

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students are a vital component of the New Mexico State University (NMSU) community. After a student is admitted to a degree seeking program ISSS office may issue an I-20 after the student submits the required documents. Based on the I-20 students may apply for an F-1 visa in their home country. The US consulate officer determines the eligibility of F-1 visa of a student.

International students are admitted to the United States primarily in F-1 (student) and J-1 (exchange visitor/student) nonimmigrant classifications and are subject to federal immigration laws and regulations administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), as well as by the U.S. Department of State for J-1 exchange visitors/students. The Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) under the umbrella of the International Programs and Compliance (IPC) serves as the University's designated office for SEVP compliance and is responsible for advising international students on their immigration-related responsibilities.

Federal Regulations

The Department of Homeland Security through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has established rules for students in non-immigrant status, such as those with F-1 or J-1 visa types. Some of these rules include the following:

1. Enrollment requirements

For immigration purposes, each student must maintain full-time student status

- Undergraduate - Full-time status for fall and spring semesters is defined as 12 or more credits for undergraduates (only three online credits can apply to the full-time requirement).
- Graduate - Full-time status for fall and spring semesters is defined as 9 or more credits for graduate students (only three online credits can apply to the full-time requirement).
- Summer- Generally students are not required to enroll in classes during summer semester, as it is considered as a break time. The exception being when:
 - When students are admitted in summer semester. They are required to be full time student. Full-time status for summer is defined according to NMSU requirements.
 - Students graduating in the summer semester are required to enroll in at least one in-person class. Exceptions possible for final semester. Consult ISSS officials for more details.

2. Employment:

- On-campus employment: Students can work 20 hours per week on campus during Fall and Spring semester. Students can work upto 40 hours per week during break. Example Summer break, spring break etc. Students on valid I-20's with F-1 visas are eligible to work on campus while studying in the U.S. Students may only work on campus while they maintain status. A valid I-20, F-1 visa and I-94 document serve as proof of work eligibility for on-campus employment.
- Off-campus employment: International students are generally not eligible to work off-campus but maybe eligible to not work off campus with without prior authorization from ISSS office.

- CPT – Students are generally eligible to apply for CPT after they complete one academic year as an F-1 student. But CPT must be authorized by ISSS office prior to working. Working without prior authorization is a violation of immigration status and the students I-20 maybe terminated for “unauthorized employment”.
- OPT – Students are eligible to apply for OPT if they are in valid F-1 status for an academic year. Student can generally apply for OPT 90 days prior to their graduation date or within 60 days of graduation.
- STEM OPT – Students must be in active OPT Status with employment with an e-verified employer and must have received a degree in a STEM field. Students are eligible to apply for STEM OPT 90 days before their OPT expires.

For additional eligibility requirements about CPT,OPT or STEM OPT please contact ISSS office.

3. Maintaining Status:

- All international students must maintain their most current USA address and phone number in their NMSU account and notify within 10 days of change their new address.
- Maintain valid passport and visa
- Have a valid I-20 reflecting the students current major and educational level at all times.

University Procedures for International Students

Undergraduate Admission

International students are subject to the same admissions standards as all other NMSU students, but some additional requirements apply. This section addresses those additional requirements. Visit <https://issn.nmsu.edu/new-students/undergraduate-admissions/step-1.html> for more information.

Applications for admission that include the transfer of credits earned at a non-U.S. university must include a professional Foreign Credential Evaluation (FCE) report from a member institution of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) for every transcript from a foreign secondary school and/or post-secondary institution attended. The ISSS office highly recommends that applicants consider using The Evaluation Company (TEC) for their FCE. NMSU has worked with TEC to provide applicants with a clear understanding of which evaluation is needed. TEC provides an applicant portal to track and access evaluations. TEC is a long-standing member of NACES. For more information, please visit <https://spanside.my.salesforce-sites.com/SpansideApplication?id=945ec224-f79e-4171-8888-8c452728aafb>

Undergraduate – New

- GPA requirement of 2.75 or higher
- Minimum TOEFL of 68 iBT, or 6.0 IELTS, or Duolingo 95 or higher
- Secondary school equivalency with a minimum 2.75 GPA or ACT composite score of 21 or SAT score of 1060 or Ranked in the top 20

percent of their high school graduating class or a GED cumulative score of 480 or HiSET cumulative score of 45.

Undergraduate – Transfer

- 2.00 or better GPA on transfer college or university credits.
- Students transferring from a two-year college, community college, or university in the United States who have earned a minimum of 30 acceptable semester credits (45 acceptable quarter credits) with a GPA of 2.0 or better (acceptable credit means classes that require a high proficiency in both written and oral English).

English Language Proficiency Requirements

For undergraduate admission to the university, NMSU requires a score of 68 (internet-based) or better on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or a score of 6.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or a score of 95 on the Duolingo English Test (DET) for international students for both non-degree and degree seeking. International students attending another US institution and having a valid I-20 may enroll as a non-degree seeking student and take course(s) at the undergraduate level.

Students who are citizens from one of the following countries will be exempt from providing a TOEFL, IELTS, or DET score for admission purposes. NMSU requires all admitted international students to take the English Language Placement Test (ELPT) for placement purposes.

Anguilla, Antigua, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Barbuda, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, Caicos Islands, Cameroon (Anglophone), Canada (except Quebec), Cayman Islands, Christmas Islands, Cook Island, Dominica, England, Eritrea, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grand Cayman Islands, Grenada, Grenada and the Grenadines, Guernsey, Guyana, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Jersey, Kenya, Kiribati Islands, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Montserrat, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Scotland, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, St. Christopher, St. Helena, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Swaziland, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Tristan da Cunha Island, Turks & Caicos Islands, Uganda, Virgin Islands, Wales, Zambia, Zimbabwe

For students not from the countries listed above, a waiver of the TOEFL/IELTS/DET requirement may be considered for:

1. Students completing high school in the United States who have attended the high school for at least two full years.
2. Students transferring from an institutional accredited two-year college, community college, or university in the United States who have earned a minimum of 24 semester credits or 36 quarter credits (all classes having English as the language of instruction) with a GPA of 2.0.
3. The university reserves the right to require any prospective international student to meet the TOEFL, IELTS or DET requirement.

All application material, transcripts, national examination scores, transcripts from colleges or universities (with an English translation),

and test scores (including the TOEFL or IELTS) should be sent directly to the NMSU Undergraduate Admissions at admissions@nmsu.edu. Please note that transcripts, test scores, and foreign credential evaluations sent directly from an applicant/student to NMSU will be considered unofficial. To be considered official, transcripts, test scores and foreign credential evaluations must come directly from the school, testing agency, or evaluation agency. All documents should be emailed to admissions@nmsu.edu.

Admission Restrictions

Admissions to summer terms is not available to new undergraduate international students due to the limited number of face-to-face course offerings.

Admission Deadlines

For full consideration for undergraduate admission, applicants are subject to the following deadlines:

July 1 (application initiated)	Fall Semester
July 15th (all documents submitted)	Fall Semester
October 1st* (Study Abroad)	Spring Semester
November 15th (application initiated)	Spring Semester
December 1st (all documents submitted)	Spring Semester

Post Admission

Immigration Document Requirement (I-20) to be submitted to ISSS office

1. Valid passport for six months or more (from the date of entry into USA).
2. International student must submit a current financial support document to the ISSS office. This document must show that:
 - The financial support document/ bank statement - Availability of financial document/bank statement must be within the last 3 months on the letter head of the bank and reflect the account holders name, account number, type of bank account and the available balance. The bank statement must be from an account where the funds are readily available to use to support the student's education and other related expenses such as tuition expenses, living expenses, insurance, other expenses for at least one academic year.
3. Complete the Affidavit of Support Form provided by ISSS office.
4. All official communication and I-20 will be sent to the students NMSU email address

Post Arrival

1. New Student Orientation

Orientation for all new Undergraduate first-time and transfer students is mandatory. At NMSU's New Student Orientation programs, students will attend information sessions, learn about campus resources and college life, meet with an academic advisor, and register for courses.

More information about New Student Orientation is available at <https://awo.nmsu.edu/>.

2. English Language Placement Test

Placement in writing classes for international students is determined by the results of the English Language Placement Test (ELPT).

Based on the results of the ELPT, the student is either assigned to ENGL 1105M (a bridge course designed to ensure success in ENGL 1110M) or is allowed to enroll directly in ENGL 1110M (for multilingual students). Please note that these classes are only available on NMSU's Las Cruces Campus. International students excused from ENGL 1105M will be required to take ENGL 1110M. The student may then be required to complete one or more regular English classes as required for a particular degree. Completing basic English courses at other U.S. institutions does not automatically satisfy the ENGL 1110M requirement. Equivalencies for ENGL 1105M and equivalencies for ENGL 1110M or ENGL 1110G are determined by the University Student Records Office, who may refer exceptional cases to the English Department in the College of Arts and Sciences.

In cases of dramatic discrepancies between TOEFL/ IELTS scores and the ELPT, the ELPT results shall determine placement.

3. Mandatory SEVIS check-in

SEVIS check-in is another orientation for all new and transfer international students admitted for the semester and it is federally mandatory to attend. This is a federal requirement for students to comply. Mandatory SEVIS check-in MUST be completed by all new and transfer students ideally one day before classes begin depending on the semester they are admitted to. The location of the Sevis check-in will be communicated by the ISSS office.

4. Canvas Course & Document Upload Portal

The Canvas Course & Document Upload Portal is where a student uploads their documents such as passport, F-1 visa, I-94, along with US address, phone number and emergency contact information. Students will receive an email invitation to the Canvas course 2 weeks before the semester begins. Students can access this Canvas course using their NMSU email address. All official communication will be sent to the students NMSU email address.

*** All the 4 items listed above must be completed by New and Transfer International students.

Graduate International Students

For information about admission process, eligibility and deadlines please visit the Graduate School section of this catalog.

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/future-students/international-graduate-students-processing-steps.html>

Post Admission of graduate student:

Immigration Document Requirement (I-20) to be submitted to ISSS office

1. Passport valid for six months or more.
2. International student must submit a current financial support document/ Assistantship offer to ISSS office. This document must show that:

- If submitting financial support document - The Bank statement with transactions must be on the letter head within the last 3 months of the bank and reflect the account holder's name, account number, date and the available balance. The bank statement must be from an account where the funds are readily available to use to support the student's education and other related expenses such as tuition expenses, living expenses, insurance, other expenses for at least one academic year.
- Assistantship offer- The offer must be on the department letterhead reflecting the students name, Aggie #, the semester/s student will be offered assistantship, amount in funding the student will receive and other benefits, if any.

3. Complete the Affidavit of Support Form provided by ISSS office.

4. All official communication and I-20 will be sent to the students NMSU email address.

Post Arrival

1. Mandatory SEVIS check-in

SEVIS check-in is orientation for all new and transfer international students admitted for the semester and attendance is federally mandated. This is a federal requirement for students to comply. Mandatory SEVIS check-in MUST be completed by all new and transfer students at least one day before classes begin depending on the semester they are admitted to. The location of the SEVIS check-in will be communicated by the ISSS office.

2. Canvas Course & Document Upload Portal

The Canvas Course & Document Upload Portal is where student upload their documents such as passport, F-1 visa, I-94, US address, phone number and emergency contact information. Students will receive an email invitation to the course 2 weeks before the semester begins. Students can access this Canvas course using their respective NMSU email address.

*** All the 2 items listed above must be completed by New and Transfer International students.

3. Enrolling in Classes:

- Fall and Spring semester: Full-time status for fall and spring semesters is defined as 9 or more credits for graduate students (only three online credits can apply to the full-time requirement).
- Summer semester: Students admitted to summer semester must enroll in full course load. Full-time status for summer is defined according to NMSU requirements.
- Students graduating in summer semester must register for at least one in-person class.

Employment:

- On-campus employment: Students on valid I-20's and F-1 visas are eligible to work on campus while studying in the U.S. Students may only work on campus while they maintain status. A valid I-20, F-1 visa and I-94 document serves as proof of work eligibility for on-campus employment.
- Off-campus employment: International students may not work off campus without prior authorization from ISSS office.

Miscellaneous Regulations

Health Insurance

New Mexico State University (NMSU) requires all F-1 international students studying at NMSU to have university mandated health insurance coverage. It is the student's responsibility to enroll in health insurance coverage offered by NMSU. The health insurance coverage must cover the student while they are physically present in the U.S. including summer and winter breaks. NMSU will provide an educative canvas course whereby NMSU will inform international students with their option/s for obtaining health insurance plan along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option and allow the students to make an informed decision on their own.

Canvas Health Insurance Course - All new international students at NMSU are required to complete the Canvas Health Insurance Course. Students will be sent a link to the course after they have enrolled in classes. Participation in the course is mandatory. Completion of the course acknowledges that you have been provided with the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the purchase of your health insurance coverage. It acknowledges that you understand the pros and cons of the plan you selected, including **taxes and potential complications during subsequent change of status procedures**.

1. UG students: New and transfer international students are permitted to enroll in classes after they complete Aggie Welcome and Orientation and taking the English Language Placement Test (when applicable, see English Language Proficiency Requirements section). All international students, are required to the campus to which they were admitted. The following are the offices that a student may need to report to:

Las Cruces campus: International Student & Scholar Services, Suite 101 of the Educational Services Building (575) 646-2834, iss@nmsu.edu.

- a. Doña Ana Community College: International Student & Scholar Services, Suite 101 of the Educational Services Building (575) 646-2834, iss@nmsu.edu.
- b. Alamogordo Community College: Office of Student Services, Student Services Building, second floor
- c. Grants Community College: Office of Student Services, Walter Martinez Building, Main Office Complex

2. All international students are required to register to undergo a TB test or submit results of a current TB test done in the home country within a week of arriving. Guidelines will be provided by the Aggie Health and Wellness Center.

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International Exchange Students

An Exchange Student is defined as a visiting student who is coming to NMSU for one semester to one Academic Year but is not seeking a degree. An Exchange Student typically comes to NMSU from one of NMSU's partner universities or one of NMSU's partner consortiums.

All international exchange students are required to be enrolled in NMSU-approved health insurance. Education Abroad & National Student Exchange will enroll the students and bill the insurance amount to the student's account.

Exchange Students are required to attend a mandatory Orientation before courses begin. Orientation will be scheduled and facilitated by the Education Abroad & National Student Exchange, abiding by guidelines set forth by the US government per J-1 visa requirements.

Exchange students are subject to the same English Language Proficiency policies outlined in the section on University Procedures for International Students.

Application Process for International Exchange Students

Prior to admission to NMSU, a prospective international exchange student must be nominated from their home university, complete an application with Education Abroad & National Student Exchange and submit their required documents. The process is as follows:

1. Nomination for exchange must be submitted by the Home University to the Incoming Exchange Coordinator by March 15 for Fall semester and September 15 for Spring semester. Please see your home university exchange coordinator for more information and to complete the nomination process.
2. Once a nomination is received, students will be directed to make an account at: <https://educationabroad.nmsu.edu/incoming-exchange-students.html>.
3. The student is then required to complete the Exchange Student Nomination Form Questionnaire and upload the following documents:
 - a. Passport
 - b. Transcripts (in English)
 - c. Financial document showing proof of \$8,000 per semester attended.
4. Current TOEFL scores (2 years or less). See below for acceptable scores. Information on current test scores can be found at Education Abroad & National Student Exchange's website: <https://educationabroad.nmsu.edu/exchange-students-application-deadlines-and-processes.html>. All international students, regardless of status, must apply for Admissions to NMSU. Education Abroad & National Student Exchange staff will send the students specific instructions on how to apply non-degree, guest matriculant to NMSU.

Academic Restrictions

The majority of the NMSU catalog applies to Exchange Students, with the following exceptions:

- Courses must be taken at the Main Campus only. Community college courses, including DACC, are not available to Exchange Students.
- The Nursing Department and the Creative Media Institute (CMI) are the only departments strictly off limits to exchange students, with case-by-case exception by the departments, and this would have to be approved well in advance of the student being nominated. The English Department also has restrictions on the courses available to exchange students. Please contact the Education Abroad office for more information.
- Exchange students are required to abide by all pre-requisite requirements and class size restrictions (i.e., if a course is closed when the student goes to register, an exception cannot be made).
- Online courses are restricted due to visa requirements (no more than three credits can be taken online. Additional fees will apply).