Section 1: Welcome & Overview

A Word of Welcome!

Congratulations again on your admission to Luther! We are happy you have made the decision to attend Luther; we look forward to having you join us on campus in the near future.

Once you arrive on campus, you will quickly realize that there are a lot of people who will be involved in helping you be successful at Luther—faculty members, advisors, counselors, administrative and support staff, and other students. Although the campus is full of people who will support you throughout your studies, the following people are primarily responsible for working with international students at Luther. They are:

- **Jon Lund** – responsible for managing the admissions and scholarship processes for all international students. Jon is the primary contact for you prior to arrival on campus.
- **Amy Webber** – works with all international students throughout their enrollment at Luther. Amy is the primary support person for you once you arrive on campus.

About the Luther College International Student Pre-Arrival Guide

The *International Student Pre-Arrival Guide* was written to help you navigate the confusing process between college admissions and your arrival on Luther’s campus. Please read through the information carefully.

The *Pre-Arrival Guide* is divided into various sections to make it easier for you to find information. In addition, the *Pre-Arrival Guide* contains a variety of symbols to help call your attention to important information. As you read the *Pre-Arrival Guide*, look for the following symbols:

ℹ️ The “i” symbol, short for “information,” alerts you to text that requires special attention.

📄 The “document” symbol highlights documents and forms that you will need to complete. We will instruct you to complete and submit several documents prior to your arrival at Luther. For other documents, we will ask you to bring them with you and submit them once you arrive.

Contact Information

We know you will have questions as you prepare for your visa interview, make your travel plans, and travel to the U.S. to begin your studies. Feel free to contact us if you have questions or need help.

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<tr>
<th>Jon Lund</th>
<th>Executive Director, Center for Global Learning and International Admissions</th>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:lundjon@luther.edu">lundjon@luther.edu</a></td>
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<th>Amy Webber</th>
<th>International Student Coordinator, Diversity Center</th>
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**Important Note:** When you are traveling to Luther, you should contact Amy if your flight(s) are delayed or if you are experiencing travel problems. Calls made to this number after business hours (M-F, 8 AM - 5 PM) will be forwarded to Amy’s cell phone; she will be able to help you day or night.

**Please Note:** Additional emergency contact information is found on page 14.
Section 2: Introducing Luther

About Luther

Founded in 1861, Luther College is a four-year, university-level, residential institution of 2,400 students. One of the outstanding colleges in the Midwest, Luther offers more than 60 majors, minors, and pre-professional programs leading to the bachelor of arts degree.

A Phi Beta Kappa chapter—the most prestigious academic honors society found on only ten percent of American college and university campuses—confirms the academic excellence of the college.

Originally founded by Norwegian immigrants—and named for the 16th-century reformer, Martin Luther—the college is affiliated with the Lutheran church and welcomes students of all beliefs and backgrounds to its 1,000-acre (405-hectare) campus.

Luther College is located in Decorah, Iowa, a picturesque community of nearly 8,500 people. Decorah has an abundance of clean air, clean water, and is a very welcoming place. The town has been recognized as one of the best 120 small towns in the U.S. And the Smithsonian magazine recently selected Decorah as one of the “20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2014.”

Mission Statement

In the reforming spirit of Martin Luther, Luther College affirms the liberating power of faith and learning. As people of all backgrounds, we embrace diversity and challenge one another to learn in community, to discern our callings, and to serve with distinction for the common good.

As a college of the church, Luther is rooted in an understanding of grace and freedom that emboldens us in worship, study, and service to seek truth, examine our faith, and care for all God’s people.

As a liberal arts college, Luther is committed to a way of learning that moves us beyond immediate interests and present knowledge into a larger world—an education that disciplines minds and develops whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

As a residential college, Luther is a place of intersection. Founded where river, woodland, and prairie meet, we practice joyful stewardship of the resources that surround us, and we strive to be a community where students, faculty, and staff are enlivened and transformed by encounters with one another, by the exchange of ideas, and by the life of faith and learning.

Brief History

After discussions extending over several years, the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America decided on October 10, 1857 to found a college.

In the same year it also decided that, until such time as suitable buildings could be erected, students should be sent to a college in St. Louis, Missouri and that a Norwegian professorship should be established there. The first three students went to St. Louis in 1858 and five more followed the next year.

The Norwegian professorship was filled in 1859, when Reverend Laur. Larsen was appointed, entering officially upon his duties October 14, 1859. Hence October 14 was designated as Founders’ Day by the college.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, disorder arose in St. Louis, the college closed in April 1861, and Professor Larsen and students returned home. At its meeting in June 1861, the church decided to proceed at once to establish its own college.

In August, although a building in Decorah, Iowa had been rented and partially renovated, college authorities decided to make use of a newly erected vacant parsonage at Halfway Creek, Wisconsin, about 13 miles north of La Crosse, Wisconsin. There the school opened September 1, 1861, with two teachers, Laur. Larsen and F. A. Schmidt. Larsen and Schmidt also served as pastors for the immigrants living in the area. The enrollment for the year was 16.

In the summer of 1862 the school was transferred to Decorah; its first home was the building, still standing, at the northwest corner of Winnebago and Main streets. The first building on the college campus was "Main,” dedicated October 14, 1865.

The present Main building is the third "Main" to stand on the same site, the two preceding having been destroyed by fire in 1889 and 1942. Though college work was begun in 1861, the Civil War, illness, and other causes left none of that year's freshman class to graduate in 1865. The first graduating class, therefore, was that of 1866.
The classical curriculum established by the founders of the college was changed in 1932 when the requirement that all students take both Greek and Latin was dropped.

For 75 years the school admitted men only; then in 1936 Luther College became coeducational. When the institution celebrated its centennial in 1961, it had an enrollment of 1,357 and a staff of 74 full-time and 12 part-time teachers.

Expansion has marked Luther’s second century with the student body at approximately 2,500. The number of faculty has increased to nearly 200. The college has expanded physically since 1960 with an extensive building program that included a union, library, science hall and laboratories, business and computer science facility, field house and athletic complex, residence halls, a music building, an art and theatre building, and a center for worship and performing arts. In 2011, Luther celebrated its 150th anniversary!

**Academic Calendar**

The academic year at Luther is divided into:

- Fall Semester (September-December).
- January-term (the month of January; students refer to it as J-term).
- Spring Semester (February-May).
- In addition, students may choose to enroll in summer session classes; summer session classes have additional fees.

New international students need to attend an international student orientation coordinated by Amy Webber in the Diversity Center. For students entering during Fall Semester, international student orientation is a weeklong overview to the academic experience at Luther and introduces students to life in the U.S. For students who begin mid-year (during J-term or Spring Semester), the international student orientation is compressed into a few days.

Detailed information about international student orientation is found in Section 6 of this *Pre-Arrival Guide*.

We have enclosed two copies of the **Academic Calendar** with the *Pre-Arrival Guide*. One copy is for your use; one copy is for the use of your parents, guardians, or sponsors.

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**Section 3:**

**Obtaining Your Visa**

**Applying for Your U.S. Visa**

⚠️ Your first step as you prepare for your Luther education is to obtain your U.S. visa.

The U.S Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State determine the visa issuance process. Students attending Luther enter the U.S. under an F-1 student visa. The process to obtain an F-1 visa consists of the following steps:

- We have enclosed a **Form I-20**. The I-20 is required for you to apply for an F-1 student visa for study in the U.S. You will need to bring this form with you to your visa interview at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country.

- All students applying for a U.S. visa are also required to pay a SEVIS fee. SEVIS is an acronym for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. This program tracks all student visitors to the U.S. Students are required to pay a $200, I-901 fee to help offset the cost of the program. At Luther (unlike most colleges in the U.S.), we pay the $200 SEVIS fee for you. We have included a **SEVIS I-901 fee payment confirmation** with this mailing. Bring this SEVIS I-901 fee payment confirmation with you to your interview.

- **Schedule your visa interview** at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. In some countries, the wait time for your interview can be long, so start early. These interviews can be as short as 2-3 minutes in length, or as long as 15-20 minutes. The visa process varies from country to country, so you will need to follow the procedures specific to your country. For details, review the procedures for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your city/country.

  - [www.usembassy.gov/](http://www.usembassy.gov/)

- Once your U.S. visa is issued, you will be ready to make your travel plans to Luther. Once again, it is important you plan ahead, since the process may take time.

**EducationUSA: A Useful Resource**

EducationUSA advising offices are available in almost all countries around the world. EducationUSA is the educational advising branch of the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs. Students are
strongly encouraged to use the resources available through these centers as a way of preparing for the visa interview.

These centers, which typically charge very little or nothing for their services, are great resources for international students. The centers will provide advice on the visa process and offer pre-departure orientations for international students studying in the U.S. We encourage you to locate an EducationUSA advising center near you.

http://educationusa.state.gov/find-advising-center/

In addition, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has their own site highlighting information for international students studying in the U.S.

https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/

Helpful Tips as You Prepare for Your Visa Interview

While consular officers never give specific reasons for a student being denied a visa, the three reasons most commonly cited are:

- The student’s academic record appeared weak for the program of study he/she intended to pursue.
- The student’s financial records did not appear to confirm his or her ability to pay for study in the U.S.
- The student did not appear to have ties to the country of citizenship; the consular official questioned whether or not the student’s true motive for study was to immigrate to the U.S.

Prior to your interview, we strongly encourage you to visit EducationUSA’s website on steps to U.S. study.

http://educationusa.state.gov/your-5-steps-us-study/

Ten Points to Remember at Your Visa Interview

NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, has prepared ten points for students to remember when applying for a visa. Gerald A. Wunsch and Martha Wailes developed these points, with input from the U.S. Department of State. We have adapted them for use below.

Ties to Home Country. Under U.S. law, applicants for student visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the U.S. “Ties” to your home country are things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence—job, family, financial prospects that you own, or will inherit, investments, etc. The interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in our home country. Each person’s situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter that can guarantee visa issuance.

English. Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language.

Speak for Yourself. Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

Know the Program and How it Fits Your Career Plans. If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program at Luther, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying at Luther and in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

Be Concise. Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer’s questions short and to the point.

Supplemental Documentation. It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you’re lucky.

Not All Countries are Equal. Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the
U.S. as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.

**Employment.** Your main purpose for coming to the U.S. should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While a few students do work off-campus during their studies, most students do not and such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If you are married and your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, beware that F-2 visa holders cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S.

**Dependents Remaining at Home.** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family.

**Maintain a Positive Attitude.** Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

**Important Reminder**

- Remember to bring these forms with you to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for your visa interview:
  - I-20 form (3 pages).
  - SEVIS I-901 fee payment confirmation.
  - A valid passport.
  - Completed visa application form.
  - Official Luther College acceptance letter.
  - Official Luther College financial aid documents (and your financial support documents).
  - Any forms specific to procedures at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country.

**Let Luther Know About Your Visa Status**

As soon as you are granted a U.S. visa, please send an e-mail message to Jon Lund to let him know. If you are denied a visa, don’t panic. Send an e-mail message to Jon and he will help you prepare for a second visa interview.

- If you live in a country with a high visa denial rate, send an e-mail message to Jon in advance of your interview indicating the date of your visa interview. Jon will send an additional letter to you that you may present at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate during your interview, urging the U.S. government to grant you a visa.
Section 4:
Things to Do Prior to Your Arrival at Luther

Getting Ready to Come to Luther

There are a number of other tasks you need to complete—in addition to obtaining your U.S. visa—prior to coming to Luther. We’ve listed the tasks below:

- We have enclosed the Student Health Evaluation Form with your Pre-Arrival Guide. This form should be completed and brought with you to campus (you do not need to mail it in advance). This form has five sections:
  - A section for you to provide us with your medical history.
  - A “confidential sharing agreement and consent for treatment” section.
  - An insurance data section.
  - A section on immunizations.
  - A physical examination section to be completed by a physician or healthcare provider.

Luther College requires that you complete the Student Health Evaluation Form, undergo a complete physical examination, and update your immunizations prior to arrival on campus. If you arrive on campus without the proper immunizations, you will be required to receive the inoculations through the Luther College Health Service at your expense.

- It is important that you bring your completed immunization record with you to campus. Your registration for classes is not complete until the Luther Health Service receives your student health evaluation record (including immunizations).

- All international students are required to enroll in the college’s student health insurance plan. You will enroll in the health insurance plan once you arrive on campus.

- When your acceptance letter was mailed to you, we included a Luther College Housing Application. If you have not already done so, complete the application, scan the document, and attach it to an e-mail message sent to global@luther.edu. If it’s more convenient, you may also fax it to the Center for Global Learning, +1-563-387-1060.

- You will need to have your school send your final original or certified copy of your secondary school transcripts to us (if we have not received them already). You may have the school send the documents directly to Luther, or you may bring the documents along with you.

- If you have completed A-Levels, IB (International Baccalaureate), or AP (Advanced Placement) curricula and sat for the related exams, you may be eligible for transfer credit. Obtaining A-Level exam scores (scores D or higher), IB Higher Level exam scores (scores of 4 or higher), or AP exam scores (scores of 4 or higher) will generally result in you being eligible for transfer credit to Luther College based on the standards established by the Registrar and/or the academic department. Please be aware that you may have to supply Luther with catalogs, syllabi, or other written documentation of prior coursework. You will be responsible for providing certified English translations, if necessary. You will not receive credit for prior coursework until the Registrar’s Office verifies, to its satisfaction, your documentation for all prior coursework.

- All international students are matched with a family through the Friendship Family Program. You will meet your family during orientation. You do not live with the family; instead, your Friendship Family will occasionally invite you to family activities, prepare some meals, and celebrate special holidays or events with you. The Friendship Family Program is an excellent way for you to get to know an American family and learn more about life in America. Your family will, in turn, get to know more about you and your culture. You are not required to have a family. If you DO NOT want a family, please contact Amy Webber, webberam@luther.edu. You will receive more information about the Friendship Family Program in the summer before your arrival.

www.luther.edu/diversity/programs/friendship-family/
Planning Your Travel to Luther

**Please note:** the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport has two terminals—Terminal 1 (the main terminal served by all international flights and most domestic flights) and the much smaller Terminal 2. A free tram connects both terminals.

**New International Student Orientation officially begins on Monday, August 22.** It is very important that you attend orientation. If, for some reason, you will not be able to arrive by Monday, August 22, contact Amy Webber as soon as possible.

**We strongly recommend that you arrive on Luther’s campus a day or two prior to orientation (but not earlier). Therefore, you should plan your travel so that you arrive on either Saturday, August 20 or Sunday, August 21.**

**Most international travelers enter the U.S. at one of the country’s major international airports (for example, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, or Minneapolis). Once you have arrived at a major international airport entry point, you will clear immigration and customs before continuing on a domestic flight to a smaller airport.**

**If at all possible, we encourage you to plan your travel so that you fly into the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP is the airport code) on Saturday, August 20.** Luther College has chartered a bus to transport international students arriving on August 20 directly to campus from the airport (the drive from the airport to campus takes about 2 hours and 30 minutes). **The bus departs the airport at 4:00 p.m.**

You should plan your air travel so you arrive at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport (Terminal 1) at least 90 minutes before the scheduled departure time listed above. This should allow you enough time to clear customs (if Minneapolis is your port of entry into the U.S.), collect your luggage, and find the bus departure location. The bus will provide you with a very convenient way to travel to Luther. In addition, it should be fun since you will have the opportunity to meet many of the other new international students on the bus. **The bus is free of charge. You need to reserve your space in advance by contacting Amy Webber at webberam@luther.edu.**
is $29. You should make reservations for the shuttle by contacting Amy Webber in the Luther Diversity Center. If you use this option, we have included the shuttle van schedule (the shuttle van company is called “GO Rochester Direct”).

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Periodically, the “GO Rochester Direct” shuttle schedule may change. You may verify the shuttle schedule online.

www.gorochesterdirect.com

Just so you know, the “GO Rochester Direct” airport desk is located in the Ground Transportation Atrium at Terminal 1 of the Minneapolis/St. Paul International airport. Signs will point you to Ground Transportation.

☐ **It is very important that you send Amy Webber, via e-mail, a copy of your entire travel itinerary.** Amy needs to receive the following information for each portion of your trip to Luther. It’s important that you work with Amy as you make your arrangements since she will be able to help you better coordinate your arrival with bus/shuttle transportation.

☐ As a reminder, U.S. regulations allow you to enter the U.S. **no sooner than 30 days before the start date on your I-20 form.**

☐ If your travel plans change prior to departure (or if you have a flight problem, a delayed flight, miss a connection, or anything else while on your way to Luther) make sure you contact Amy Webber. **See page 14 for emergency contact information.**
Section 5: Academics at Luther

What You Need to Know

During new international student orientation, you will meet your first-year advisor, talk about your academic interests, take a few placement exams, and register for classes. Your advisor will help you through this whole process after you arrive on campus. There is nothing you need to do prior to your arrival.

Since you are joining an academic community, though, you should know a bit about Luther College’s approach to learning. The following section provides an overview.

Goals for Student Learning

Graduates of Luther College should be individuals with disciplined and inquisitive minds, equipped to understand and confront a changing society, and committed to using their talents to serve the common good.

As a liberal arts college of the church, Luther College seeks to ensure that all students will grow in knowledge and abilities and mature in values during their undergraduate years and be motivated to continue this growth throughout their lives. The college expects students to pursue these goals in both independent and collaborative settings. It provides an environment in which students are active participants in shaping their intellectual and personal development.

Summary of All-College Requirements

To meet the Luther goals for student learning, all graduates will:

- Find common ground in their learning in this place.
- Explore fields of inquiry, one in depth and others across the liberal arts.
- Seek an integrative understanding of their studies and the relationship of those studies to the larger world.
- Develop the perspectives and skills they need as students and in their lives as citizens and professionals equipped for distinguished service.

Specifically, this means students at Luther will be required to pursue studies in the following areas:

- **Common Ground**
  - Paideia I (two courses: Paideia 111 and 112).
  - Religion (two courses).
  - Language other than English (one to two courses typical; waived if English is second language).
  - Wellness (two one-credit courses: PE 100 and 110).

- **Fields of Inquiry**
  - Inquiry in Depth (an eight to ten course major typical, some larger).
  - Inquiry across the Liberal Arts (six courses, some of which may be satisfied within the major).

- **Integrative Understanding**
  - Paideia II (ordinarily one course).
  - Senior Project (up to one full-course equivalent).

- **Perspectives and Skills**
  - Intercultural (one course, often satisfied within other requirements).
  - Historical (one course, often satisfied within other requirements).
  - Quantitative (one course, sometimes satisfied within other requirements).
  - Ethical (satisfied within the major and Paideia II).
  - Writing (satisfied within Paideia I, the major, and Paideia II).
  - Speaking and Public Presentation (satisfied within the first-year January seminar, the major, and the senior project).
  - Research (satisfied within Paideia I, the major, and senior project).

Requirements for the Degree

To qualify for the bachelor of arts degree, students must complete 128 semester hours of credit with a cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 (C) or higher. The 128 hours must include the following:

- 30 fall/spring full courses or their equivalents. A full course is equivalent to 4 credit hours; other courses offered are equivalent to 2 credit hours or 1 credit hour.
- 2 January terms. These 2 month-long terms must include a first-year seminar, and one of the following types of experiences: study abroad, directed readings, student-initiated project.
- At least 20 course equivalents outside the student’s major discipline.
- All-college requirements, as articulated above.
Majors
Luther College’s liberal arts education balances the breadth symbolized in the general requirements with the depth possible in an individual major. Each major incorporates a body of knowledge, a methodology, applications, and ethical concerns.

Accounting  History
Africana Studies  Intermedia Arts
Anthropology  International Studies
Art  Mathematics
Athletic Training  Mathematics/Statistics
Biblical Languages  Music
Biology  Nordic Studies
Business (Management)  Nursing
Chemistry  Philosophy
Classics  Physical Education
Communication Studies  Education
Computer Science  Physics
Dance  Political Science
Data Sciences  Psychology
Economics  Religion
Education  Russian Studies
English  Social Work
Environmental Studies  Sociology
French  Spanish
German  Theatre
Health & Fitness Promotion  Women’s and Gender Studies
Health Education-Teaching

In addition, students may combine study in a given major (or majors) with pre-professional preparation in areas that lead to careers in medicine, dentistry, law, journalism, church vocations, engineering, physical therapy, and museum studies, to name a few.

Finally, working with a faculty advisor, students may also propose and design an individualized interdisciplinary major.

English 114: Introduction to U.S. Academic Writing
Just so you know, most international students who attend Luther are pre-enrolled in an introductory English course, called Introduction to U.S. Academic Writing. This course helps students become fluent, confident, and effective writers and readers in U.S. academic culture. It strengthens skills in writing college-level essays (including thesis-driven, analytic essays), in responsible use of outside sources, and in making surface corrections and refinements. Some instruction takes place in individual conferences. Students will usually take this course concurrently with Paideia 111.

For More Information
As mentioned earlier, you don’t need to worry about registering for classes until after you have arrived on campus and spoken with your academic advisor. Feel free, though, to explore academic options as listed on the Luther website.

www.luther.edu/academics/

A full description of all Luther courses is available in the Luther College Catalog, found online.

www.luther.edu/catalog/
Section 6: Orientation, Housing & Meals

Orientation: An Overview

New international student orientation is designed to help you become acclimated to life in the U.S. and your experiences as a college student at Luther. Some of the activities/experiences during new international student orientation include:

- Move in to your residence hall room.
- Meet your roommate when he/she arrives on campus.
- Tour campus and learn about the various facilities at Luther.
- Tour Decorah and the surrounding area.
- Meet staff members from a variety of offices.
- Meet your academic advisor and register for classes.
- Take a few placement exams to determine the appropriate courses in which you should enroll.
- Have a picture taken for your Luther student identification card.
- Talk about how to pay your bills, set up payment plans, manage your money, use work-study funds to help cover expenses, taxes, and other financial topics.
- Open a U.S. bank account.
- Register for a U.S. social security number.
- Determine your work-study assignment, complete work-study paperwork, talk about expectations, and meet with your work-study supervisor.
- Discuss living in the U.S.
- Shop for supplies for your room and for classes.
- Learn how to use Luther’s computer networks, e-mail, and other technology.
- Meet your friendship family.
- Share experiences with upper-class Luther international students.
- Learn about your responsibilities relative to SEVIS and maintaining your F-1 visa status.
- Attend a Diversity Center Welcome Dinner.
- Have lots of fun!

Housing

Please be aware that all students are required to live on campus. You will, most likely, live in a room with one or two other students. Typically, your roommate(s) during your first year at Luther will be an American student(s) who can help you adjust more quickly to life in the U.S. After your first year, you will select your own room and roommate(s). A few notes about your accommodation:

Rooms. Each room contains mattresses, dressers, desks, blinds, chairs, and closet space.

Linen. The college will provide basic linen packets (a blanket, pillow, sheets, and a towel) for new international students. These items will be returned to the college upon graduation.

Telephone. Each room has a telephone equipped with a voice mail system. Each student determines his/her own access code for the system. Students may use a calling card to make long-distance calls.

TVs. Televisions are located in one public lounge in every residence hall. TVs are allowed in student rooms. Each room is equipped with a cable TV jack; basic cable TV service is included in the room fee.

Data Network. Each residence hall room is connected to the Luther College network, which includes Internet and e-mail services. During orientation, you will receive instructions on how to use the technology on Luther’s campus. If you don’t have a computer, hundreds of computer stations are available across campus for your use.

Laundry. Each residence hall has laundry facilities available for student use. Students pay $1.00 per load to wash laundry and $0.50 per load to dry. Students provide their own laundry detergent.

Microwaves. Each residence hall is equipped with microwave ovens for student use.

Housing During Breaks. Almost all colleges in the U.S. “close” for various college holidays and vacations. At Luther, the college is officially closed for Winter Break (typically the last two weeks of December) and Spring Break (typically one week in March or April). In addition, the college has a number of short breaks of two to four days. Although the college is closed during the break periods, international students may continue to stay in certain designated college housing areas (free of charge). Students are, however, responsible for paying their
own meal costs when the cafeteria is closed during breaks. Finally, if you choose to live on campus during the summer, there is an additional charge.

**Meals**

The general student meal plan included in your costs provides for 19-meals per week (and $200 in Dining Dollars) each semester while classes are in session. Once you arrive on campus, you will be provided with information on how to modify your meal plan options to best meet your needs.

Dining Dollars can be used anywhere you can buy food on campus: Marty's, Oneota Market, Sunnyside Cafe, the C-Store, Nordic Brew, Grab-N-Go, Peace Brunch and the cafeteria.

Students may eat in variety of different dining locations across campus. Consult the Dining Services homepage for details.

https://www.luther.edu/dining/

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**Section 7:**

**Odds & Ends**

**Just So You Know**

This section contains important information that doesn’t fit easily into the other sections of the Pre-Arrival Guide.

**Climate.** Iowa is located in the American Midwest, a region of the country that features four seasonal changes. Climatic conditions vary widely from season to season. Clothing needs will vary from lightweight in the summer when it is typically hot and humid to heavyweight in the winter. We encourage you to explore the average high and low temperatures by month on the Luther website.

http://www.luther.edu/admissions/international/discover/iowaclimate/

**Shipping Items.** If you want to ship any winter clothing or other items to Luther, the Diversity Center will store the packages for you until you arrive. Send your packages to:

Luther College Diversity Center
700 College Drive
Decorah, Iowa 52101 U.S.A.

(Please place your name on the outside of the package so we know it belongs to you.)

**Things to Bring.** Because of luggage weight restrictions, we suggest you bring the essential items you need to campus with you (clothing, personal items, special medications, important documents, etc.) and either ship other items to campus or purchase them once you arrive. We recommend you come with a modest amount of money that you can use to purchase items (such as paper, pens, other school supplies, alarm clock, clothes hangers, etc.) once you arrive. The international student orientation schedule provides time and transportation for shopping.

**Towels and Washcloths.** As mentioned earlier, blankets, pillow, sheets, and a towel are provided for you. Most students choose to obtain their own towels and washcloths, though. Bring these items with you, ship them, or plan on purchasing them when you arrive.

**Ethnic Arts Festival.** Each Spring Semester, the Diversity Center sponsors an Ethnic Arts Festival featuring exhibits and performances from around the world. We encourage you to bring native clothing, flags, recipes, and other items that represent your
country so that they may be represented at the Ethnic Arts Festival.

**Book Shop.** Luther owns and operates its own on-campus store. The Book Shop stocks textbooks, Luther College clothing (purchased from certified, “sweatshop-free” manufacturers), greeting cards, gifts, and personal items.

**Health Service.** The Luther College Health Service and its programs are a support service for the promotion of health and the prevention of diseases. The office provides on-campus services of a certified nurse practitioner, registered nurses, a massage therapist, and two family physicians. Services include diagnostic and treatment of medical problems, first aid for medical emergencies, health education, laboratory testing, allergy injections, immunizations, and medical referrals.

**Area Health Care.** Decorah has a wonderful hospital and two private clinics. In general, all of your health needs can be met in Decorah. If you require more specialized care, the world-famous Mayo Clinic and Hospitals (widely regarded as the best health care facility in the world) is only a 75-minute drive away.

**Counseling Service.** The Counseling Service assists students in resolving personal concerns. Short-term individual and group counseling is offered on a confidential basis. A licensed psychologist and two nationally certified mental health counselors staff the office. The staff also refers students to other services or to off-campus mental health professionals as appropriate.

**Career Center.** The Luther Career Center offers a full complement of programs and services addressing the career needs of students. The Career Center works with students in identifying majors, obtaining internships, and preparing for graduate school and/or employment. A director, an internship coordinator, a career counselor, an employment coordinator, and career resource specialists staff the center.

**Student Academic Support Center.** The Student Academic Support Center provides academic support, free tutors, writing support, and professional assistance with time management, learning assistance, test-taking strategies, and note-taking.

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**The Luther Shuttle.** Section 4 of this *Pre-Arrival Guide* covers details related to your initial travel to Luther. We want you to know that after your initial travel to Luther, you may want to coordinate your flights to/from the United States with Luther’s regularly scheduled shuttle that provides cost-effective travel to/from various airports before and after college breaks.

[https://tickets.luther.edu/online/](https://tickets.luther.edu/online/)

**Computers, Cell Phones, and Technology.** Luther’s Technology Help Desk has produced a very helpful resource on technology related questions and answers for new students. Visit the Technology Help Desk online.

[http://www.luther.edu/helpdesk/newstudent/#one](http://www.luther.edu/helpdesk/newstudent/#one)

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**Important Reminder**

- Remember to bring these documents with you when you travel to Luther:
  - A valid passport with your visa. Please note: your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of your expected stay.
  - I-20 form (3 pages).
  - SEVIS I-901 fee payment confirmation.
  - Official Luther College acceptance letter.
  - Official Luther College financial aid documents.
  - Airline tickets and flight itinerary.
  - This *Pre-Arrival Guide*.
  - Your completed Student Health Evaluation Form.
  - Original or certified copies of transcripts for coursework you would like to be considered for transfer credit. You may have to supply syllabi, catalogs, or other documents (with certified English translations, if necessary) to verify the completion of prior college-level coursework.
Emergency Contact Information

A few important ways to contact us:

☐ If you would like to leave an emergency contact number with your parents, guardians, or friends prior to your departure to the U.S., we recommend giving them the following numbers:
  ➤ Diversity Center phone number
      +1-563-387-1014
  ➤ Diversity Center FAX number
      +1-563-387-2127.
  ➤ Amy Webber’s e-mail address
      webberam@luther.edu

☐ When you are traveling to Luther, you should contact Amy Webber in the Diversity Center if your flight(s) are delayed or if you are experiencing travel problems. Simply dial +1-563-387-1014 (the Diversity Center phone number). After hours and on weekends, calls made to this number will be forwarded to Amy’s cell phone; she will be able to help you day or night.

☐ You may also call Amy directly on her cell phone at +1-563-419-0025.

Section 8: Arriving at a U.S. Port of Entry

What Can You Expect

So, you’ve read your Luther College International Student Pre-Arrival Guide thoroughly, completed your preparations, and are now ready to enter the U.S. What can you expect?

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is committed to facilitating your stay in the United States while you take advantage of the nation’s academic, educational, and cultural offerings. To enhance security without slowing legitimate travel, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has instituted entry and exit procedures. Careful planning and preparation by international students can ensure that any delay based on these procedures is minimal.

A Word of Warning

You may be refused entry into the United States if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the program start date listed on your I-20 form.

Plan Your Arrival

A few helpful tips as you plan your arrival:

- **Always hand-carry your documents.** Do not place the Luther College International Student Travel Documents envelope (enclosed with this Pre-Arrival Guide) in your checked luggage.
- **Instead,** place all of your important documents into the envelope and carry it with you on your flight. Use the checklist on the outside of the envelope to ensure that you have the appropriate documents.

For additional information on procedures for traveling to and arriving in the U.S., visit:

Complete Your Entry Paperwork

Flight attendants on your airplane will distribute one form for you to complete while you are in flight: a Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059). Bring a pen along with you on your flight so you can complete this form prior to landing.

- Enter your Last/Family Name and First/Given Name exactly as it appears in your passport.
- The document will ask you for your street address where you are staying. You should enter the following: Luther College 700 College Drive Decorah, Iowa 52101
- Please note: most airlines will have detailed instructions on how to complete this form inside the airline’s in-flight magazine. Consult the in-flight magazine for additional information.

Arriving at the Port of Entry

Once your flight has landed, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available for presentation:

- Passport and visa.
- I-20 form (3 pages).
- Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059).

All visitors entering the United States must state their reason for wishing to enter the country. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer that you will be a student. Be prepared to state that you will be a student at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. You may also be asked to present some of the other documents contained in your Travel Documents envelope at this time.

Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will:

- Stamp your documents for duration of status (“D/S”) for F-1 visa holders.

Once you have cleared immigration and had your documents verified, you proceed to baggage claim, pick up your luggage, and then clear customs (where you will submit your customs declaration form). After you’ve cleared customs, you continue on your journey to Luther. Congratulations!

Once You Have Been Granted Entry into the United States

You are required to report to Luther College within 30 days of the date that appears on the I-20 form to register for courses. Failure to do so may result in serious consequences by the U.S. government.

Additional Information

Every so often, your entry into the U.S. may be delayed for a variety of reasons. This does not happen frequently, but you should be prepared in case it does.

Secondary Inspection Requirements. If the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry cannot initially verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information without causing delays for other arriving passengers. In addition, you may have to go to secondary inspection if you are entering the United States from certain countries.

The inspector will first attempt to verify your status by using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). In the event that the CBP officer needs to verify information with Luther, have the CBP officer contact Amy Webber, Luther’s Principal Designated School Official (PDSO). Amy’s contact information is located on your Travel Documents envelope and in your Pre-Arrival Guide.

Just so you know, failure to comply with U.S. government entry-exit procedures may result in you being denied entry to the United States. Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue a “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor” Form (I-515A), which authorizes temporary admission into the United States. Amy Webber will then work with you to submit the proper documentation without delay.
Section 9: Money Matters

Notes About Finances

Once you arrive at Luther, students frequently have questions about costs, scholarships and financial aid, work-study awards, and taxes. All of these issues will be covered in depth during new international student orientation. A few common topics of interest are listed below.

Wiring Money to Luther – Method 1

If you or your parents, guardians, or sponsors need to wire funds to the college, you may obtain bank wire transfer instructions online. You will also need to ask for our bank account number. Simply send an e-mail message to the International Admissions Office or the Diversity Center and we can e-mail you the bank account number.

http://www.luther.edu/financial-services/student/cost-pymt/wire/

Wiring Money to Luther – Method 2

Luther has also partnered with a company called Flywire by peerTransfer to make it easy and cost-effective for international students to pay by wire transfer from any country or any bank.

http://www.luther.edu/financial-services/student/cost-pymt/international/

Currency Exchange

If you plan on exchanging money from your home currency to U.S. dollars, you should make the exchange at the airport upon entry to the U.S. Once you arrive in Decorah, the ability to exchange money at the bank is a much more time-consuming and expensive process.

Work-Study Assignments

For most Luther students, having a job on campus is part of the Luther experience. Whether planting flowers with our groundskeepers or working in the cafeteria, we hope students find their position to be a valuable way to serve the Luther community, gain important work experience, and earn money toward tuition and other expenses.

Once you arrive on campus, you will be assigned a work-study position. So, no need to think about it now; we’ll help you obtain your work during new international student orientation.

Taxes

The U.S. tax code requires both U.S. students and international students to pay taxes at a rate of 14 percent for any scholarships received that exceed the cost of tuition, books, and fees. Luther College pays this tax amount each semester on behalf of students. But students need to repay Luther for taxes paid to the U.S. government on their behalf.

For some students, tax treaties between the U.S. government and the students’ “tax residency” mean there is no tax liability (or in plain English, they don’t have to pay any taxes on their scholarships). The “tax residency” is usually the home country. We will help you determine your “tax residency” and any tax implications after you have arrived on campus.

For other students, their “tax residency” may not have tax treaties with the U.S. In these cases, students will have to pay taxes on the portion of their scholarships that exceed the cost of tuition, fees, and books. To pay these taxes, students are encouraged to save—each month—a portion of their student-work earnings. We will help you determine how much to save once you arrive at Luther.

We know that the U.S. tax liability issue is a complicated one, because it varies so much from student to student. We’ll help you make sense of it once you arrive.