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# International Student Welcome Guide



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Greetings International Student,

Congratulations on your admission to Bowie State University! We are delighted that you have selected BSU and we welcome you to our growing global community. If you have not seen it already, I encourage you to enjoy our [CAMPUS TOUR VIDEO](#).

Aligned with the university's strategic goals, our international community is a robust and central part of our [RACE TO EXCELLENCE](#). We look forward to the contributions of new ideas, values, beliefs, customs, and experiences to enrich our campus. You will find your time here rewarding both personally and academically.

As the University adjusts to the challenges of starting the semester during the ongoing global health crisis, please [keep informed by referring to the university's COVID UPDATES](#).

The Office of International Education & Services (OIES) is here to support you. We look forward to meeting you at the beginning of the semester and wish you a successful and enjoyable learning experience in Maryland.

Kind regards,

**Office of International Education & Services Team**



# Welcome International Scholars!

The International Student Association of Bowie State University is excited for your arrival and integration into our robust & global community. Our organization brings people together, through our shared respect, distinctive cultures, backgrounds and our desire to help one another.



Being an international student can be an anxious or culturally shocking experience, but we are here to tell you it is also an extraordinary journey.

**International Student Association**  
Bowie State University

ISA offers a sense of belonging, accomplishment through engagements and opportunities to forge lifelong relationships and experiences. We strive to excel in all ways possible and at the same time, represent school spirit through academics, social events, leadership, & so much more. Involvement on-campus through the international community is a great way to network with others and pursue leadership roles during your time at BSU. We anticipate you joining our diverse community, so we can help give you a memorable experience as we ***race to excellence*** alongside each other, and the Bowie State University. We want you to stop by the ISA lounge to meet you in person. So, please **email us** at, [isabsu.international@gmail.com](mailto:isabsu.international@gmail.com) and follow BSU ISA today on social media. We are here to support and advocate for you!

 [Bowie State ISA](#) |  [@bowiestate ISA](#) |  [@bsu isa](#) |  [BSU ISA](#)

Sincerely,

***Omolola Kate Eboda***

President, International Student Association



# I. PRE-ARRIVAL

Here are the basic **things you need to know** about & do before you arrive in the USA & to Bowie, MD:



## 1. Confirm Your Acceptance (Undergrad)

To confirm your acceptance go to website:

[Next Steps for Admitted Students](#)



## 2. I-20 Requirements

Submit the following documents to Office of International Education & Services via:

[internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu](mailto:internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu)  
[so that we may create a Form I-20 for you](#)

- ✓ Bank statement with official bank stamp or seal and signature of bank official in English or with translation
- ✓ Affidavit of Support (A notarized letter from person financially supporting – not required if you have a Financial Guarantee)
- ✓ Passport Bio Page
- ✓ International Residential Address
- ✓ *Only Transfer Students* from SEVIS approved schools should also submit:
  - Transfer In Form
  - Copy of most recent F-1 Visa

## 2a. I-20 Electronic Delivery ONLY

**Due to SEVP Policy Guidance all I-20s are issued electronically via email on file.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Electronically issued I-20s can be printed and used for embassy and consulate verification, and for entry into the United States.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Once SEVP Policy Guidance is updated we will update you.**

# Ia. PRE-ARRIVAL

CONTINUED...

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### 3. Apply For A F-1 U.S. Visa

1. **Pay your I-901 fee for SEVIS**  
(mandatory for new international students): <https://www.fmjfee.com/>
2. **Schedule a visa interview appointment by reading the information on this link.**
3. **Attend your visa interview with all required documents:**
  - a. A passport valid for at least 6 months
  - b. Form I-20 (signed by Bowie State University)
  - c. Bowie State Admission Letter (sent via email by the Admissions Office)
  - d. Completed visa application form
  - e. SEVIS I-901 Receipt
  - f. Visa Application (MRV) Receipt
  - g. DS 160 Confirmation Page copy
  - h. Proof of financial support while you take classes
  - i. Other documents as may be requested by the U.S. Embassy where you apply

### 4. Test Your Username & Password

For services such as **Bowie Email, PeopleSoft, and Blackboard**, take time to configure and get familiarized with these services.

If you have any difficulty accessing these services, contact Bowie State University's **Student Help Desk** for assistance

**Phone: 301-860-4357**

**Email:**

**[Helpdesk@bowiestate.edu](mailto:Helpdesk@bowiestate.edu)**

### 5. Make Housing Arrangements

Bowie State encourages new students to live in one of our First-Year Success Halls. On campus, you will find the community and strong support you need to enhance your college experience and reach your academic goals.

**Office of Residence Life**

**Ph: 301-860-5000**

**[housing@bowiestate.edu](mailto:housing@bowiestate.edu)**

website: <https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/>



# Ib. PRE-ARRIVAL

CONTINUED...

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### 5a. Undergrad Applying For On-campus Housing

The application for campus housing can be found on the website under

[Housing and Dining:](https://bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/)

<https://bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/>

#### ON CAMPUS HOUSING IS DESIGNATED BY GENDER:

- **Male:**
  - Dwight Oliver Holmes Hall
  - Lucretia Kennard Hall
- **Female:**
  - Harriet Tubman Hall
  - Towers Hall
- **Co-Ed:**
  - Alex Haley Residential Complex

**\*\*All student must secure temporary lodging prior to travel if you plan to arrive prior to campus housing opening.**

### 5b. Graduate Students Off-campus Housing

Graduate Students are encouraged to find accommodations close to campus. **Assistance with finding off campus housing can be found at:** <https://bowiestate.och101.com/>

- Housing can take at least a week to secure.
- You should plan housing options prior to arriving in the US.

### 6. Child Care & Schools

**You can find more information about local schools and childcare at the link below:**

**DC Public Schools:**

<https://enrolldcps.dc.gov/>

**Prince George County Public Schools:**

<https://www.pgcps.org/registration/>

**Howard County Public Schools:**

<https://www.hcpss.org/enroll/>



# Ic. Packing List

## Carry On Luggage:

**\*\*CONFIRM WHAT YOU CAN CARRY ONBOARD WITH YOUR AIRLINE**

**\*\*BE AWARE OF LUGGAGE WEIGHT & SIZE REQUIREMENT TO AVOID FEES**

- Passport with valid visa
- Airplane tickets
- Immigration/Entry document (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Cash Money
  - (a small amount of cash will be useful until you open a U.S bank account)
- Traveler's checks/ATM card/ Credit Card
- A photocopy of your passport
- Medicine & any prescriptions that are required daily
- Your laptop and/or phone
- Snack foods for the trip (must be eaten before landing in US)

## Checked Luggage:

- Summer & winter clothing
- Personal toiletries
- Medical supplies & prescriptions names
- Extra pairs of prescription glasses or contact lenses
- A few personal items (to remind you of family & friends for your new place)
- Traditional clothing representing your culture
- Small items from home (souvenirs) for new friends
- Backpack
- Proof of medical history & immunizations
- Transcripts from previous schools
- Home County Driver's License
- Warm Jackets/Coat/Gloves/scarfs
- Emergency contact information
- Comfortable boots/shoes

# II. ARRIVAL

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



# ARRIVALS

FLIGHT NO.	REMARKS
L44488	BAGS DELT
TH7252	BAGS DELT
LU2317	BAGS DELT
LU2319	LANDED
	BAGS

### 1. Airport Emergencies

If you have any difficulty with Customs & Border Protection while entering the country contact the Office of International Education & Services (OIES) so we can assist.

CALL or TEXT:

**301-860-3519**

### 3. Mandatory Check-in

Once registered, you MUST send the following documents to the Office of International Education & Services:

- ☐ Your signed I-20
- ☐ Passport you entered the US with
- ☐ F-1 visa
- ☐ I-94

**Without these documents we will not be able to register you in SEVIS**

### 2. Transportation from the airport

For convenient service that can accommodate your luggage, we recommend:

- BWI Airport Taxis
- Uber--mobile app
- Lyft--mobile app
- Super Shuttle



**WELCOME  
BULLDOGS!**



# Ila. ARRIVAL

CONTINUED...THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

## 4. Get a Bulldog Card

Your Bulldog Card is your student identification card. It is proof that you are a student and used when registering for classes, filling out financial aid applications, and attending campus events. Fill your card with Bulldog Bucks and Flex dollars

\*\*\*\*\*

To obtain a Bulldog card, go to [BULLDOG CARD SERVICES](#) Link.

You must be registered for classes *BEFORE* being issued a Bulldog Card.

## 5. Sign Up for BEES Mobile Alerts

The BSU Electronic Emergency System (BEES) allow you get important campus-wide information by text. You can sign up at: <https://bowie.omnilert.net/subscriber.php>

## 6. Obtaining a U.S. Phone Number

A phone number is required for immigration compliance. You can gain access to a phone number by buying a SIM card with a prepaid plan from certain cell phone providers.

## 7. Health Insurance

All UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENTS are NOT required to have health insurance to register for classes, but it is highly recommended. We recommend you explore buying a health insurance plan using [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) or using the following companies specifically for international students: [Compass Student Insurance](#) and [ISO Insurance](#)

# III. ORIENTATION & WORKSHOPS

## 1. New Student Orientation (NSO)

Log in to your [Bulldog Connection](#) student portal to register for New Student Orientation (NSO) and Academic Advising. Your username and login instructions are included in the acceptance letter you received in the mail or as an email. For assistance with your Bulldog ID or Password please email our HELP DESK at [HELPDESK@bowiestate.edu](mailto:HELPDESK@bowiestate.edu).



## 2. International Student Orientation



### F-1 BASICS: HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR STATUS

**Tuesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am – 11 am**

**Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Thursday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am – 11 am**

**Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm – 2:30 pm**

- ① Learn about all the new policies and procedure of the Office of International Education & Services,
- ② Receive guidance and information you need to maintain your F-1 Status
- ③ Get advice on how best to navigate campus services to meet your needs



# IV. Scheduling Classes

## 1. Online Registration

Bulldog Connection is the student portal for your registration needs. You will need your pre-assigned username and password for access on:

<https://bowiestate.edu/bulldog-connection/index.php>

## 2. Paying Tuition & Fees

Payments Can Be Made on  
[Bulldog Connection](#):

### PAYMENTS PLANS ARE AVAILABLE!

Fees and tuition can also be paid here:

<https://bowiestate.edu/about/administration-and-governance/division-of-administration-and-finance/office-of-student-accounts/how-to-pay/online-payments/payment-plans.php>

### DATES YOU NEED TO REMEMBER:

First day of Classes: August 30th

Last day of ADD/DROP Courses: September 10th

Last day of classes: December 13th

Exam Period Dec. 15th- Dec. 21st

**2021-22 Academic Calendar**

## 3. Government Sponsored Students

- **You must have a valid financial guarantee** to be registered for classes and registered in SEVIS. If you do not have a financial guarantee your classes will be dropped and your SEVIS record will be terminated.
- **Letters concerning confirmation of tutoring, online classes, and enrollment**, can be requested at the Office of International Education & Services- Send your request by email to: [internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu](mailto:internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu)
- **Transcripts serve as proof of registration & graduation**- the Office of Records & Registration provides transcripts to students for their respective government requests: you can request your [transcript](#) here:  
<https://bowiestate.edu/about/administration-and-governance/division-of-enrollment-management/registrars-office/transcript-services.php>



# V. Getting Around

## 1. Transportation & Parking

### [DOWNLOAD CAMPUS MAP HERE](#)

#### Metro & MARC

You can easily get to campus from DC and Baltimore and other surrounding areas. All of the information you need can be found at:

<https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/student-services/commuter-resources/>

#### PARKING

If you want to drive to campus you can find the rules for and application for parking on the [BSU website](#)

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#### AREA & CAMPUS SHUTTLE SERVICE:

The Bulldog Shuttle service is based on the Academic Calendar. [View the schedule & routes](#) before planning your commute from College Park, MD or Residence Halls

## 2. Obtaining A Driver's License

If you want to obtain a driver's license, you can visit or email the Office of International Education & Services (OIES) to get assistance. OIES suggest you obtain your international driving license from your home country before you leave for the US. For More information: <https://www.usa.gov/visitors-driving>

## 3. Driving in Maryland & Receiving a State ID

### Driving in Maryland and getting a State ID

Please see MVA services: <https://mva.maryland.gov/drivers/Pages/international-applicants.aspx>

Before going to the MVA (Motor Vehicle Association), it is imperative to make sure that your SEVIS record has been registered if you are a new student.



# VI. Administrative Offices & Advice

- Division of Academic Affairs - Henry Administration Building, X 3417
- International Education & Student Services - Thurgood Marshall Library, X 3519
- Division of Student Affairs - Student Center, X3812
- School of Graduate Studies - Center for Business and Grad Studies, X 3409
- Counseling Services - Martin Luther King Jr. Building X 4164
- Henry Wise Wellness Center - Christa McAuliffe Residence Hall, X 4170.
- Office of the Bursar - Henry Admin Building, X 3490
- University Registrar - Administration Building, X3730
- Career Development Center - Student Center, X 3831
- Writing Center - Martin Luther King Jr. Building, X 3490
- Bowie Student Center
- Public Safety and Parking McKeldin Gym, X 4040
- Bowie State Clubs & Organizations

## ADVICE FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

- ☐ Be prepared for cold weather! Be prepared to buy a coat...
- ☐ Being under enrolled and not paying your tuition and fees WILL affect your immigration status
- ☐ Stay up to date with the International Office
- ☐ Use the [Writing Center](#) and [SmartThink](#)
- ☐ Money can be added to your [Bulldog Card](#) to purchase items in the bookstore, canteen & certain vending machines.
- ☐ Network, Network and Network, a lot!
- ☐ Know the [Campus Map Link](#)
- ☐ [Parking Permit info link](#)
- ☐ Get to know other international students.
- ☐ Get accustomed to [Blackboard](#) and Teams
- ☐ Get involved with campus organizations



# The Office of International Education & Services Welcomes You!

## Fall 2021 Workshop Schedule:

TITLE	DATES & TIMES	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#"><u>Maintaining Your Status:</u></a> <a href="#"><u>F-1 BASICS</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Mandatory for New Students</u></a>	Tue. Aug. 24th 9:30 am –11 am Wed. Aug. 25th 10 am-11:30 am Thu. Aug. 26th, 9:30 am – 11 am Mon. Aug. 30th, 1 pm – 2:30 pm	Learn about our office & your role in maintaining your F-1 Visa status and how to fix problems that arise along the way. <b><u>New &amp; continuing students encouraged to attend!</u></b>
<a href="#"><u>CPT &amp; On-campus Employment</u></a>	Thu. Sept. 9th 11 am – 12 noon Tues. Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> , 1 pm – 2 pm	Do you want to learn how to work on and off campus? Join us to learn how. Any All F-1 students can attend.
<a href="#"><u>OPT BASICS</u></a>	Fri. Sept. 17th 1 pm - 2:30 pm Tue. Sept. 21st 10 am - 11:30 am Wed. Sept. 22nd 10 am - 11:30 am Thu. Sept. 30th 1 pm - 2:30 pm	Receive and overview and support for applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) with USCIS. <b><i>Reserved for Graduating Seniors</i></b>
<a href="#"><u>OPT STEM EXTENSION</u></a>	Thurs. Oct. 7th, 9am – 11 am	Learn how to extend your OPT for an additional 24 months. <b><i>Reserved for Graduating STEM majors</i></b>

**REGISTER HERE**

For questions - email:  
[INTERNATIONALOFFICE@BOWIESTATE.EDU](mailto:INTERNATIONALOFFICE@BOWIESTATE.EDU)