Western Welcome Guide:
Arrival, Orientation, and Settling In

“My orientation date is ________________”

+1(269) 387-5865
oiss-in@wmich.edu
wmich.edu/internationaladmissions

#WelcomeAtWestern
**Western Welcome Guide**

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Welcome to Western Michigan University!

Western Michigan University understands that going to college can be challenging as well as exciting. The International Student Orientation is an exhilarating time filled with opportunities to grow, explore and be more independent.

Our orientation team is here to help you make a smooth transition to WMU. You will meet new friends, faculty, staff, and current international students who will help you transition to life in Kalamazoo.

We are excited you chose WMU and look forward to meeting you!

Haenicke Institute for Global Education
Western Michigan University
Start Preparing Now

- Get your passport and U.S. visa as soon as possible.
- Register for the [International Student Orientation](#) at WMU.
- Make travel arrangements to Kalamazoo.
- Make plans for a place to stay during orientation—see below for information about temporary housing.
- Tell your friends and family about your temporary mailing address.
- Visit the International Admissions [Campus Life webpage](#) to learn more about campus life.

Living Arrangements

**WMU Residence Halls**

[WMU Residence Halls](#) provide safe, on-campus housing where you can meet other WMU students. All questions about residence hall reservations and contracts should be directed to [WMU Residence Life](#).

Phone: (269) 387-4735  
Fax: (269) 387-4786  
rl-info@wmich.edu

**WMU Apartments**

[WMU Apartments](#) (on campus) are open to incoming transfer/graduate/sophomore-level and above students. All questions about WMU Apartments reservations and contracts should be directed to [WMU Residence Life](#).

Phone: (269) 387-2175  
Fax: (269) 387-4786  
rl-info@wmich.edu
**Finances**

WMU's total cost of attendance for each academic semester may be found [here](#). Do not rely on working in the United States to meet all your educational expenses. Like most U.S. schools, WMU has little financial aid for international students.

If you have a government scholarship, bring enough money for two months to pay for rent, food, book, deposits, and to buy warm clothing.

If privately sponsored, bring enough money to cover your first semester’s tuition, fees, and living expenses. Payment of the full balance on your student account is due on the first day of classes each semester. You may pay with the wire transfer service [Fly Wire](#) or with a bank draft. Note that there are rules for bringing cash into the U.S.

Tuition and fee rates are reviewed by the University in August each year and may change without notice.

**Transfer Credits**

If you expect to receive advanced transfer credits, and you have not sent an official transcript directly to WMU from your current school, please bring a copy with you in a sealed envelope. Refer to the credit evaluation portion of the International Admissions and Services website.

**Immigration and Visa Preparation**

An I-901 fee for F-1 students of $200 and J-1 students of $180 has been charged by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. **The fee must be paid before your visa interview.** Please read all immigration documents carefully. By signing your copy of the form I-20 or DS-2019 and accepting your U.S. visa, you agree to all terms and conditions set forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Website [https://www.fmjfee.com/](https://www.fmjfee.com/)

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Please note that International students may see delays at U.S. ports of entry.

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Due to more security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers are checking the status of F-1 and J-1 nonimmigrants in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System before admission at port of entry. As a result, many students and exchange visitors have reported being referred to secondary inspection, where their SEVIS record was reviewed. Due to these new entry rules, F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors entering the United States should plan to spend 2-3 hours in the secondary inspection should allow more time for flight connections.
**Tuberculosis Testing**

To comply with guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College Health Association, Western Michigan University requires international students from high-risk countries to submit results in English of a TB test prior to the start of classes.

Many international students received **BCG vaccine**, which reduced their TB risk as children. However, BCG vaccine effectiveness declines with time. A TB test is still required for those who have previously received BCG.

If you were NOT born in a **country exempt from testing**; have lived in or traveled to a country with a high rate of TB; or have had close contact with anyone who has had active TB you are required to have a Mantoux skin test or QuantiFERON TB Gold test administered in the **three months prior to arriving at WMU**.

The [WMU Sindecuse Health Center](https://www.wmu.edu/sindecusehealth) outlines how TB results should be sent to WMU.
Important Academic Dates at WMU

A list of important academic dates at WMU is maintained by the Registrar’s Office in the Academic Calendar and includes:

- Class registration schedule
- Semester start dates
- Refund schedule
- Exam week dates
- Grade posting schedule
- Graduation schedule
- University holidays and recesses

Bronco Bash is a welcome fair for WMU students held the first Friday of each fall semester. Thousands of students attend the event to pick up free items and take pictures with the university mascot, Buster the Bronco.
Arriving in Kalamazoo

Travel to Kalamazoo

By air

We recommend new students arrive 1-2 days before orientation to rest and adjust to the time change. We recommend students fly directly to the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport (airport code: AZO). Even though Chicago and Detroit are nearby, both are at least three hours away by car.

Transportation from the Kalamazoo Airport will be provided FREE for four days before the start date of orientation and two days after. Find the WMU sign near the Leisure Limousine transportation desk in the baggage claim area of the Kalamazoo Airport to request transportation or call them at 269-343-0848.

By bus or train

If you arrive to Kalamazoo by bus or train you can arrange for transportation to WMU’s main campus by calling a taxi. We recommend the following services:

1. Bronco Express, (269) 343-3000, Estimated fair $7
2. Godspeed Taxi, (269) 547-5477, Estimated fair $10
Contact Information During Arrival

WMU International Admissions and Services is ready to help you during your arrival to Kalamazoo. Please feel free to reach out with questions, concerns, or difficulties!

Normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET):
Phone: +1 (269) 387-5865
Fax: +1 (269) 387-5899

After normal business hours (Saturday-Sunday or after 5 p.m. ET):
Phone: +1 (269) 203-5482

For police or medical emergencies in the U.S. call: 911

If you need to send things ahead, your WMU temporary mailing address is:

First name, family name, c/o orientation
International Admissions and Services
3110 Faunce Student Services
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008–5246 U.S.A.

Travel Requirements

Please be advised to stay up-to-date on airline and travel requirements as U.S. immigration and travel policy is very fluid. Further, U.S. airlines have imposed new requirements on electronic devices and checked luggage; therefore, please be sure to inquire with your airline for specific restrictions and requirements. Students may also reference the WMU Immigration Services website for further immigration information.
International Student Orientation

International Student Orientation is one of the first steps to learning about WMU and the local community. The orientation sessions include information and training on:

- Adjusting to local culture
- Health insurance in the United States
- Immigration information
- Resources on campus

Make sure to REGISTER for orientation and find more information including dates, times, and maps online.

Documents to bring to orientation

1. Passport, visa
2. I-20 or DS-2019 form
3. Admission letter from Western Michigan University
**Housing During Orientation**

**Students with a WMU apartment contract:**

Students need to visit the WMU Residence Life office, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., to receive move-in information.

Students will not be able to move in earlier than the official move-in date for WMU apartments. *Students arriving before the move-in date will need to find a place to stay until the official WMU move-in date.*

**Students with a residence hall contract:**

There is an early move-in date for new international students coming to orientation. Please check the date in the WMU Residence Life move-in schedule. Students moving in on that date will be billed an additional cost for the nights between the move-in date and the start of their housing contract. Contact Residence Life on specific rates at WMU-housing@wmich.edu. Students planning to check into the residence hall early must bring bedding (twin extra-long size) and bath towels.

*Students arriving prior to the designated residence hall early move-in date will have to make their own plans to stay in a hotel until that day. WMU's Residence Life staff may be reached during regular business hours at (269) 387-4735 or via email at WMU-housing@wmich.edu.*

**Students without a housing contract:**

Students not living on campus will need to stay in their arranged off campus housing or in a hotel during orientation. We recommend that international students stay at the Comfort Inn of Kalamazoo: 739 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI, 49007, USA.

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WMU provides a daily shuttle service to campus from the Comfort Inn hotel during orientation. It picks up students at the hotel door between 7:30—8:30 a.m.

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Steps for making an online reservation for a room at the Comfort Inn hotel:

1. Make a reservation by:
   a. Going online
   b. Calling: (269) 384-2800
   c. Emailing: Comfortinn739@yahoo.com

2. Tell the Comfort Inn staff that you are a new Western Michigan University international student to receive a discount.
Meals during Orientation

During orientation you will be provided with a free breakfast and lunch each day or orientation.

Student dining meal plans will not start in WMU dining halls and cafeterias until the first day of classes. However, the Bernhard Center Café and Market will be open with meals to buy. The Bernhard Center café is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Kalamazoo also offers a wide variety of food options within the community.
Academic Requirements

**English**

If your admission letter states that you must take A-S 3600 or 3610, your international admission counselor will register you for this class before the beginning of the semester. This course counts toward the bachelor's degree only and cannot be waived. You must receive a grade of "C" or higher to pass this course.

**Math**

If you are in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) you will need to take a proper math course. Math placement exams are given in the first afternoon of ISORP during August. For students arriving in winter or summer, math placement will be determined later.

If you have taken an ACT or SAT test in the past 3 years, you can use your math section score to be placed into a math classes.

If you have taken a math class at another college or university, please provide a course description or syllabus for that class as well as proof of completing the course with a C or better. This can also be used as a placement tool.

See [Math Placement](#) for more information.
Health and Counseling

Health Insurance in the United States

WMU requires all international students to have comprehensive medical insurance. Please visit the Health Insurance for International Students page for more information.

Counseling Services at Sindecuse Health Center

Short-term individual, couples and group counseling is available for a diverse student population at the Sindecuse Health Center located on the WMU main campus. Counselors help students identify challenges and make changes to manage the emotional and social difficulties that might complicate college life including:

- Relationship or family conflicts
- Stress and anxiety
- Grief or loss
- Social and peer pressure
- Sexual identity questions
- Trauma and post-traumatic stress
- Adjusting to college life
- Feeling down or depressed
- Body image or eating disorders

Services are tailored to meet individual needs. Students have access to personal counseling and are also able to join a variety of group counseling sessions.

Patient’s rights to privacy will be respected; patients are asked to sign a consent form before any information is released to a third party.

Student Recreation Center

The University Student Recreation Center promotes healthy life-style choices, team building, leadership skills, and opportunities for positive social interaction. Outstanding fitness options include:

- Open recreation
- Intramural sports
- Fitness programs