**
 - Ask the taxi driver to take you to the intersection of Foster and Spaulding Avenues (Spaulding is half way between Kedzie Avenue and Kimball Avenue).
 - A cab ride from O'Hare Airport will cost you about \$35; a ride from Midway Airport is approximately \$50. Taxi drivers expect a 15% tip in addition to your fare.
 - Lyft/Uber fares will differ according to distance and time of day.

3. Hotels and Hostels

Campus residence halls first open during International Student Orientation. If you plan on arriving before then, you should make reservations at a hotel or hostel. Here are some options:

- Best Western at O'Hare Chicago
 - 10300 West Higgins Road, Rosemont, IL 60018
 - *Complimentary shuttle from the airport runs continuously*
- Holiday Inn Express
 - 6600 North Mannheim Road, Rosemont, IL 60018
 - and 10233 West Higgins Road, Rosemont, IL 60018
 - *Complimentary shuttle from the airport runs continuously*
- IHSP Chicago
 - 1616 North Damen Avenue 2nd Floor Chicago, IL 60647
 - *Take the Blue Line from O'Hare to Damen*
- Urban Holiday Lofts
 - 2014 W. Wabansia Chicago, IL 60647
 - *Take the Blue Line from O'Hare to Damen*

WHO WE ARE

The mission of North Park University is to prepare students for lives of significance and service through liberal arts, professional, and theological education. North Park seeks to educate students as whole persons, not just as students in the classroom. This vision is supported by the academic curriculum as well as the emphasis North Park places on urban and civic engagement, which helps students prepare to serve the public good.

North Park is a Christian university founded in 1891 by first-generation Swedish immigrants. It is sponsored by the Evangelical Covenant Church. Students from all Christian denominations and the world's religious traditions, as well as those without a faith tradition, are equally embraced.

North Park University has a student population of approximately 3,200 students, about 2,000 undergraduate students and 1,200 graduate students. Each year North Park has approximately 200 international students on campus, representing over 45 countries. Some international students come for one semester of exchange studies, while others will graduate with bachelors or masters degrees.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

While you are a student at North Park, you will be held accountable for the following standards:

- Practicing personal and academic integrity
- Demonstrating concern for the growth, learning, and development of yourself and others
- Respecting the rights, property, and dignity of all persons

For complete information on North Park policies and expectations, please read the [Student Handbook](#).

THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of International Affairs is located on the first floor of the Nancy and G. Timothy Johnson Center for Science and Community Life. We are open to international students whenever they have questions about visa regulations, life in the United States, North Park policies, or just to talk! At minimum, international students must be in contact with the Office of International Affairs once each semester via the SEVIS Checklist. In addition, U.S. law requires that students contact the Office of International Affairs:

- 1. Upon arrival, to present copies of passport, visa, and stamped Form I-20 or DS-2019.**
- 2. Anytime there are changes to your address, academic program, or funding.**
- 3. Prior to taking a leave of absence, traveling outside the US, or extending your program.**

Please email to request an appointment:

Dr. Sumie Song, Director of Global Education
PDSO (F-1 students), RO (J-1 students)
ssong@northpark.edu

Ms. Tessa Zanoni, Assistant Director
DSO (F-1 students), ARO (J-1 students)
tzanoni@northpark.edu

CAMPUS RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Admissions-related questions

International Admissions
Old Main, first floor
773-244-5501
medrake@northpark.edu

Residence hall questions

Residence Life Office
Johnson Center, first floor
773-244-5555
housing@northpark.edu

Basic medical care, mental health counseling

Center for Counseling and Health Services
Foster Avenue (between Spaulding and Christiana Avenues)
773-244-4897
healthservices@northpark.edu

English language support

English as a Second Language
Magnuson Campus Center, first floor
773-244-4942
dbricault@northpark.edu

Writing support

Writing Center
Brandel Library, second floor
773-244-4975
writingcenter@northpark.edu

Getting involved on campus

Student Activities Office
Johnson Center, first floor
773-244-4994
studentdevelopment@northpark.edu

Computer issues

Computer Services
Caroline Hall, garden level
773-244-5540
it@northpark.edu

Requesting campus escort

Campus Security
Magnuson Campus Center, lobby
773-244-5780

Reporting crimes

In an emergency, dial “911” (Chicago Police Department)

Paying bills, loan paperwork

Student Accounts

Student Services Building, first floor
773-244-5607
studentaccounts@northpark.edu

Ordering transcripts, verifying enrollment

Records Office

Student Services Building, first floor
773-244-5560
records@northpark.edu

On-campus jobs, career planning

Career Development and Internships

Johnson Center, first floor
773-244-5575
careers@northpark.edu

On-campus employment paperwork

Human Resources

Old Main, third floor
773-244-5599
hr@northpark.edu

ACADEMIC LIFE

1. The Liberal Arts

North Park University, like many colleges in the United States, is a “liberal arts” institution. You will take courses from a range of different subject areas that form a broad educational foundation. A liberal arts curriculum is designed to provide an understanding of a variety of basic subjects while still allowing you to concentrate primarily on your major field of study.

2. Academic Expectations

- **Syllabus**
 - Your course syllabus will outline the specific expectations of the professor.
 - Professors use a variety of criteria to evaluate course work. Some courses may require two examinations: a “midterm” about halfway through the semester, and a “final” at the end of the semester. Others may use shorter tests or quizzes throughout the semester.
- **Attendance**
 - You are expected to attend all class sessions.
 - Class attendance usually counts toward your grade, so you should check with your professors about specific attendance policies.
- **Written Assignments**
 - Many professors will require written papers.
 - Your professor or a tutor at the Writing Center can discuss with you the different types of writing assignments required in a given class.
- **Academic Honesty**
 - All cultures know that dishonesty is wrong, but not all cultures define dishonesty in the same way, and not all academic systems enforce consequences to the same degree. Two main types of academic dishonesty are especially serious in the United States.
 - **Plagiarism** – is the practice of copying from a publication, a lecture, or website without proper acknowledgment of the source of that information. Your professor or the Writing Center can help you use other texts appropriately in your writing.
 - **Cheating** is the practice of giving or receiving unauthorized aid while completing course requirements. Giving answers to or accepting from another student during an exam, writing a paper for another student, or copying another student’s work are all forms of cheating. Getting assistance from the Writing Center, talking with a professor or fellow student, or forming a study group before an exam are all acceptable forms of aid.
 - The consequences of plagiarism and cheating are outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

3. What Other International Students Say About...

- **Student-Professor Relationship**
 - The relationship between professor and student is fairly relaxed and informal.
 - Professors at North Park appreciate interaction with their students. They are usually willing and eager to converse with their students, as well as to offer help.
 - Introduce yourself to your professor on the first day and tell them you are an international student.

- Speak up in class.
- Take advantage of professors' office hours.
- **In-Class Accommodations**
 - Some professors allow international students extra time for test taking and/or the use of a dictionary during a test. Ask your professor what she or he allows.
 - See the next section to learn about disability resources.
- **Additional Support**
 - Tutors may be available for your course at no cost to you. Contact the Center for Student Engagement for more information: studentdevelopment@northpark.edu.
 - The Writing Center will be an especially helpful resource for you. Email for more information: writingcenter@northpark.edu.
 - See the next section to learn about disability resources.
- **Language Proficiency**
 - The most important thing you can do to improve your level of success in the classroom is to improve your English skills.
 - Your English will not improve if the only people you talk to outside of the classroom speak your native language.

4. Disability Resources

- **Definition**
 - In the United States a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person from participating in one or more major life activities.
 - Common disabilities include:
 - Blindness
 - Deafness
 - Physical limitations
 - Learning difficulties
 - Long-term illnesses
 - Mental health conditions
- **Americans with Disabilities Act**
 - The law provides legal protections for people with disabilities from discrimination on the job, at school, or in the community.
 - It requires organizations to provide assistance to people with disabilities who need special services. Having a disability will not keep you from attending school or getting a job.
 - The fact that you have a disability will not be part of a permanent record that is sent back to your home country.
- **What to Do If You Have a Disability**
 - Contact studentdevelopment@northpark.edu to meet with a student support specialist if you have a disability. The support specialist will work with you to determine what additional resources you may need.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE

1. Health Insurance Requirements

- **Coverage Requirements for J-1 Students and Scholars and J-2 Dependents**

- If you are on a J Visa, the United States Department of State requires that your insurance meets the following requirements:

| ITEM | MINIMUM (as of 05/15/2015) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Medical Benefits | \$100,000 |
| Repatriation of Remains | \$25,000 |
| Medical Evacuation | \$50,000 |
| Deductible per accident or illness | \$500 |

(You, your spouse, and/or any dependent(s) may be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act [22 CFR 62.14(a)])

- Covers pre-existing conditions after a reasonable waiting period
- May include provisions for coinsurance under the terms of which the Exchange Visitor may be required to pay up to 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness
- Does not exclude benefits for perils inherent to the activities of the Exchange Visitor's program
- Any insurance plan must be:
 - Underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above; a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's Claims paying Ability rating of "A-" or above; a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above; a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of "A-" or above; a Moody's Investor Services rating of "A3" or above; or such other rating as the Department of State may from time to time specify;
 - OR backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country;
 - OR part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor;
 - OR offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- **J-1 and J-2 Automatic Enrollment**
 - J-1 students and scholars and their J-2 dependents will be automatically enrolled in North Park University's international health insurance plan.
 - **If you wish to use your own insurance, you must sign a waiver and provide written proof that your insurance plan:**
 - **meets the above requirements—all explanation of benefits MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH**
 - **is valid from the start of classes through the end of your program (dates as listed on your Form DS-2019)**
- **Coverage Requirements for F-1 Students**
 - F-1 student are subject to the same requirements:

| ITEM | MINIMUM (as of 05/15/2015) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Medical Benefits | \$100,000 |
| Repatriation of Remains | \$25,000 |
| Medical Evacuation | \$50,000 |
| Deductible per accident or illness | \$500 |

- You will be asked to provide proof that you are insured by the end of the third week of the semester on your SEVIS Checklist.
- If you fail to provide proof by that date you will be automatically enrolled in the North Park health insurance plan.

2. On-Campus Services

- **Basic Medical Care and Referrals**
 - Undergraduate and ESL students have access to basic medical care at Health Services.
 - Walk-in services are available weekdays during business hours.
 - Referrals will be provided as needed to Swedish Covenant Hospital, located four blocks east of campus on Foster and California Avenues.
- **Mental Health Care**
 - Undergraduate and ESL students have access to services including health consultations, group counseling, and crisis intervention at Counseling Support Services.
 - Walk-in services are available weekdays during business hours.
 - Referrals will be made as needed to outside mental health providers.

BANKING

1. Bank Accounts

- **Account Types – Checking or Savings**
 - Most students are interested in a Checking Account. Such accounts do not usually earn interest.
 - A checking account comes with:
 - a checkbook (a book of paper checks)
 - a debit/ATM card that enables you to get US currency from cash machines on campus and throughout the US
- **Opening an Account**
 - To open an account you will need your passport, Form I-20 or DS-2019, a letter from the Office of International Affairs, and a deposit to the bank.
 - Many banks in the United States require individuals to have a U.S. Social Security Number before opening an account.
 - The local branch of Chase Bank does not require a Social Security Number or a letter from the Office of International Affairs. Chase Bank is a large bank with a branch offices across the country. It is located at 4843 N. Kedzie Ave.

2. Bill Payment

- **Credit Card**
 - North Park University accepts most major credit cards.
 - Credit card payments are subject to a 2.5% fee in addition to your original charge.
- **Wire Transfers**
 - You may wire money from your bank account at home to North Park.
 - Your bank will need the following information to complete the transfer:
 - Bank Name: JP Morgan/Chase, Chicago
 - SWIFT Code: CHASUS33
 - Account Name: North Park University
 - Account Number: 20035683
 - **You must include your name and North Park student ID number on the wire transfer so that payment can be credited to the correct account.**

MAIL

1. Physical Mail and Deliveries

- **Campus Postal Center**
 - The postal center is located on Foster, west of Spaulding
 - You will be assigned a post office box when you arrive on campus.
 - Physical deliveries will be sent to the postal center.
- **Your Mailing Address**
 - [your name]
 - North Park University
 - 3225 W. Foster Avenue
 - # [your post office box]
 - Chicago, IL 60625
 - USA
- **Sending Mail**
 - Check with the postal center for domestic and international rates.
 - Important documents such as passports or USCIS applications should always be sent **certified or registered mail** so that they can be traced if lost. You can also request notification when your item is delivered.
 - **The postal center only accepts cash or checks.**

2. Campus E-Mail

- **Your NPU Email Account**
 - All students at North Park will be assigned a North Park email address.
 - For help setting up your email account, stop by computer services in the basement of Caroline Hall.
 - **You must your North Park email account regularly.** All entities on campus including faculty will contact you through North Park email.
- **Public Computers**
 - There are several computer labs on North Park's campus.
 - Public computers are also available in each residence hall.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

1. What Is an SSN

- The Social security number (SSN) is used for identification and tax purposes.
- If you work on campus or have off-campus work permission, you will need to apply for a social security number in order to get paid.

2. Applying for an SSN

- **Steps**
 - **You must have a job offer to be eligible to apply.**
 - Stop by the Office of International Affairs for instructions on how to apply.
 - Obtain a letter of employment from your site supervisor following the letter template provided by OIA.
 - Make an appointment with OIA to obtain a letter of permission from the P/DSO or A/RO.
- **Documents**
 - Complete page 5 of the [SSN application](#) form – **do not submit online!**
 - Original Form I-20 or DS-2019
 - Passport
 - Printout of [I-94 Admission Number](#)
 - Letter of permission from North Park Office of International Affairs
 - Letter of employment from supervisor at your on-campus job
 - ISEP students will also need an employment authorization letter from ISEP.
- **Social Security Administration Office**
 - You must apply for your SSN in person at the Social Security Administration Office.
 - The office serving North Park is located at:
 - 2127 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago IL 60625
800-772-1213.
 - By bus: take the #81 Lawrence Ave. bus east from Kimball/Lawrence to 2127 W. Lawrence.
 - By el: take the Brown Line from Kimball/Lawrence to the Western Avenue/Lawrence stop.

DRIVING IN THE U.S.

1. Driver's License

- **Applying for an Illinois Driver's License**
 - State law permits students at Illinois universities to drive on a valid license from their home state or country. If you would like to get an Illinois driver's license, you have two options:
 - **If you have a Social Security Number** you are permitted to apply for an Illinois Driver's License. You will need the following documents in order to apply for an Illinois Driver's License:
 - Valid Passport and I-94 Admission Number
 - Form I-20 or DS-2019

- Social Security Card
 - Two documents proving Illinois residency
- **If you do not have a Social Security Number** you should be eligible for a Temporary Visitor's Driver's License. You will need the following documents in order to apply for a TVDL:
 - Valid Passport and I-94 Admission Number
 - Form I-20 or DS-2019 issued for at least one year of study, with at least 6 months remaining
 - Letter from the Social Security Administration indicating that you are ineligible for a Social Security Number. This will require you to go to the Social Security office, apply for a SSN, and be denied.
 - Two documents proving Illinois residency
 - A letter indicating that you are eligible for on-campus employment but can't find a job.
- **Examination and Driving Test**
 - You must go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to take an examination and driving test in order to qualify for the license.
 - **You will need to have a car to take the driving test.** Have a friend drive you.
 - The nearest driver's license facility to campus is located at 5401 N. Elston Ave, Chicago, IL 60630.
 - For more information on obtaining a driver's license, please check www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

2. International Driving Permit

There is no such thing as an International Driver's License, but there is an International Driving Permit, which is issued by your home country. The International Driving Permit translates your license to make it easier for U.S. officials to read. By itself, however, it does not give you permission to drive.

3. Illinois State ID Card

- **What Is an State ID Card**

As an international student you may not need to drive in the United States, but you may want a form of identification that is easier to carry than your passport.
- **Applying for the State ID Card**
 - Follow the application instructions listed above for obtaining a driver's license.
 - Refer to the eligibility requirements and application process here: www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

MAINTAINING VISA STATUS

****PLEASE NOTE:** The information provided below is a brief explanation of your rights and responsibilities as an international student. We have not reprinted all applicable laws in this section. Please consult the Office of International Affairs if you have any questions.

1. Health Insurance

- All international students are required to have health insurance which covers them during their period of study as indicated on the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. Please refer to the section on health insurance (pp. 13-14).

2. Semester Registration

- **Full-Time Enrollment**
 - Undergraduate, Exchange, and ESL students must take 12 credits each semester.
 - Graduate students must take at least 8 credit hours each semester.
 - **Do not drop classes without first checking with the Office of International Affairs.**
 - All international students must show full course registration at the start of each semester. Even if you are taking some classes in Quad A and some classes in Quad B, you must be registered for the full amount of credits at the start of Quad A.
- **Less Than Full-Time Enrollment**
 - There are only a few cases in which an international student may legally enroll less than full-time. Please contact the Office of International Affairs if you believe you qualify for an exemption.
 - Please note: **if you are authorized for a Reduced Course Load, your state loans may be reduced due to less than full-time enrollment.**
- **Online Courses**
 - International students may take only one on-line course each semester to count toward their full course requirement.
- **Summers**
 - A student who is enrolled in both spring semester and the following fall semester does not need to register for summer courses.
 - If you begin at North Park during the summer term, you must show full-time enrollment for the summer.

3. SEVIS Registration

- **Requirements**
 - At the start of each semester, every international student must be registered in the SEVIS database. Information about the SEVIS Checklist will be sent to you at the start of each term. You must submit your completed SEVIS Checklist to the Office of International Affairs in order for North Park to register you in SEVIS.
 - The Checklist includes:
 - Proof of full time enrollment for the term
 - Proof of health insurance. Please see the section on health insurance requirements
 - Understanding of F-1 or J-1 visa responsibilities and rights

- **Graduation**
 - During semester registration, the Office of International Affairs must indicate if a student is in her or his last session prior to graduation.
 - If you must postpone your program completion date past that on the I-20 or DS-2019 form, the Office of International Affairs must have a letter from your academic advisor indicating the classes you have left to complete and your new anticipated program end date.

4. Travel and Reentry

- **Form I-20 or DS-2019 Travel Signature**
 - Any international student traveling outside the US must have her or his Form I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed for travel prior to departure. Only DSOs/PDSOs can sign I-20 forms and only ROs/AROs can sign DS-2019 forms.
 - Travel signatures are valid for one year.
 - Exchange students on International Student Exchange Programs will have Form DS-2019 processed by ISEP. You will need the signature of an ISEP staff member, rather than a North Park RO/ARO, in order to travel outside of the United States.
- **Expired Visa and Visa “Renewal”**
 - Even if the visa in your passport expires, you may remain in the US as long as you are lawfully enrolled in school.
 - **If you leave the US with an expired visa, you must apply for a new visa in your home country prior to returning.**
 - Before you can apply for a new visa, you must obtain an updated Form I-20 or DS-2019 from the Office of International Affairs.
 - Regulations governing application for a new visa in a country other than the home country (e.g., Canada or Mexico) are complicated. **If you attempt to renew a visa in a country other than your home country and the visa renewal is denied, you will not be permitted back into the United States**, even if your academic program is ongoing. Please see the Office of International Affairs if you plan to travel to Canada or Mexico on an expired visa.
- **Traveling and OPT**
 - **Do not travel outside the U.S. before applying for OPT.**
 - A student who has an application pending for OPT should talk with the Office of International Affairs before leaving the US.
 - A student on OPT will need additional documentation to travel outside the U.S., depending on the specifics of your situation. Please consult the Office of International Affairs before you depart.
 - The travel signature on the Form I-20 must be renewed every 6 months while on OPT.

5. Employment

- **On-Campus Employment**
 - As an international student you are permitted to work on-campus a maximum of 20 hours per week during the academic term.
 - During the summer and/or other break periods (e.g., fall break, winter break, spring break) you may work on-campus 40 hours per week.
 - J-1 Exchange students must receive permission from the Office of International Affairs or alternative Program Sponsor (e.g. ISEP) before beginning any on-campus work.

- **Off-Campus Employment**
 - **You are not permitted to work off-campus without permission from the Office of International Affairs and, in some cases, the U.S. Government.** Even an unpaid, volunteer position, if not properly documented, may be considered illegal employment.
 - In some cases, you may engage in an off-campus internship, clinical training, or practicum (paid or unpaid) as part of your program of study. (See section on CPT).
 - If your financial circumstances have changed since the processing of your initial I-20 or DS-2019, you may be eligible to apply for Severe Economic Hardship Work Permission if the cause of the financial difficulty was out of your control. The application for Severe Economic Hardship Work Permission must be done in SEVIS with the help of the Office of International Affairs.

6. Curricular Practical Training

- **Definition of CPT**
 - Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as “alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school” and which is “an integral part of an established curriculum” (8 C.F.R 214.2(f)(10)(i)).
 - **Internships, clinicals, and practica all fall under the federal guidelines governing CPT.**
- **Eligibility**
 - You must have completed 1 academic year (2 semesters) in full-time F-1 status before you apply for CPT.
 - English language training (ESL) students are not eligible for CPT.
 - Undergraduate students must declare an academic major (typically in the second year) before applying for CPT. You must receive Major credit for any CPT experience.
 - **Graduate students in a program who have already completed a full year in F-1 status may be considered eligible for part-time CPT during the first semester of your program.** (Graduate students for whom practical or clinical training is required from the start of the program are eligible for CPT during the first semester.)
 - All CPT must be taken for academic credit.
- **Internships**
 - If pursuing an internship, you must meet all institutional requirements for internship eligibility before applying for CPT. You may, therefore, have to wait longer than 1 academic year before taking part in CPT.
- **Enrollment while on CPT**
 - Throughout CPT, you must be enrolled on a full-time basis
 - Undergraduates must be enrolled for 12 or more credit hours per semester.
 - Graduate students must be enrolled for 8 credit hours per semester.
 - Summers and break periods are an exception. However, CPT must still be taken for credit and appear on your academic schedule.
- **Applying for CPT**
 - You must first meet with your Academic Advisor or School Dean to determine whether you are eligible for an internship, clinical, or practicum.
 - Any CPT taken as an internship must also be vetted by the Career Development and Internships Office.

- CDIO will work with Student Administrative Services to register you for the internship.
 - Check in WebAdvisor to confirm that you have been registered.
 - Submit the following to the Office of International Affairs
 - A completed CPT Authorization Form, available in OIA
 - A copy of your academic schedule showing you are registered for an internship, clinical, or practicum
 - **Students doing CPT for clinical or practicum credit must also provide a letter from their site supervisor**
 - CPT applications be submitted at least 3 business days before you are scheduled to start
 - You will be issued a new Form I-20 indicating you are authorized to pursue CPT. **You may not begin CPT before you are issued a new Form I-20.**
- **Commonly asked questions**
 - **Can I be paid while on CPT?** – CPT may be paid or unpaid
 - **Do I have to have an internship/clinical/practicum lined up before I can apply for CPT?** – Yes. You must have an offer of employment or clinical/practicum appointment before CPT can be authorized.
 - **Can I do CPT part time or full time?** – It depends on your academic level and program:
 - Undergraduate students can only do CPT on a part-time basis (20 or fewer hours) during the fall and spring semesters. You may do full-time CPT during the summer (only if enrolled for the following fall) and/or break periods. Undergraduates can do up to 8 credits of CPT.
 - Graduate students can do only do CPT on a part-time basis during the academic year. You may do full-time CPT during your vacation period (and only if enrolled for the following academic term). Use of full-time CPT for 12 months or more eliminates eligibility for Optical Practical Training (OPT).
 - **Can I change employers or sites while on CPT?** – You may. However, you must fill out a new CPT Authorization Form, as CPT can only be authorized for a specific employer, location, and duration (i.e., start- and end dates) indicated on the CPT Authorization Form. You may not change employers during CPT without prior authorization by the Office of International Affairs.
 - **Can I do more than one CPT a semester?** – Yes. You must complete a separate CPT Authorization Form for each experience
- **Federal regulations governing CPT**
 - **Any off-campus internship, clinical, or practicum experience that is not properly documented as CPT may impact a student's future prospects for employment benefits or Change of Status petitions.**
 - In any and all instances of CPT, it is the academic curriculum and not the desire for employment that should determine the usefulness and purpose of CPT. USCIS expressly prohibits the authorization of CPT for the purpose of facilitating employment.
 - Eligibility for CPT will be determined by the P/DSO on a case-by-case basis at the time of application. The P/DSO reserves the right to make exceptions or changes to the above policy, given particular student circumstances and/or in accordance with amendments to federal law or its interpretation.
 - **The P/DSO is obligated to report illegal employment. If a P/DSO has constructive knowledge that a student is engaging in off-campus work that is not properly documented, the P/DSO will terminate the student's SEVIS record for "Unauthorized Employment."**

7. Volunteering

Students interested in volunteering off campus must consult the Office of International Affairs to determine whether or not your experience qualifies as CPT.

POST-PROGRAM OPTIONS

1. F-1 Students

- **60-Day Grace Period** – After your program (ESL, undergraduate, or graduate), is completed, you may take 60 days to travel within the US and prepare to depart the country. **You may not work during the grace period, and cannot depart and reenter the U.S.**
- **Other Options** – you have several other options, all of which must happen within 60 days of the program end date on your Form I-20.
 - You may apply for another program at North Park.
 - You may apply for an academic program at another university.
 - If you have completed an undergraduate or graduate degree you may be eligible to apply with the USCIS for one year of employment in the U.S. in your field of study, referred to as Optional Practical Training (OPT). Students who are interested in applying for OPT should speak to an Office of International Affairs staff member as soon as possible.

2. J-1 Students

- **30-Day Grace Period** – After your exchange program is completed, you may take 30 days to travel within the US and prepare to depart the country. **You may not work during the grace period, and cannot depart and reenter the U.S.**

GLOSSARY – IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND TERMS

1. Travel Documents

- **Passport**
 - Issued by your own government, your passport permits you to leave and reenter your own country.
 - **U.S. law requires that your passport be valid at all times.**
- **Visa**
 - This stamp in your passport, given by a U.S. consulate abroad, allows you to enter the U.S.
 - It indicates the type of visa you have (e.g., F-1, J-1, B-2) and the latest date on which you can enter the United States.
 - Your visa does not indicate how long you may stay in the U.S. **It is possible to stay in the U.S. on an expired visa as long as you have a valid form I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students).**
 - **You must renew your visa only if you plan to leave and re-enter the U.S. after your visa has expired.**
- **I-94**
 - This is an electronic record of your entry to and departure from the United States. Each time you re-enter the U.S. you receive a new I-94 number.
 - **Should you need ever need a copy of your I-94 record, you may obtain it online: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>.**
- **I-20**
 - This document is given by a university to allow a student to apply for an **F-1 student visa**.
 - If you leave the U.S. for a period of time and plan to return, you will need a signature on page 3 of your I-20.
- **DS-2019**
 - This document is given by a university or program sponsor to allow an exchange visitor or scholar to apply for a **J-1 exchange visitor visa**.
 - If you leave the U.S. for a period of time and plan to return, you will need a signature on page 1 of your DS-2019.

2. Terms

- **Duration of Status or D/S**
 - F-1 and J-1 students have permission to remain in the U.S. for the “duration of status,” the period during which you are pursuing a full course of study.
 - It may include any period of authorized practical training (F-1) or academic training (J-1).
 - It also includes a **grace period** within which to leave the country (**60 days for F-1 visa holders; 30 days for J-1 visa holders**).
- **SEVP/SEVIS**
 - The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (a division of the US Citizenship and Immigration Service) keeps track of international students and scholars in the United States.
 - SEVP uses a computer database called SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System).

- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**
 - This laminated card is issued by the DHS as proof of valid employment authorization for certain F-1 students and J-2 dependents. The EAD indicates the beginning and ending dates of employment and the type of work permission authorized.
- **USCIS**
 - The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service makes decisions on the benefits of visa status, such as work authorization, change of status, and reinstatement.