International Gustie Guide
International Gustie Guide

This guide is intended to help you prepare for your experience at Gustavus Adolphus College. We have included information about some of the most important things to consider prior to your arrival and while you are transitioning to life here. More information on any of these topics can be obtained from the Center for International and Cultural Education. The Center for International and Cultural Education will be a resource for you throughout your stay at Gustavus and beyond.

Cultural Transition

As you adapt to your new surroundings at Gustavus, culture will play a very important role. The transition between cultures is unique for each student. Your experience may differ from others. So we can’t tell you exactly what to expect. But we do feel it is important for you to be aware of and understand this cultural transition. Below is an excerpt from NAFSA’s (Association of International Educators) International Student Handbook. Please read this section, to become more familiar with the topic for our discussions during International Student Orientation.
Adapting to New Surroundings. Culture shock is not quite as shocking or as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture that is called “cultural adaptation.” Most people experience some discomfort before they are able to function well in a new setting. This discomfort is the “culture shock” stage of the adaptation process. The main thing to remember is that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through.

Just as you will bring with you to the United States clothes and other personal items, you will also carry invisible “cultural baggage” when you travel. The baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcases, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

Know What to Expect. Anticipating future events and possibilities makes it easier to deal with them when they happen. For example, it helps to anticipate your initial departure and plan ways to maintain relationships with people at home while you are away. Be sure to allow ample time to say goodbye to all the people who are important to you, and plan how to keep in touch. This assures people that you will continue to care about them.

Planning to stay in touch does not require a promise to write or telephone on a strict schedule, but it does help to establish a realistic interval between communications. You will be extremely busy getting settled and learning about your new environment, so it is essential that long periods between communications not alarm your family and friends at home.

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new place. People may walk and talk more quickly, traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. Such differences are easy to see and quickly learned.

The housing arrangements at your college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing. The international student office is often the best place to go for help with such matters.

Studying abroad means making big changes in your daily life. Generations of students have found that they go through a predictable series of stages as they adjust to living abroad.

At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds, and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and
helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or “quaint.” There will be many opportunities to meet people off campus; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles.

Your “cultural comfort level” will vary over time as you move in and out of your home culture.

**Emerging Differences.** Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences --- rather than similarities --- will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic and social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. But culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community.

For many this gradual process culminates in an emotional state known as “culture shock,” although it is seldom as dramatic as the term implies. The common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings that seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with course work and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility toward the host culture

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

**Coping with Culture Shock.** The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from an event that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response to it
- Ask others how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works
• Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you --- and you toward them --- are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

“Will I Lose My Own Culture?” Sometimes students worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Do not worry: It is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for an understanding of your own culture. Do not resist the opportunity to become bicultural, that is, able to function competently in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, so an accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions with the new culture. As you increase your ability to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!

What Students Say About Culture Shock.

“We always warned new students about the three-month blues; it seemed about that time that we all felt what we eventually realized was culture shock.” --- a student from India

“I expected to learn about the United States; I was surprised how much I learned about myself and my country.” --- a student from Colombia

“Yes, I missed my family, especially my sisters, but we wrote letters and kept in close touch. After a while, I did not think about it all the time. I know they will be eager to see me when I get home.” --- a student from Jordan

“I was so grateful to my host family. They were kind to me when I criticized their country. They patiently helped me get through the time when I was so sad and so angry.” --- a student from Nigeria
“I thought people from places like India and Japan would have culture shock but not me. I thought Americans are a lot like us Germans. It won’t be so different. But I was wrong. I had culture shock too, and it was probably worse because I was so sure it would not happen!” --- a student from Germany

**U.S. Culture.** You may already know a lot about life and culture in the United States. That may help you in your transition, but you may also be confused or surprised to find that some things are not as you had expected. It can be hard to generalize about U.S. culture, as cultures and values differ widely from one social group to another and from one individual to another. Each person’s perceptions are different, so part of the value of your experience here will be your own discovery of the United States and its people.

---

**Community**

**Saint Peter Community.** Gustavus is in Saint Peter, a small town of about 10,000 residents. You will have opportunities to meet people and become involved in the local community. Many students participate in community service through a variety of programs (helping students at local schools, building homes for low income families, walking dogs at the local humane society, and more).

**International Friendship Families.** Each international student is matched with a family in the community, as part of the International Friendship Family program. This is an opportunity for you to get to know an American family and become more connected to the community. Your friendship family may invite you to have dinner in their home, go on a trip with them, or go to an event or activity with them. You will be able to decide how much or how little to do with your friendship family. Many students have become
lifelong friends with their friendship families. Some families have later visited students in their home country. Some friendship families have been valuable resources for students, helping with transportation, finding jobs, and many other things. You will have more information about your friendship family in your international student orientation packet.

**Gustavus Community.** Community is one of the core values of Gustavus. Civility, mutual respect, cooperation, shared governance, and caring have long been hallmarks of the college. Freedom to express a broad range of ideas is central to our sense of community. There is a pervasive sense of concern for every member of the College community. The Center for International and Cultural Education serves as a support system for international students. We care deeply about you and strive to be a family away from home. Jeff Anderson, International Student Services Coordinator, is an advisor specifically for international students. There are also many other caring and professional resources for you at Gustavus. You will meet many of them during International Student Orientation. See [http://www.gustavus.edu/stuservices.cfm](http://www.gustavus.edu/stuservices.cfm) for a listing of some of the resources for students.

**Gustavus Students.** Most students live on campus and are involved in student organizations, athletics, fine arts, or community service. The campus community is vibrant, active, involved and friendly. There will be no shortage of things to do on campus. You will certainly make friends that will last a lifetime.

**Collegiate Fellows.** Collegiate Fellows (CFs) are carefully selected upper-class students assigned to a floor/section of each residence hall. CFs are charged with actively creating and sustaining a living environment conducive to the learning, growth, and development of students. CFs have a variety of responsibilities: peer counseling, facilitating activities and programs that encourage the development of a strong, positive, and inclusive community in the hall, acting as general resources and referral agents. CFs are good examples. They have good advice. They live nearby. Talk with them.
Academics

The U.S. system of higher education, particularly at a liberal arts college like Gustavus, may be quite different than in your home country. Enclosed is a brochure titled “U.S. Classroom Culture.” Please read this prior to your arrival, so you will be familiar with some of the differences. We will further discuss academics at Gustavus during International Student Orientation.

Course Registration. You will registration information prior to your arrival, with instructions to e-mail your course choices to Jeff Anderson. He will register you for classes before you arrive in the U.S. You can make changes to your schedule during International Student Orientation. You may also drop or add classes during the first two weeks of the semester. After your first semester you will register for each semester on-line through the Gustavus website, after consulting with your faculty academic advisor.

Faculty Academic Advisor. Gustavus Adolphus College strives to instill students with a capacity and passion for lifelong learning and encourages them to take an active role in their own education. To assist students in this intellectual and personal growth, each student is assigned a faculty academic advisor.

If you are a first-year student, the professor of your first term seminar course will be your faculty academic advisor, at least through the end of your first semester. If you are an exchange student or transfer student, the Advising Center’s Academic Counselor will be your academic advisor. If you are a teaching assistant, your faculty supervisor will also be your academic advisor.

All first-year students are officially considered undeclared majors upon arrival and must keep their assigned advisor at least through the end of the semester. If students are
certain about their major, they are encouraged to talk with faculty from that major department while keeping their assigned advisor the first semester. If students are certain about a pre-professional interest, they are welcome to talk with the pre-professional faculty contacts. In addition, we hope students will use many campus resources like the Advising Center, Career Center, the Registrar’s Office and the Center for Vocational Reflection from the very beginning.

If first-year students are ready to declare a major and arrange for an advisor from that department, the first time they are allowed to do so is after their first semester. If they are not ready, they should stay with their original advisor until they are ready, continuing to use campus resources as well. Spring semester of the sophomore year is a traditional time by which students should be ready to declare their major.

The mission of our faculty-based advising goes beyond simply prescribing courses. Faculty and students talk about course choices, the integration of coursework and co-curricular responsibilities, possible majors, and developing an academic program that will be finished in a timely fashion and will lead to further study or interesting careers.

Advisors supply students with accurate information about the curriculum and refer students to on-campus and off-campus resources. Advisors guide students in the decision-making process and are available to answer additional questions and process information.

Conversations with advisors often introduce students to new, intriguing, and possibly unfamiliar academic opportunities available in the Gustavus community. Equipped with such information, students are in the position to ultimately become their own best advisor, in charge of their decisions, and prepared to shape their particular college academic career according to their skills, values, and interests.

**Academic Advising Center.** The Academic Advising Center coordinates the faculty-based academic advising program and provides a number of other services to help you make the most of your academic experience at Gustavus. To assist you in maximizing your academic development, the advising staff provides instruction on a variety of skills necessary for college success. Strategies are designed to improve your ability to master concepts in specific courses as well as strengthen your overall study habits. The Academic Advising Center also provides for the needs of enrolled students who have physical or learning disabilities. And tutors are available to assist students.

**Writing Center.** The Writing Center is staffed by Gustavus students from a variety of majors across the curriculum, all of whom want to help you take charge of your own writing process. They are here to help you clarify your own ideas and hone your written communication skills as you learn the conventions of academic writing across the college. The Writing Center is not an editing or proofreading service. Writing Consultants can, however, help you learn to self-edit and work with you on the grammar, punctuation, and usage problems that you identify.
Writing Center staff welcomes the opportunity to talk with you about your writing at any stage in the process. In other words, they work with writers who are just getting started, writers who already have a rough draft, and writers who are ready to consider finishing touches. When you come the Writing Center, you can expect:

- a one-on-one consultation with a peer tutor
- help with reading and interpreting assignments
- discussion of revision and revision strategies
- assistance with brainstorming, planning, and invention
- attention to thesis development and argument
- assistance with style, usage, and documentation
- help with editing strategies.

**Academic Tips for International Students.** Below is a list of tips that have been helpful to international students at Gustavus.

- Carefully examine the course syllabus throughout the semester. At the beginning of the course, your professor will give you a syllabus. It includes the professor’s office hours, phone number, e-mail address, dates of tests, due dates for papers or presentations, attendance policy, and how your course grade will be determined.

- Talk to your professor often. Introduce yourself to the professor on the first day of class. Let the professor know at the beginning if you have any concerns or challenges. Ask questions in class immediately if you don’t understand something. Make an appointment to meet with your professor outside of class if you have further questions or concerns.

- Participate in class discussion, group work, and collaboration projects. It will affect your course grade.

- Don’t fall behind. There may be more assignments than you are used to. It is very important to complete assignments on time. It is wise to read course material before class, and then review soon after class. This will help you understand and remember the material.

- Don’t miss classes. Most professors have attendance policies, and exceeding the maximum number of absences will dramatically affect your grade. If you are ill, you should leave an e-mail or voice-mail message with the professor before class. You should talk to your professor to determine what you missed and how to make up for that.
Student Life

You will have a variety of experiences at Gustavus and life here will be different for each student. This section merely addresses some issues that are particularly helpful for international students to consider prior to arrival.

Transportation. Everything on the Gustavus campus is within walking distance, and downtown St. Peter is only 1 km from campus, so daily transportation is not necessary. But students sometimes wish to go to nearby Mankato or Minneapolis, or travel within the United States during a break. Public transportation in rural Minnesota is limited, so travel can be difficult. Below are some of the options available.

- Saint Peter Transit: This is a taxi service serving the Saint Peter area. It is especially handy during the winter months if walking from the Gustavus campus to downtown St. Peter is difficult.

- Gustavus Student Senate Shuttle: The Student Senate traditionally sponsors a shuttle that runs late night routes through the city of Saint Peter and around campus. Specific schedules will be available at the Student Activity Office information desk once the schedule is set.

- Airport shuttle: Mankato Land to Air us a company that offers a shuttle service between downtown St. Peter and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport. There are
normally four trips each day. Buy tickets at the Gustavus Student Activities Office for a discounted rate. From the airport, you can travel by light rail, bus, taxi or rental car to most parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- **Bus:** Two bus lines go through St. Peter, but they are infrequent, so they are not convenient for travel from St. Peter to Mankato or Minneapolis, but can be useful for longer trips within the United States. They are Jefferson Lines (www.jeffersonlines.com) and Greyhound (www.greyhound.com).

- **Car:** Some students have cars or rely on friends who have cars. If you choose to drive, you will need a license. A driver’s license from your home country will not suffice. You may obtain an International Driver’s License before you come to Gustavus, or you can apply for a Minnesota Driver’s License. To obtain a Minnesota driver’s license, you must pass a knowledge test, a vision test, and a road test. To rent a car, most companies require that you be at least 25 years old. If you have your own car, you must apply for a permit to park on campus. In Minnesota, and most other states, the law requires that you wear a seatbelt.

- **Bicycle:** Some students use a bike around campus and in St. Peter. It is difficult or unsafe to travel to Mankato or Minneapolis by bike. If you have a bike, it is a good idea to register your bike with Gustavus Campus Safety Department and to lock your bike when not in use.

- **Hitchhiking:** Hitchhiking is illegal in Minnesota, and greatly discouraged anywhere in the United States for safety reasons.

**Communication.** Your room will have a telephone and you will find out your telephone number when you arrive at Gustavus. The Gustavus Telecommunications Office will provide you with a long distance authorization code so that you can make calls within the U.S. and overseas, and they will send you a bill for any calls that you make. For better rates, many students choose to buy pre-paid calling cards. You may wish to ask other international students for the best pre-paid calling cards and other cost-effective methods of communicating overseas. Your mailing address at Gustavus will be:

Your Name  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
800 West College Avenue  
Saint Peter, MN 56082

Family or friends sending mail should use the above address, and not your PO box number or residence hall and room number.

You will be given a Gustavus e-mail account and address when you arrive at Gustavus. The e-mail address is normally the first letter of your first name, the first seven letters of your last name, @gustavus.edu. For example, the e-mail address for Ryo Yamanami would be ryamanam@gustavus.edu.
**Housing During Breaks.** You are allowed to stay on the Gustavus campus during breaks; however, you may need to move to a central residence hall. If you intend to stay on campus during a break, contact Residential Life for permission and procedures. For the summer vacation period, if you are a degree-seeking student who will be registering for fall courses, you may work and live on campus. Each department hires their own summer employees. There is no central summer-work job posting. It is your responsibility to contact each department in which you’d like to work well in advance of the summer months. There is a charge for living on campus during the summer, but not for other breaks. Many students choose to travel or stay at a friend’s home during breaks.

**Campus Safety.** Because of the serenity and size of Gustavus, we feel that our campus is a very safe place. But Gustavus is not immune to crime. The safety of all students is taken very seriously. The Department of Campus Safety is on-duty 24 hours a day. Its mission is to provide the safest environment possible in which education may be pursued. Uniformed officers are responsible for residence hall, academic building and grounds security, enforcement of parking and traffic issues, response to health and safety concerns, and supervision of student assistants in both residence halls and academic facilities. Officers are in constant radio communication with the St. Peter Police Department. For international students, it is particularly important to provide your family and the Center for International and Cultural Education with emergency contact information, and to also let your family know if you will be traveling over a break. If there is an emergency, you may call 911 from anywhere in the United States to be connected to local police, fire department, ambulance or medical service. For safety tips from Gustavus Campus Safety, see: [http://www.gustavus.edu/security/tips/crime.cfm](http://www.gustavus.edu/security/tips/crime.cfm)

**Alcohol, Drugs & Tobacco.** Minnesota law and Gustavus policy prohibit the possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21, and prohibit providing alcohol to a person under the age of 21. Consuming or possessing alcohol in an open container in any public campus locations or public property is prohibited. If you are 21 or older, appropriate drinking locations include your residence hall room, private residences, bars or restaurants. Possession, use, sale, or solicitation of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia is prohibited by Minnesota law and Gustavus policy as well. Driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is a serious crime in Minnesota and the rest of the United States. The purchase of legal drugs requires a prescription from a physician or pharmacist. The drug must be purchased at a drug store or pharmacy. Legal drugs are never sold outside these locations. Minnesota state law prohibits the use of smoking tobacco inside public buildings. Gustavus also prohibits the use of smoking tobacco inside all Gustavus buildings.
Immigration

The United States immigration system can be complicated and confusing. Jeff Anderson, International Student Services Coordinator, will advise you on matters of immigration. This section includes some general information regarding immigration for international students.

**Agencies with Immigration Authority.** Two U.S. agencies share most of the responsibility for administering immigration laws. The U.S. Department of State is responsible for consular offices abroad and policies and procedures related to visa issuance. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for administering and enforcing immigration laws within the United States. Immigration functions are divided between three Bureaus of DHS:

1) **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** is responsible for processing applications and petitions.
2) **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** is responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence, and SEVIS.
3) **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** is responsible for immigration inspections at U.S. ports of entry.

**Immigration Documents.** There are generally four types of documents associated with immigration status. This section explains the purpose of each.

1) **Passport:** A passport identifies the person and the country in which the holder is a citizen. You must have a passport valid for at least six months.
from the date you enter the United States. You must maintain a valid passport while in the United States.

2) Visa: You will need an F-1 or J-1 visa to enter the United States as a student. You can apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa only at a U.S. consulate abroad. The only purpose of a visa is to permit admission to the United States. The visa that you use to enter the U.S. can expire while you are inside the U.S., with no negative effect on your immigration status. However, you would need a valid visa to exit and re-enter the U.S.

3) Form I-20 or DS-2019: An F-1 student will have an I-20. A J-1 student will have a DS-2019. These documents are issued by the school and are necessary to apply for a student visa. They are also used as evidence of your immigration status in the U.S.

4) Form I-94: This is a card on which DHS records the category in which you have been admitted to the U.S. and the duration of your stay. You will surrender your Form I-94 each time you depart the U.S., and you will be issued a new Form I-94 each time you enter the U.S. Make sure that your name on Form I-94 matches exactly your name as it appears on your passport and I-20 or DS-2019. Form I-94 also serves as an official “registration document” and is used as proof of your status in the U.S.

Applying for a Visa. You should have received your I-20 or DS-2019, along with instructions and tips on applying for a visa. Please contact Jeff Anderson, International Student Services Coordinator, with any questions.

Admission to the U.S. To enter the U.S., you will need the following:

- Passport valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter the U.S.
- Valid F-1 or J-1 visa
- I-20 or DS-2019 from Gustavus Adolphus College
- Documentation of funds sufficient to cover your first year at Gustavus (you can use the same documentation you used to apply for your visa)

After your flight lands in the United States, you will be inspected according to US-VISIT (U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology Program) procedures. Those procedures consist of the following:

- A U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer will review your documents (passport, visa, I-20 or DS-2019) and ask questions about your stay in the U.S.
- The CBP Officer will scan your fingers with an inkless electronic fingerprint scanner. The CBP Officer will also take a digital photo of you.
- The biographic and fingerprint data will be used to verify your identity and will be compared against various government databases. At that point, the CBP
The CBP Officer will also have access to the information entered into the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) database when your I-20 or DS-2019 was created. Your I-20 or DS-2019 has a bar code and identification number that is used to locate your SEVIS record in the database.

Sometimes the CBP Officer will seem friendly, and sometimes unfriendly or rude. It is important to maintain your composure, to not argue with the CBP Officer, and to answer questions honestly. You can be concise in your answers, without appearing to be uncooperative. There is pressure on the CBP Officer to not make any mistakes. It may help for you to keep in your mind that there should be no reason you would not be admitted to the U.S. if you have all of the required documents, and to maintain a positive attitude even if there are delays. As you make your flight arrangements, you may want to allow some extra time for this process between flights.

**Maintaining Immigration Status.** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires that international students follow all immigration regulations while in the United States. Jeff Anderson, International Student Services Coordinator, is trained to advise and help you comply with immigration regulations. Ultimately, you are responsible for compliance. It is very important for you to maintain proper immigration status, because failure to do so could jeopardize your education and any plans to visit, study or work in the United States in the future. As an F-1 or J-1 student, you are required to:

- Attend the school that issued the I-20 or DS-2019 you used to obtain your visa and enter the U.S.
- Enroll each semester as a full-time student (3 or more credits each semester).
- Maintain good academic standing
- Make normal progress towards completing your course of study by the program end date on your I-20 or DS-2019
- Maintain sufficient financial resources
- Work no more than 20 hours per week on-campus during the academic year
- Do not work off-campus unless specifically authorized
- Have a valid passport at all times
- Report a change of address within 10 days of the change
- Disclose fully and truthfully all information requested by DHS
- Obey all federal and state laws that prohibit the commission of crimes of violence

Immigration law requires that international students maintain full-time student status. You must complete at least 3 credits each semester to be considered a full-time student. If you have an illness, medical condition, or other reason that prevents you from studying full-time you must consult with the International Student Services Coordinator who will advise you on the necessary steps and documentation required for authorization to drop below full-time. Do not drop below 3 credits a semester without first consulting the International Student Services Coordinator. If you drop below 3 credits the immigration
service will consider you to be “out of status” and you may be required to leave the country.

Immigration laws allow F-1 and J-1 students to work on-campus up to 20 hours a week during the academic year and full-time during break periods and summer vacation. Even though immigration laws allow for 20 hours per week, normally Gustavus students who have campus employment as part of their financial assistance work around 12 hours a week. Even though immigration laws allow J-1 students to work on-campus, J-1 exchange students at Gustavus do not have financial assistance from the college and may not be able to work on campus at all.

Off-campus employment is prohibited. Working off-campus is a serious violation of immigration law and could result in you having to leave the country. There are limited types of off-campus work authorization available for students to do internships in their field of study, work for a year in their field of study after graduation, or in cases of severe economic necessity. You should consult with the International Student Services Coordinator to learn more about those employment options and to take the steps necessary for the employment to be authorized by DHS.

What to Bring?

We find that students pack very differently. Much will depend on your individual preferences. You may wish to check with your airline prior to departure to find out the maximum limit on number and weight of your luggage. You may also wish to correspond with your roommate prior to arrival to get an idea of what he or she is bringing. Some international students are surprised by how much their American
roommates bring to college. You may also want to think about what items would be better to purchase when you get here. You will have an opportunity on the last day of International Student Orientation to go shopping at a mall in nearby Mankato, and you can buy most basic necessities in St. Peter prior to that. This section includes some of the things that international students often have questions about.

**Clothes.** You may find that most students dress casually. It can be nice, though not necessary, to have at least one formal outfit for special occasions. You may wish to consider the weather in Minnesota in choosing what clothes to bring. Minnesota has very distinct seasons. We have very cold winters and hot summers. Spring and fall can be unpredictable, with both cold and warm weather. You will need a winter coat, hat, mittens or gloves, warm clothes, and warm shoes or boots for winter. You can either bring those items with you or buy them here.

**Bedding.** Gustavus will provide a pillow, pillowcase, sheets, and a blanket for your use. Many students still bring their own bedding or purchase it after they get here.

**Computer.** Gustavus does not require students to bring their own computers to campus, however, many choose to. Computer labs are available for your use in all of the residence halls, the library, many academic buildings, and in the campus center. If you are unsure about purchasing a computer, we suggest that you spend some time on campus before making a decision. For more technology information for new students see: [http://www.gustavus.edu/gts/Incoming_Student_Technology_FAQ](http://www.gustavus.edu/gts/Incoming_Student_Technology_FAQ)

**Electronics.** The standard U.S. current is 110 volts, 60 cycles alternating current (A.C.). Appliances running on 220-240 volts will not work in the U.S. Most appliance or hardware stores carry current-conversion kits that will work on appliances. Many visitors bring these from home.

**Money.** You should plan to bring enough cash to cover your expenses while traveling to Gustavus, and a little more for your first couple of weeks at Gustavus. Almost all activities at Gustavus are free, so students do not need much cash. It is recommended that you do not carry a large amount of cash. Some students use traveler’s checks initially. You will have an opportunity to open a bank account in St. Peter during International Student Orientation. For larger amounts of money to cover your tuition, room & meals, books, and living expenses during the year, several options exist. Many students find that the best way to transfer funds from home is by bringing a bank check in U.S. dollars. or a “wire transfer” from your bank at home to your new bank in the U.S.

**Cultural Items.** You will have many opportunities to share parts of your culture with others. Many students bring clothes that are traditional in their country, and also poetry, music and pictures from their home country. Each fall, Gustavus has a large international festival that includes a cultural fashion show and music, and also an international student chapel service where you will have an opportunity to read a poem or sing a song in your native language.
Orientation

First you will have an International Student Orientation and then you will have an Orientation with all of the new Gustavus students. So, there will be time to adjust to life here before classes begin.

The International Student Orientation is designed to help you with the cultural and academic transition, and introduce you to the campus community and resources. It is also a time to make friends and have fun. Normally the international student orientation includes: sessions on international transitions, academics, technology, and college life; meeting with academic advisors regarding your course registration; a Gustavus tour; a tour of St. Peter; a chance to open a bank account and apply for a social security card; shopping in Mankato; a welcome breakfast with Center for International and Cultural Education staff; a reception with the Gustavus President; a dance with Peer Assistants in the Dive; a lunch and event to get to know the Gustie Greeters; dinner with the Collegiate Fellows; and a social gathering in the Gustavus Chaplain’s home.

For information on the orientation for all new students, see: http://www.gustavus.edu/orientation/