



Division of Student Success
Office of Enrollment Management
International Student Services
New Mexico State University
MSC 3G, Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001

Welcome to NMSU!

PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Congratulations! We are pleased to welcome you to New Mexico State University and look forward to your arrival. We are very proud of NMSU's academic reputation and welcome you to our friendly campus.

Please check the accuracy of information on your letter of admission and immigration document. Contact us immediately for any questions or concerns. If you are a graduate student and have been awarded an assistantship, contact your academic department for additional information. If you wish to live on campus, apply for on-campus housing through the Housing Department early to reserve your preferred housing option.

The International Student Services staff is available to assist with your pre-departure needs as well as after you arrive on campus. Our office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you need emergency assistance after hours or during the weekend, contact the student advisor, Mary Jaspers at 575-649-0393. The following information will hopefully assist you in planning your travel to NMSU.



SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019

SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security web-based system used to issue immigration documents for new students and also to record the progress of continuing students. SEVIS reportable events include the location and status of international students and researchers for the entire time they are in the United States. SEVIS tracks international students, researchers and their families from receipt of the I-20 or DS-2019, entry into the United States, class registration, travel to another country while an NMSU student, employment in the United States (curricular or optional practical training), graduation, transfer to another university, or end of program. NMSU is required to report changes in major or program level, program extensions, transfer to another school, program completion, address changes, and others.

A SEVIS generated I-20 or DS-2019 will be issued to each new international student entering the United States who will attend New Mexico State University. Please read the instructions attached to your I-20 or DS-2019. Also carefully review your I-20 or DS-2019 for accuracy. Check the spelling of your name (and family members), birth date, country of birth and citizenship, academic program, level of degree, and financial information. If there are discrepancies, contact Dianne Gobrick (dgobrick@nmsu.edu) or Mary Jaspers (marjaspe@nmsu.edu) immediately. Your immigration document must be accurate for both your visa appointment and for your inspection at the POE.



VISAS and TRAVEL

Student Visas. For most foreign citizens, a visa issued by a U.S. consulate or embassy in your home country is required for traveling to the U.S. A student who has been issued an I-20 by a U.S. university will apply for an F-1 visa. A student or exchange visitor issued a DS-2019 will apply for a J-1 visa. It is recommended that you review the U.S. Department of State website "Destination USA" (<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/fairs.htm>) for information regarding visa application procedures. Take your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, SEVIS Fee receipt, proof of financial support, and other required documents to your appointment. To obtain a visa for the United States you must have a valid passport that has an expiration date at least six months following the date you enter the U.S. If your spouse and/or children will accompany you to the U.S., each family member will be issued an I-20 or DS-2019. Before our office can issue immigration documents for your family members, you must provide the passport identification page including, birth date and country of citizenship for each family member..

Due to the high volume of visa applications, it is important that you make your visa appointment as early as possible. If the consulate or embassy requires additional information from NMSU, ask if they want this information faxed or emailed directly to them, or if it should go to you. When arranging your travel to the U.S., be aware that you can enter the U.S. 30 days prior to the I-20 or DS-2019 starting date of your program.

For an initial admission, the school specified on your visa must match the I-20 you use at the port of entry. If you have received admission to more than one U.S. school, your decision regarding which school you will attend must be made prior to your visa appointment.

Students can no longer adjust visa status from B-2 to F-1 from within the U.S. (unless "prospective student" was stated on the B-2 visa). If your intent is to study in the U.S., wait in your home country until your F-1 visa has been approved.

You will receive Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Card) upon entry into the U.S. The I-94 states the purpose of your admission and the length of time you may remain in the U.S. It is usually stapled into your passport. The immigration official will stamp your I-20 or DS-2019 and also your passport. Read the I-94 carefully at the port of entry. If you are an F-1 student, be sure your I-94 states "F-1" and "D/S" (duration of status). For J-1 student it should state "J-1" and "D/S".

- ◆ F-1 and J-1 requirements – According to immigration policy, students with F-1 or J-1 visas must enroll full-time. Full-time is a minimum of 12 credits for undergraduate students and 9 credits for graduate students Fall and Spring semesters.
- ◆ An F-1 or J-1 student must make reasonable progress toward degree completion. For questions regarding immigration status, contact our office.

Travel Tips (from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security news)

- ◆ Hand carry (do not check with your baggage) the following documents:
 1. Your passport
 2. SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019
 3. Evidence of financial resources
 4. Evidence of student or exchange visitor status, such as letter of acceptance or transcript
 5. Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee
 6. The name and contact information of your designated school official, Mary Jaspers, 575-646-2017 (office) or 575-649-0393 (cell phone)

Important Note: *If you are a new student or exchange visitor, and the U.S. Department of State's Consular Officer returned your documents in a sealed envelope attached to your passport it is important that you do not open this envelope.*
- ◆ Inform the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer at the port of entry as soon as possible that you will be a new or returning student or exchange visitor in the United States.
- ◆ Report to your school or program upon arrival so that your school official can validate your participation in SEVIS.
- ◆ Maintain contact with your designated school or sponsor official throughout your stay to ensure your SEVIS data is updated and accurate.

US-VISIT Program (the U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology Program). Sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, the system verifies the identity of incoming and outgoing non-immigrants. It is designed to expedite the entry and exit requirements at major U.S. airports and seaports.

Transferring from another U.S. school. If you are transferring to NMSU from another U.S. college or university, request your old school to release your SEVIS record to NMSU on a specific date such as the last day of the current semester. You must complete the NMSU SEVIS form on our website. NMSU can issue an I-20 or DS-2019 transferring your F-1 or J-1 SEVIS status only after the release date. If you are traveling outside the U.S. between the release date and the start of your program at NMSU, contact our office. If you are not traveling outside the U.S., NMSU will issue your I-20 after you register for classes in January.



ARRIVAL

Transportation. When arranging your flight, your final destination should be **El Paso, Texas**. Las Cruces is 50 miles from the El Paso Airport. Travel options between El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico include:

- ◆ Shuttle – The most economical way to travel between El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces is by shuttle. The Las Cruces Shuttle operates daily between the hours of 5:45 am and 11:30 pm. Reservations are taken only by phone (1-800-288-1784) and the payment (currently \$43 per rider) is cash or travelers checks.
- ◆ Pre-arrival arrangements for pick-up by an NMSU international student association or community volunteer program. Contact information for NMSU international student groups is available on the International Student Services website (<http://international.nmsu.edu>).

Housing. If you have not arranged for your long-term housing before your arrival in Las Cruces the following options are available.

- ◆ Local Motels – For temporary housing while looking for an apartment, the following facilities are close to campus: Comfort Suites (575-522-1300), Sleep Inn (575-522-1700), Ramada Palms (575-526-4411), Plaza Suites (575-525-5500). Advance reservations are advised.
- ◆ On-Campus Housing – Options available include dormitories, apartments, and student family housing. For additional information contact NMSU Housing Department, www.nmsu.edu/~housing.
- ◆ International Student Groups – There are several student groups that will help with temporary housing when you first arrive. Email dgobrick@nmsu.edu for additional information.

Annual expenses. Annual living and educational expenses while attending NMSU will vary based on your program. The estimated annual amounts stated on your I-20 or DS-2019 for full-time enrollment are:

	Graduate	Graduate with Assistantship	Undergraduate Main campus	Dona Ana Community College
Tuition & fees* (subject to change)	\$12300	\$4100	\$15000	\$3900
Living expenses housing, meals, miscellaneous	6060	6060	6060	6060
Other** Books & health insurance	1600	1600	1600	1600
TOTAL	\$19,960	\$11,760	\$22,660	\$11,560

Additional family members included on I-20 or DS-2019

Spouse Add \$4000
Each child Add \$2500

* Fall and Spring semesters

** \$50 new student orientation fee is not included



REGISTRATION

Prior to registering for classes the first semester, you must attend New Student Orientation and complete all pre-registration requirements.

New Student Orientation. You will attend orientations sponsored by International Student Services and the Office of Admissions, both are divisions of the Office of Enrollment Management. Topics covered include immigration issues, health care and medical insurance, registration procedures, campus services and a library tour. We will also photocopy your immigration documents including any documents from previous schools. Please refer to the following schedule to determine when you are must report to campus to complete pre-registration prior to the start of semester classes. Enclosed in your packet is information about the Academic English Proficiency Test (AEPT) which describes which students are required to complete the test prior to registration.

August 13th (Thursday)	Check-in for student taking the Academic English Proficiency Test (AEPT)
August 14th (Friday)	AEPT (if required)
August 15th (Saturday)	TB (tuberculosis testing) and sign-up for health insurance International New Student Orientation
August 17th (Monday)	New Student Orientation (separate sessions for graduate and undergraduate students)
August 17 th or 18 th	Registration upon completion of orientation requirements
August 20 th (Thursday)	Classes begin

Registration. Prior to class registration, new undergraduate students will be advised by their college (Agriculture, Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Extended Learning, or Health & Social Services) and new graduate students by their department. You must complete all Orientation requirements prior to class registration. Failure to complete these requirements will delay your registration. Registration for new students begins August 17th or 18th and classes are in session starting August 20th.

Late Orientation. Failure to complete Orientation and Academic English Placement Testing according to the above schedule will delay class registration. If you do not register on August 20th, 2009, you must attend late Orientation before you can register for classes. The last day to register for the Fall 2009 semester is September 1, 2009.

If your arrival is delayed, there are two additional orientation and English screening options:

- ◆ August 21, 2009 (Friday)
- ◆ August 28, 2009 (Friday)

For late tests and orientation, plan your arrival in Las Cruces to be no later than the day prior to orientation. If you would like additional information, contact International Student Services.



ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Health Insurance. NMSU requires all F-1 and J-1 students to purchase and continually maintain major medical health insurance. You will purchase insurance coverage on either an annual basis or divided into the Fall semester and the Spring & Summer semesters. Health insurance coverage is required for the Summer months even if you do not register for classes.

- ◆ International Student Services will assist you in the purchase of health insurance coverage through a plan administered by the NMSU Student Health Center. Major medical health insurance by is required for all F-1 and J-1 students and their families. **Do not purchase health insurance until you have attended New Student Orientation. Travel insurance purchased in your home country is not acceptable.**
- ◆ Tuberculosis (TB) testing is required for all new students. TB testing will be done at the NMSU Student Health Center (SHC) for a nominal charge and must be scheduled during Orientation.
- ◆ Additional information regarding health insurance and TB testing will be available at Orientation.

Employment. In the U.S., nonimmigrant employment is restricted by the Department of Homeland Security and should not be considered a primary means of financial support. Students holding F-1 or J-1 visas who are enrolled full-time are eligible to work on-campus a maximum of 20 hours per week while classes are in session, 40 hours per week during semester breaks and the Summer.

Las Cruces. With our close proximity to Mexico, Las Cruces is a small, multicultural city with a population of 75,000. Located in southern New Mexico at the base of the Organ Mountains, Las Cruces is on the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert. Annual precipitation is 8.5 inches of rain and Las Cruces enjoys 350 days of sunshine each year. Temperatures routinely reach the high 90s in the summer. Winters are relatively short compared to other areas of the U.S with an average of no more than two inches of snow during the winter.

There are many scenic spots and area attractions in Las Cruces and the surrounding region. Some of the attractions within a few hours' drive from Las Cruces are:

- ◆ The U.S. - Mexico border – An hour's drive from Las Cruces, you will have the opportunity to explore another country.
- ◆ White Sands National Monument – More than 250 square miles of naturally produced gypsum creating one of the most unique sites in the world.
- ◆ Historic Old Mesilla – Adjacent to Las Cruces, Mesilla was one of the most popular trade centers 150 years ago between the midwest and the west coast. Surrounding a central plaza are shops, restaurants and art galleries.
- ◆ Carlsbad Caverns – With more than 100 caves, including the deepest limestone cave in the U.S. at 1567 feet (478 m), the Caverns are a well known natural wonder.
- ◆ Ruidoso and Cloudcroft, New Mexico – Camping, hiking and snow skiing.
- ◆ Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Taos, New Mexico – Historic, cultural cities in northern New Mexico.

Student Activities. We hope you will take advantage of some of the many opportunities available at NMSU to enrich your educational experience in the U.S. There are many campus clubs open to NMSU students such as academic and professional interest groups, social organizations and athletic teams.

- ◆ There are also campus and community events throughout the academic year including sports events, speakers, concerts, theatre, and many more.
- ◆ International student organizations at NMSU raise campus awareness about their cultures. These clubs along with International Student Services organize events such as the annual International Festival. Presented each Fall, the Festival is an opportunity for international students to display information and artifacts from their home countries. NMSU students and staff, and the Las Cruces community are invited to this event.
- ◆ The FSN-NMSU (Foreign Student Network) list serve enables students to stay in touch with other foreign and domestic students. It also serves as a communication tool for the International Student Services office to counsel students on immigration issues, academic deadlines and other activities and events.
- ◆ The International Student Club organizes social activities and community service projects. Student representatives serve on an International Student Services advisory panel.

International Student Services Staff

Mary Jaspers, Assistant Director and Student Advisor
Sean Milton, Student Advisor and Recruiter
Dianne Gobrick, Immigration Specialist
Sandra Moreno, International Admissions Processor
Preeti Bhakta, International Admissions Processor

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International Student Services Homepage

<http://international.nmsu.edu/ISSS/ISSSHome.html>.