

International Student and Scholar Handbook



UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

Global Engagement Office
International Students
and Scholars

Prepared by International Student and Scholars

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WELCOME TO UW!

NO MATTER WHAT SIZE YOUR VISION, OUR HORIZONS ARE WIDE ENOUGH FOR YOU ...

On behalf of the staff at International Students and Scholars (ISS), we extend a warm welcome to you! We hope that your stay at the University of Wyoming will be a rewarding one.

As a new member of our international community, your stay with us will begin with many questions concerning American customs, academic requirements, extracurricular activities, as well as transportation, and everyday life queries. This handbook is designed to assist you in your adjustment to living in Laramie, Wyoming. Some of the information will prove useful during the first few weeks of your stay. You may use the other information throughout the entire time that you are at UW. We have attempted to make this handbook as comprehensive as possible, although everything cannot be covered in one publication. You are certain to come across questions or problems that are not addressed within the handbook. We provide a knowledgeable and friendly staff to serve you here at ISS. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us either by visiting our office or by giving us a call.

We also want to encourage you to take advantage of the many campus and community activities that are available. You will have the opportunity to make new friends and learn about the United States while sharing the international perspective you bring to the University of Wyoming. The University benefits from our international students and scholars; you can contribute in a meaningful way to the growth and education of others.

Best wishes in all of your endeavors while at the University of Wyoming!

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M-F 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Academic Year Hours

M-F 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Summer Hours

Please Note:

The information contained in this handbook is of a general nature and should not be regarded as legal advice. Specific action on legal issues should not be taken on the basis of any of the material contained in the handbook without the advice of an attorney.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

1. OUR MISSION

The mission of International Students and Scholars (ISS) is to enhance and support the international dimension of the University of Wyoming (UW) and to participate in the creation of a culturally diverse learning environment by assisting persons involved in international exchange. We provide essential services and programs for students and scholars from other countries so that these members of the UW community can fully achieve their educational, professional, and personal objectives. ISS serves as an advocate for international education within the university and at the governmental level.

International Students and Scholars

ISS promotes international educational exchange on the campus by:

1. Assessing the needs of international students and scholars, setting priorities, responding appropriately, and evaluating their effect;
2. Coordinating and facilitating the National Student Exchange program;
3. Providing information on immigration regulations and procedures to ensure individual and institutional compliance;
4. Orienting international students and scholars to the policies and expectations of the University, the educational system, and the U.S.; and
5. Fostering an international dimension within the University and the community at large through specific programming activities.

The staff of ISS recognizes that the international scholars, students, exchange students at UW are the reason for our office's existence. We strive to maintain an atmosphere that encourages student and scholar interaction and involvement, and to provide each individual with a consistent quality level of service.

The International Resource Center

The International Resource Center (IRC) promotes international educational exchange through its services and programs. The mission of the IRC is to assist in creating an environment that is supportive and conducive to meeting the educational, intellectual, and social needs of the UW international population in particular as well as the campus community at large. The IRC is one of several services that are responsible for assisting in the campus wide facilitation of meaningful dialogue on the value and importance of human diversity.

The IRC, located in the basement of the Cheney International Center, provides opportunities for a wide variety of cross-cultural activities to enrich the experience of international education at UW. Ongoing programs include discussion sessions, a weekly informal coffee hour, foreign language conversation hours, workshops on American students studying abroad, and information about cross cultural awareness and concerns. In addition, the facility serves as a regular meeting site for several international groups. Computers are also available in the center. The International Resource Center is open from 7:00 am – 9:00 pm Monday-Saturday during the academic school year and all are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities it provides.

2. ISS SERVICES

Immigration, Personal, Financial, and Other Counsel

International Students and Scholars advises non-immigrants on an individual basis concerning non-academic matters such as transfer of schools, extension of stay, work permission and practical training experience. We are professionally trained to offer you advice, counseling, and programs about academic, immigration and financial matters in the United States. Students and scholars also come to us for discussion and counseling regarding personal matters, such as problems with friendships, family, and roommates; cross-cultural misunderstandings; feelings of sadness, anger, and fear; concerns about returning home; and making life changes and choices. Also, we help you understand and deal effectively with the academic system and University requirements.

You can call or stop by to ask general questions. If our reception staff is not able to assist you with your concern, you will be asked to schedule an appointment with either the Immigration Coordinator or Director. If your question or concern will take more than 15 minutes, we suggest you inform the Office Associate so a longer block of time can be reserved for you.

Orientation Programs

At the beginning of fall and spring semesters, the ISS director conducts an orientation for newly arrived non-immigrants. The orientation is mandatory so you can learn about the many facets of academic study and daily life at UW. The orientation includes tours, lectures, discussions, and question and answer sessions.

Students should attend regular undergraduate and graduate orientations, in addition to the international student orientation.

Liaison and Advocacy Services

ISS serves as a representative, advocate, or spokesperson for non-immigrants in dealing with U.S. and international government agencies, other campus offices and departments, and community members. This service can often help you cut through many agencies' bureaucratic levels, serving as a "buffer" between you and those which with you must deal. In particular, ISS is the liaison between the Justice Department, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, State Department, and the United States Information Agency.

Certification Letters

ISS will, upon request, assist the Office of the Registrar in providing letters that certify your status, enrollment and/or tuition expenses. It generally takes one to three days to process certification requests, depending upon the time of year.

International Student Association (ISA)

As a UW international student, you belong to the International Student Association. This organization is also open to non-students, spouses, and dependents. ISA represents many nations and the United States. You can enjoy frequent activities such as the weekly International Coffee Hour, Film Festival, International Week, picnics, potluck dinners, and other informal get-togethers. Meetings are held throughout the year, and you are encouraged to become actively involved. In addition, ISA represents international students on ASUW. Check the ISA website for specific meeting times.

Friendship Families Program

The "Friendship Families Program" was developed in response to a need within the community to, "provide international students attending the University of Wyoming with an opportunity to get together with a local family on a regular basis." The purpose of the program is to foster intercultural awareness, friendship, and understanding.

"Friendship Families" does not provide living arrangements for students, nor do they provide financial or academic support. They do provide international students with a chance to share occasional meals, and family oriented activities as well as serving as a forum to exchange ideas, customs, and individual differences. Perhaps most important, it is a chance for an international student to be matched up with, and become a part of, a local American family.

Interested international students are encouraged to complete a program application. The applications can be obtained through ISS. Completed applications will be forwarded to a committee of community members who will try to match the student with a local Laramie family. This is done on a space available basis.

“The Talking Stick”

In order to keep UW international students and scholars informed about changes in immigration regulations and procedures, University activities, meetings for various student groups, and items of a general interest, ISS publishes a weekly electronic newsletter. "The Talking Stick" is published and sent to hundreds of UW students, faculty and staff each week during the regular academic year. It offers a very timely means for people to find out what is happening on campus and across our international community. To receive "The Talking Stick" simply call, or, e-mail International Students and Scholars, and give us your UW electronic mailing address and we'll put you on our mailing list. From then on, you'll receive interesting and useful information that will keep you better informed as an UW student/scholar. For more information, please email ISS at emailuwglobal@uwyo.edu.

GETTING STARTED

1. HOUSING

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

[Residence Life and Dining Services](#)

Approximately twenty-five percent of all US students live in on-campus housing. Residence Life and Dining Services offers a variety of residence hall living options. When you are accepted for admission to the University, you are sent an Application for Residence Life and Dining Services Contract. Those wanting on-campus accommodations in the residence halls must return the application promptly. Priority for room assignments is based on the date the application is received. A refundable deposit of \$100 must accompany the application. You may choose to reside in any one of six on campus residence halls. Crane hall is specifically reserved for graduate students or persons at least 21 years of age or older and provides an environment academically and socially enriching for mature students.

Students may have a roommate if desired in any of the residence halls. Room charges include utilities, local telephone, and basic cable TV service. Each residence hall room has two twin beds, a desk, and chairs as well as built in drawers. Study lounges, computer ready rooms and convenient access to libraries and reference materials make residence hall living ideal for the serious student. Residence halls are affordable, safe, convenient, and definitely student-oriented.

Residents may choose from several board options offered in the Washakie Dining Center, or they may prepare some or all of their meals in kitchens located on every floor in Crane Hall. **The Washakie Dining Center**, located in the residence halls complex, offers residents a variety of board plans to suit most student needs.

Hall office staff are available 24 hours per day to answer questions, provide information, make change, sell stamps, and provide a variety of equipment for residents to check out.

The Washakie Center Computer Lab is located on the lower level of the Washakie Center. The lab is an integral piece of the Academic Enrichment Center. The facility features state of the art computer work stations (including scanners and printers) available to students during [Washakie Center hours](#). The computer lab is also staffed by an Information Technology trained lab assistant to help with any problems that might occur.

Housing during the summer and between semesters is available. Storage units are provided over the summer months at no cost to continuing residents. For more information write for an application or contact **Residence Life & Dining Services, Dept. 3394, 1000 E. University Ave., Laramie, WY 82071 or call (307) 766-3175.**

UW Apartments

The UW Apartments Office operates 537 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments for students, faculty and staff. The apartments are located at the east edge of campus and are accessible by car, bike, or foot. A free Union Express shuttle bus service is also provided to the Wyoming Union at five-minute intervals, and to the Classroom Building, from 7:00am to 6:00pm during the academic year.

The Classroom Express bus services the Classroom building from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. on university business days. This bus departs from the Express Lot, middle shelter, proceeds to South Downey Hall, proceeds to the Classroom building (Stop #3), travels to the Arena Auditorium (Stop #5) and then returns to the Express Lot, Middle Shelter. Departure occurs approximately every 10 minutes. After 6:10 p.m., the Classroom Express adds a stop at the Wyoming Union after the Classroom Building and then proceeds to East campus. After 6:10 p.m. the Classroom Express completes a loop in approximately 20 minutes. Please see the stop schedule for more details.

The apartments are convenient and offer affordable, clean, and comfortable student living. Apartment rent includes all utilities and basic extended cable. All of the apartments also include local telephone service. Apartments come furnished and unfurnished. Every apartment has a refrigerator, range and oven. There are washer and dryer hookups in some apartments, and the University operates coin-operated laundries in a variety of locations.

The Apartment Maintenance Shop's full-time staff is employed to remove snow, mow lawn, and perform maintenance work as necessary for all apartments. They are available for 24-hour emergency maintenance service.

The apartments are close to shopping, tennis courts, the UW golf course, Laramie's hospital and health care professional offices, grocery stores, restaurants, and other community services. Play areas for children are established in several locations within the apartment complex. Public schools are close to the apartments, and school buses pick up children in the complex.

A computer lab is available approximately 40 hours per week for residents. University Apartments offer educational, social, and recreational programs for residents. Ski trips, barbecues, holiday activities, children's programs, and potluck dinners are a few of the events regularly scheduled. The apartment Community Center is available for use by residents for birthday parties, social and religious gatherings, and holiday festivities.

The UW Apartments Office sponsors the Home Child-Care Provider Program for children of student parents. Quality, subsidized child-care for infants and toddlers is available to all residents.

For more information on UW Apartment living, call or write for an application to:

2413 Arrowhead Lane, #369
Laramie WY 82070
(307) 766-3176 or 1-866-653-0212

Dining Services

University Dining Services at Washakie offers an outstanding variety of meal plans and services for both on- and off-campus students.

For students who choose to live in the Washakie Complex, the Washakie Dining Room offers four meal plan options. **The Unlimited Meal Plan, the Any 15 Meal Plan, the Any 12 Meal Plan, and the Any 9 Meal Plan.** The Unlimited Meal Plan offers maximum convenience and flexibility with no restrictions on how many times you may enter the dining room each week. The Any 15 Meal Plan and the Any 12 Meal Plan limit the number of times you can enter the dining room each week to 15 and 12 respectively.

All students who select the Unlimited Meal Plan, the Any 15 Meal Plan, or the Any 12 Meal Plan receive \$50 per semester in Dining Dollars. Dining Dollars is a debit account on your WyoOne card and can be used at other locations on campus to purchase food items. Dining Dollars is part of the meal plan package and can be used only to purchase food items; it does not have any cash value to the meal plan user.

An important message to students NOT living in the Washakie Complex Residence Halls!

You can save time and money with any of the eight Washakie Dining Room meal plans. These meal plans are designed to fit a variety of schedules and budgets. Meal plans are available for as little as \$290.67/semester resulting in great savings for you in time and money. All meal plans offer these benefits:

- All-you-can-eat buffet style dining with unlimited seconds (except for special events).
- Endless refills on a wide selection of beverages.
- Make your own salad bar.
- Hot fast foods like tacos, hamburgers, hot dogs and pizza.
- Numerous desserts with unlimited servings. Special event dinners that offer steak, shrimp or prime rib.
- A soup and sandwich bar with a variety of breads, cheeses and meats.
- A convenient payment plan makes budgeting easy.

Meal Time: Convenient weekday operations provide continuous access to the Dining Room beginning at 7 a.m. each morning. Note that there are only two meal times on Saturday and Sunday.

MEAL TIMES

| Meals | Monday-Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Breakfast | 7:00-11:00 AM | 7:00-10:00 AM | 7:00-10:00 AM |
| Brunch | | 10:00-1:00 PM | 10:00-1:00 PM |
| Lunch | 11:00-4:30PM | | |
| Dinner | 4:30-7:30 PM | 4:30-7:00 PM | 4:30-7:00 PM |
| Late Night Snack (Sun. – Thurs.) | 8:30 – 10:30 PM | | |

Admittance: Entry into Washakie Dining Room is permitted by showing your WyoOne ID at the entrance. You must present your card for access to each meal.

Guests: Students are allowed to invite guests who live off-campus or do not have a dining plan to the Washakie Dining Center up to five times per semester for *free*. This is useful for family visits, or inviting off-campus friends to spend extra time with you over a free meal. Just let the person at check-in know that you are using a guest pass.

Special Attention: Special attention from our professional staff ensures that you will receive dining pleasure each time you visit Washakie Food Service. Menus are planned and coordinated to provide an optimally balanced and nutritious diet. For individuals requiring special diets, our in house Registered Dietitian is available by appointment for discussion and counseling.

Employment Opportunities: International students! If you prefer a job that offers variety, good pay, flexible work hours, an opportunity to meet people and teamwork, pick up an employment application in the University Food Service Office. International students may work up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session and provided it is not their first semester at the University. For more information call (307) 766-4340.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Most international staff members and some students, reside off-campus. That means they live in housing that is not owned or maintained by the University of Wyoming. There are a variety of living accommodations that are available near the UW campus area. Housing can be found through [Laramie Daily Boomerang](#), [Craigslis.com](#), and [Facebook](#) (there are several rental groups for the Laramie area). These sites will include listings of furnished and unfurnished apartments, rooms and houses for rent, lease or sale. In addition, there are off campus housing opportunities listed on bulletin boards in the Wyoming Union, Knight Hall and some departments or other areas throughout the campus.

When Choosing a Residence in Laramie, You Should Consider the Following:

- Set your priorities! What is most important to you? Costs? Having your own room? Being within walking distance to the University? Having cooking facilities? Having direct access to laundry facilities? Having a quiet place to relax? Having storage for a bicycle or car?
- Make an initial contact! Select several possibilities from housing listings, and make appointments with the appropriate landlords or managers. If your spoken English is not adequate, have a friend or, someone from your country whose English is better, help you make a checklist of important information. Ask them to go with you to make sure you understand the answers thoroughly. **PLEASE NOTE:** The University of Wyoming does not inspect properties listed or interview potential landlords in the community. Any and all contracts negotiated are the private responsibility of the parties involved, and the university cannot intervene in, or mediate, disputes.
- Negotiate the price or the terms if you think it appropriate. Make the security/cleaning deposit! **READ THE LEASE BEFORE SIGNING, AND ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.** Ask for everything to be put in writing. It is usually not a good idea to accept verbal agreements. Keep all receipts and a copy of the lease for your records.

Preventing Problems between the Landlord and Tenant

Problems between landlords and tenants, while infrequent, tend to become adversarial. Disputes arising from unreasonable behavior may be hard to avoid, but many others could be avoided with a little planning in the beginning.

You and a potential landlord may want to use the following checklist when renting an apartment or house:

- Be sure the dwelling meets your needs and fits your budget. Do not rent more than you can comfortably afford.
- Before you move in, walk through the property with the landlord and carefully inspect for defects and damage. Prepare a list of any damage, both of you should sign and date the list. This will help ensure you are not charged later for damage that was present before you moved in.
- If the landlord agrees to make repairs, ask those to be put in writing.
- Confirm who will be responsible for utility costs, including water, gas, cable, and electricity.
- Ask the exact amount of any required damage or cleaning deposits. In the case of a cleaning deposit, establish whether it is refundable. Also, ask the landlord to explain his or her definition of a "clean apartment." This should be done so you will know what to expect from the landlord to get your cleaning or damage deposit back when you move out. Be sure to ask how long it will take to get you damage or cleaning deposits back.
- The landlord should be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the premises, which remain under his/her control such as hallways, stairways, fire escapes, and outside walkways. The landlord should also be responsible for the elimination of pests (i.e. insects, mice, etc.) from all public areas. You, however, may be held responsible if your actions caused the damage or pests.
- Be sure you understand **all** the landlord's rules and regulations and are comfortable with them. If there are written rules, read them carefully. Pay particular attention to restrictions concerning noise, pets, parking, and overnight guests.
- Most rental agreements and leases may be either oral or written. If the landlord uses a written agreement, be aware of it and read it before you sign. If you think changes should be made in the agreement, write them legibly and initial each one, requesting the landlord to do the same. It is legal to make changes in a formal document. Also, be sure all blank spaces in the form agreement are filled in.
- Consider investing in homeowner's or renter's insurance. The premiums of renter's insurance are usually very low: most renter's policies are really homeowner's policies that are modified to fit the need of tenants. The landlord does not carry insurance on your belongings.

If you have questions about a form or agreement you are being asked to sign, discuss them with an attorney. There is a student's attorney in the Wyoming Union.

Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance provides compensation to a tenant in the event of losses caused by fire, theft, or vandalism, regardless of who is at fault. Insurance policies generally provide coverage for all items in your home, including clothing, electronics, and personal property, as well as any damage to the building itself. The cost of renter's insurance varies, but it is generally considered a good investment, especially if you own anything valuable in your home.

[Guide to Renter's Insurance through MoneyGeek](#)

Renter's Checklist

The following is a list of questions to keep in mind when looking for an apartment:

- What are the conditions of the lease?
- If there is no lease, what are the terms of the tenancy?
- How much is the security/damage deposit? How is it returned? And when?
- Whom do you call for repairs?
- What are the building security arrangements?
- Will you be allowed to make interior alterations (paint, install shelves, hang posters, etc.)
- Are the kitchen and bathroom facilities complete?
- Are the electrical outlets safely installed?
- Where is the fuse box or circuit breaker?
- What provisions are made for fire safety?
- What utilities are included in the rent? Is a cable hookup included?
- What kind of heat is provided, and is the cost of the heat included in the rent? If not, how much extra, on the average, per month will be needed?
- When and where is garbage picked up?
- Are there laundry facilities in the building?
- If you have a car, where can you keep it?
- How much closet/storage space is there?
- What are the landlord's policies on pets? Parties? Noise? Children?

Definitions of Terms

Apartment (apt.): A living unit that usually includes a kitchen, bathroom, living room, and bedroom(s) in an apartment building.

Apt. in house: Same as above but an apartment located in a house has usually been converted from single living space.

Condominium: A building in which each apartment is owned by separate individuals.

Efficiency: A room with a private entrance and cooking facilities, but not separate kitchen. An efficiency usually has a private bath (also called a "studio apartment").

Furnished house: Includes refrigerator, stove, beds, chairs, desks and a couch. An entire house may be rented by a group of students who split the cost equally.

Landlord/landlady/manager: The person who owns or manages a house or an apartment.

Lease: A binding legal document signed by both the landlord and the tenant, specifying the rent and duration that the apartment or house will be rented.

Non-smoker: An individual who does not smoke cigarettes, cigars, or a pipe of any type.

Roommate(s): A person or persons with whom one shares living quarters.

Security or damage deposit: An amount of money, normally equal to a month's rent, payable to the landlord before moving in.

Sublet: A procedure by which the legal tenant of an apartment rents the same space to someone else.

Tenant: A renter.

Townhouse: An apartment building, usually with an entrance into each separate apartment from the street; it may be one or two levels.

Unfurnished: Usually includes a refrigerator and a stove but no other furnishings.

Utilities: Gas, electricity, garbage collection, and water.

Laramie Service and Utility Hook-up

Garbage Collection

IMPORTANT! Do not throw garbage into the sink drain unless it is equipped with an electrical garbage disposal unit. Garbage and trash is collected once a week depending upon where you live in Laramie. Garbage should be placed in plastic bags or trash cans for pick up. Check the [City of Laramie](#) for the day and location of pick up in your neighborhood. The paper or plastic bags you receive at the grocery store are ideal to use inside your garbage containers in the house, but not for external pick up. If you do not have a trash can, use garbage bags, such as Hefty or Glad. They can be purchased at any hardware, grocery or discount store.

Electricity/Power

Who: Rocky Mountain Power
 1-888-221-7070 (Customer Service)
 1-877-508-5088 (Outages/Emergencies)
customerservice@rockymtnpower.net

How:

1. The power company will ask for the following:
 - a. your name
 - b. your previous address
 - c. your place of employment:--tell them you are a student
 - d. your I.D. passport number
2. A deposit may be required.
3. Electric service available when customer signs up.

Natural Gas

Who: [Black Hills Energy](#)
Customer Service: 888-890-5554
Emergency Assistance: 800-694-8989

How: Gas will be hooked up anywhere from one day to two weeks after you call, depending on the work schedules. There is no deposit required.

Internet & Cable Television (For People Living Off-campus)

Who: [Spectrum](#)
Order new service: 833-694-9256
Customer Support: 833-780-1880

How: Request installation through www.spectrum.com or call their new service number.

1. An installation fee is required at the time you sign up for service. There may be additional costs if you want or require more services.
2. It may take 5 to 15 working days before your cable is installed. Again, you will need to make an appointment hook-up and you, or your spouse must be present at the time of installation. Any person other than yourself or your spouse must have your written permission to stand in for you during the installation. You must also have written permission from your landlord or the owner of the premises if pre-existing wires are not there and holes need to be drilled in the house to install the cable wiring.

TRANSPORTATION

UW Shuttle Buses

The University of Wyoming provides a free bus system throughout the UW campus and student housing. The operating hours for the Campus Commuter are 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, Monday-Friday. Route maps, schedules and other information about UW transit can be found at [Transit and Parking Services website](#), (307) 766-9800, or the [Transloc Rider App](#).

SafeRide:

On-call public transportation service that operates late nights on the weekends to offer nonjudgmental "safe" rides home. The operating hours are 9:00 pm to 2:00 am on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Request a ride through Transloc Rider App or (307) 766-9800.

LaramieLink:

Free bus service provided by the University of Wyoming which includes routes around town from Walmart to downtown. The operating hours are 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, Monday-Friday.

LaramieLink Dial-A-Ride:

On-call service that serves LaramieLink bus stops as well as any point on the UW Campus. The operating hours are from 6:30 pm to 2:00 am, Monday - Friday and 10:00 am to 10:00 pm on the weekends. (307) 766-7433 (307-766-RIDE)

University of Wyoming TransLoc:

Transloc is a free app that allows you to track your buses live. It not only provides real-time location but also lets you access announcements that might affect your ride. For additional information please visit: uwo.transloc.com

UW Parking Permits

University of Wyoming students, faculty and staff may park on campus *provided they have authorization to do so*. As parking space is limited, authorization is provided only through the purchase of a **Parking Permit** available through the Transportation and Parking Services Department. The permits can be purchased online per semester, or per academic year:

1. Go to [Transit & Parking Services website](#) and select "purchase permits" under the heading "ONLINE SERVICES" ;
2. Log in as a student and continue following the prompts to purchase either an "R" or "C" permit, available to students.*
NOTE: "R" permits are only available to students living in campus dorms or housing, and the "C" permit will only allow you to park near shuttle stops off campus so that you can conveniently take a bus to campus. Neither will allow you to park in any parking lot reserved for faculty/staff, "A," which are located closest to campus.

You will be given a Parking Permit with a letter of instruction. Display the Parking Permit in your front windshield and you can park in any parking lot on campus that corresponds with the letter on your permit. Transpark will provide you with a brochure of parking regulations as well as information on the location of campus parking areas. Park only in lots that correspond to the letter on your Parking Permit or you will be ticketed. Tickets are usually about \$20 per citation. **Do not park in a handicapped zone unless you have a handicapped sticker and UW Parking Permit. Do not park in front of curbs that have been painted yellow.** You can be ticketed for both offenses. **Do not park in residential zones marked by signs on the streets surrounding campus; these streets are blocked from student parking to protect the residents of Laramie, and tickets are very expensive.** For more information contact Transpark at (307) 766-9800.

Bicycles

If you have a bicycle, it is recommended you register it with the [University Police](#) north of campus. If your bicycle is lost or stolen, it may be much easier to find and identify if it has been registered. The cost for registering a bicycle is a one-time fee of \$5 (pay with a check only,

they do not accept cash). Registration fairs are often held at the beginning of each semester outside the Wyoming Union for your convenience.

Bicycle regulations are available from the University Police. At UW, specific bicycle routes or paths have been laid out throughout the campus. Please adhere to those designated routes. Do not ride your bicycle on the sidewalk as it is dangerous for both riders and pedestrians. It is also illegal and you can be ticketed for it. Become familiar with the regulations, as both the Laramie Police Department and the University Police can and will issue tickets to those who ignore the regulations.

Automobiles and Driving in the United States

Like many other students, you may want your own car while at the University. Owning a car can be convenient as it permits you to take trips that otherwise may be impossible. However, as an international student who will be in the U.S. for a relatively short time, you may find the problems of purchasing and maintaining a car outweigh the conveniences. A car is expensive to maintain (required insurance is costly), difficult to drive in Wyoming winters, and difficult to park in the University area. In addition, when you are ready to leave the U.S. and sell the car, you will probably be offered a lot less than you paid for it. You can expect a car to cost you a lot of money over a short period of time. For these reasons, we do not encourage you to buy a car.

If you are determined to purchase a car, please read the following information carefully. When it comes to purchasing a car, our first and foremost suggestion is ***DON'T RUSH INTO IT!*** If you take your time, there are many things you can do that will not only save you money, but also insure the car you buy will be a good one. **NOTE:** If you love to bargain, this is the time to practice the art!

THE USE OF SEAT BELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS FOR ALL CAR OCCUPENTS IS REQUIRED BY LAW IN WYOMING AND MOST STATES IN THE UNITED STATES!

Buying a New or Used Car

Although a new car will most likely give you fewer problems than a used one, it will be far more expensive. A new car begins to depreciate the moment you drive it away from the dealership. If you buy a new car and sell it 12 months later, you can expect to face a substantial loss. Since the major loss in value takes place in the first year of new car ownership, we do not recommend international students, faculty and staff, who will be in the United States for a short time, buy a new car.

Used Cars

There is always risk in buying a used car, but its value depreciates less than a new car over the same period. It is possible to find a good, dependable used car.

Begin the process of buying a used car by reviewing the latest issues of "*Consumer Reports*" (normally published in April) usually found in a library's periodical section. This issue will have a section on "*Good Bets in Used Cars*" that not only includes a list of best used car buys (listed by price range and size), but also a list of models to avoid.

Next, begin to look for a car in the price range you can afford. There are two options available to you: first, to buy directly from an individual owner (see local/regional newspapers or Facebook) or, second, to buy from a reputable automobile dealer. Although you may save money buying directly from a private owner, we suggest, you purchase your car from a dealer who can give you a FULL guarantee. A full guarantee will cover repairs for free or are minimal for a specified period of time. Beyond that, there is a charge for repairs or a maintenance contract.

Several Helpful Suggestions

- When buying from an individual, pay no cash until you have obtained a signed and notarized title.
- Check the guarantee; make sure you know what is and what is not covered and compare dealers' guarantees.
- Bargain; don't assume the listed price is the one you must pay.
- Examine the car's paint finish carefully. Many times, cars are repainted to conceal damage from an accident. If possible, avoid buying a car that has been repainted. Check under the hood or in the trunk to make sure the exposed body paint matches the exterior paint. Ripples in the paint could indicate the car has been in an accident and the resulting bodywork is less than satisfactory. Take the automobile for a test drive. It's to your advantage to conduct a road test or test drive of any car you wish to buy. An ideal road test lasts about 30 minutes and includes driving in town and on the interstate highway. Notice how easily the car slips in and out of gear; check the acceleration; try the brakes several times; and generally see how well the car handles.
- Check the tires to see if there is uneven wear on them.
- Have a qualified mechanic inspect any used car prior to your buying it. Expect to pay a minimum fee for such an inspection, to include a compression check.

New Cars

Buying a new car is a fascinating, often complex experience. Not only will you be faced with different makes of cars, but each manufacturer will also offer you a wide range of sizes and models. This is further compounded by the opportunity you will have to select from many additional options: engine size, transmissions, type of brakes (manual or power), steering (manual or power), tire types, air conditioning, seat designs, automatic speed controls, mirror types, radio/stereos, trims, air bags, and colors. Such options can add \$1,000 or more to the base price of a car, so select your options with care.

If you decided to buy a new car, we suggest the following:

1. Check magazines such as "Consumer Reports", "Car and Driver", "Road and Track", and other publications on cars to see which car makes and models are recommended and why.
2. Once you have decided on the specific make and model you want and the options you'd like, find out what is the actual cost of the car to the dealer, by looking through "Consumer Reports" or a similar publication. Then negotiate up from the base price rather than down from the sticker price on the car. You may be able to get it for \$200 to \$300 above the dealer's cost which will save you more than 20 percent, a substantial amount. While you can expect to pay for transportation of the car from its manufacturing location, don't let the dealer add "dealer preparation charges" on to the cost. This is their responsibility. And don't be pressured into your decision.

Car Insurance

Insurance is required to register your car. Depending upon your age, sex, and driving record, the cost can vary from approximately \$300 to \$900/year; men under 25 will be charged the highest amount. You may want to discuss insurance with several companies since costs may vary. Also, some companies may charge a fee for making out a policy. According to Wyoming state law:

"ALL MOTORISTS ARE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE PROOF OF LIABILITY INSURANCE WHEN STOPPED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. A PERSON CONVICTED OF OPERATING A VEHICLE WITHOUT LIABILITY INSURANCE IN EFFECT WILL BE REQUIRED TO FILE AND MAINTAIN PROOF OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THREE YEARS. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION OF DRIVER'S LICENSE AND DRIVING PRIVILEGES."

Car Registration

When you purchase a car from a dealer, arrangements will be made for you to obtain a title for a new car through a Statement of Origin or a used car through a properly notarized, lien free, assigned title. If you purchase the car directly from an owner, be sure to get a properly notarized, lien free title. A seller is required by law to deliver a proper title to the buyer at the time of sale or delivery of the vehicle. If a lien appears on the title, it **must** be released, creating a "lien free" title. Have this process completed prior to your purchase of the vehicle. There is a charge for releasing the lien. You must obtain a title in your name from the County Clerk's office in the Albany County Courthouse, located between 5th and 6th Streets, Grand and Iverson Avenues.

REMEMBER TO KEEP THE NEW TITLE IN A SAFE PLACE BECAUSE YOU WILL NEED IT WHEN YOU SELL THE CAR.

Once you receive your title, you must obtain license plates and registration from the County Treasurer's Office, in the Courthouse. You must provide proof of insurance for the vehicle to complete this process. The cost of registration will vary depending upon the vehicle's make, model, and year. At this time you will also have to pay sales tax on the car's purchase price and provide a bill of sale.

Steps to Follow After Buying a Car

The following are the basic steps you must take after the purchase of your car, assuming you purchased your car from an individual.

STEP 1:

Purchase

- 1) The owner will sign and have notarized his or her copy of the TITLE and give it to you.
 - a) Make sure the owner does not have a lien on the car (owe money.) The first part of the TITLE will specify if there is a lien.
 - b) If the owner does not have the TITLE, it is probably held by a lending institution.
- 2) Pay no money before the title is signed and notarized.
- 3) Obtain a receipt for the purchase or a Bill of Sale.

STEP 2:

Insurance

- 1) All automobiles must be insured. Insurance is costly but if you have a Wyoming driver's license it may not be quite as expensive. Show your insurance agent the following:
 - a) Driver's license
 - b) Title or registration of vehicle
 - c) Deposit for the insurance
- 2) Get a verification of insurance from the insurance agent. If the agent can't give you a temporary insurance policy card, make sure you get the policy number. You will need this when you register the car.
- 3) Discussing your insurance needs with a qualified agent is a must. Be sure to ask about the wide variety of coverage available (i.e. collision, comprehensive, body injury liability, property liability, personal injury and protection--sometimes referred to as no fault.)

STEP 3:

Registration

- 1) Go to the County Clerk's Office at the Courthouse and take your:
 - a) Properly signed and notarized, assigned title.
 - b) Receipt of purchase or a bill of sale.
 - c) Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) inspection if the title is currently from another state. (The VIN inspection is done by the Sheriff's Office by appointment or during specific hours.) Please call and make arrangements for your inspection with the Sheriff's Office in the basement of the Courthouse at (307) 721-2526.
- 2) The Clerk's Office will:
 - a) Issue a new title for the vehicle in your name.
- 3) Go to the County Treasurer's Office at the Courthouse and they will:

- a) Charge you a 6% sales tax on your purchase.
- b) Give you a Car Registration Certificate.
- c) Give you new license plates.

STEP 4:

Getting a Driver's License

- 1) As an international student attending the University of Wyoming, you do not have to obtain a Wyoming driver's license if you possess a valid driver's license from another state in the U.S. or a valid license from your home country.
- 2) If you wish to obtain a Wyoming driver's license you must go to the Driver's License Office at 3411 S. 3rd, (307) 745-2225 and
 - a) Successfully complete a written test that includes information outlined in the booklet "[Wyoming Rules of the Road](#)" booklet.
 - b) Complete a vision screening.
 - c) A driving test is required if you are a first time applicant. First time applicants, who have never been licensed in Wyoming, or any other state, will be required to pass a driving test. All other applicants may be required to pass a driving test consisting of usual driving maneuvers to demonstrate their ability to operate a motor vehicle safely. The applicant must provide a vehicle licensed and properly equipped for the driver license classification they are seeking.
 - d) Pay license fee.

DO NOT DRIVE WITHOUT A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE!

3. SAFETY

Automobile Safety

Items to Keep in Your Automobile

As distances between destinations can be great and your car can break down, it is suggested you carry the following items in the trunk for emergencies.

- Blankets and/or sleeping bags
- Spare heavy coat or jacket
- One pound or more of candy or other high calorie food
- Water
- Safety candles (open window slightly)
- Matches stored in waterproof bag or container
- Tire chains
- Shovel
- Booster (jumper) cables
- Tire jack
- Tow rope or chain
- Window scraper with brush
- First aid kit
- Flashlight

Safety tips for driving in all conditions can be found in the "[Wyoming Rules of the Road](#)", available at the Driver's License office.

Winter Safety

Winters in Wyoming can be very severe but you can protect yourself by the way you dress. The following guidelines can help you prepare for winter weather. You may want to wait to purchase your winter clothing in Wyoming, Colorado, or online to save yourself the pain of losing packing space to bulky winter clothing. Laramie has several used clothing stores where you can purchase winter clothing. Facebook groups can also be really helpful. If you arriving in the spring, you will want to come prepared with at least a warm, winter coat.

Learn How to Layer Clothing

Layering your clothes is the most effective way to stay warm and comfortable. The layers keep heat close to your body and can prevent heat loss.

- **Base Layer** (underwear layer): wicks sweat off your skin, which keeps you from becoming chilled or hypothermic. Base layers will be helpful when the temperature drops below freezing or if you are active outside.
- **Middle layer** (insulating layer): retains body heat to protect you from the cold. This includes sweaters, pullovers, cardigans, etc.
- **Outer layer** (shell layer): shields you from wind, rain, and snow. The outer shell will prevent wind and water from penetrating the inner layers. **Windproof clothing is extremely helpful in Laramie!**

Check the Weather Forecast

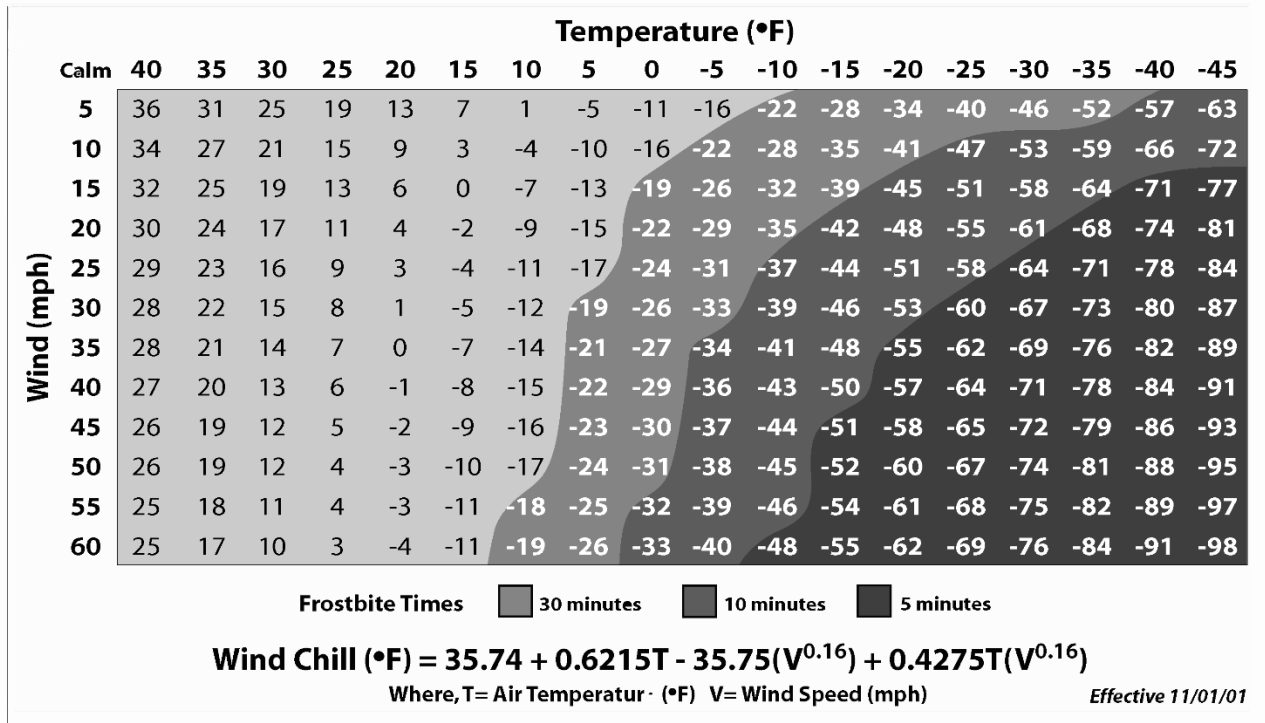
The weather can drastically change throughout the day. Checking the forecast can help you better plan your clothing and transportation choices.

- [National Weather Service](#)
- [Weather Underground](#)
- [AccuWeather](#)

One important measurement to check is the wind chill since the wind and temperature can limit your time outside before frostbite sets in.



Wind Chill Chart



Severe weather alerts messages are sent through most cell phones. You can contact your cell phone provider for additional information or refer to [Weather Emergency Alert \(WEA\)](#) for more information.

The climate in Laramie is very dry. Most students require moisturizer and lip balm to alleviate dry skin.

Personal Safety

Unfortunately, you must be concerned about your safety while in any unfamiliar environment. This requires you to use caution and common sense, becoming informed about crime. By learning to be “street wise” and keeping alert, you should be safe to enjoy your experiences here. Even though Laramie is a small city and more relaxed and less threatening than other areas of the country, there are certain safety measures you should take.

For more information regarding safety issues at UW, we urge you to refer to the University of Wyoming Police Department website at <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwupd/>. This site will provide with information and report regarding the various types and numbers of crimes reported for the last several years. These are some commonly asked questions regarding safety and the UWPD responses:

- **Is the UW campus safe?** There is no simple answer to this question. While Laramie tends to be a quiet, conservative community where violent crime is a rare event, no community is completely crime free. It is always wise to use common sense precautions regarding personal safety no matter where you live, even in Laramie.
- **Is it safe for students to walk across campus after dark?** Again, no simple answers. Random street violence, the type feared in many urban environments, is virtually unheard of in Laramie. It is always a good habit, however, to take common sense precautions-walk in lighted areas, walk with friends, or take advantage of the escort service provided by the UW Police Department by calling (307) 766-5179.
- **What can students do to prevent becoming the victim of a property crime?** Property crime occurs when property is left unattended or unlocked. The simple solution is to be careful and don't leave valuables lying around. Students should lock their rooms and not share their door codes, lock their bicycles, and never leave property (i.e. books, backpacks, laptops, etc.) unattended. It is also a good idea to keep records of descriptive information, including serial numbers, so police will know what to look for if the property is stolen.
- **What about personal safety and sexual assault?** Violent crime such as physical and sexual assault (in some cases, rape) can and do happen in Laramie. It can be committed by strangers, acquaintances, and even friends. It happens to men and women of all races, sexualities and gender identities. In recent years, the U.S. has begun focusing on prosecuting perpetrators of rape, rather than simply

educating people on how to prevent themselves from becoming victims of rape. PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR A MORE COMPLETE DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT SAFETY AND PREVENTION.

- **What about alcohol and other drugs?** Alcohol plays a role in many of the crimes and other problem behavior on campus. To reduce the number of problems which tend to follow over-consumption of alcohol, laws and regulations related to alcohol are strictly enforced on the UW campus. Fines for underage consumption range from \$160- \$750. Marijuana has recently become legal in Wyoming's border state Colorado and has become more common in border cities like Laramie. While it is legal in Colorado, it is NOT legal in Wyoming and will be persecuted with the full extent of the law. When faced with offers to do drugs, remember that you are here as a student, a representative of your country, and a representative of UW. All drug laws are strictly enforced by the UWPD.
- **Are the residence halls safe?** Each residence hall has a staff person working the front desk on a 24 hour basis, and the halls are locked after hours. Residence hall assistants make rounds on the floors and the University Police patrol the area regularly. Given these safety measures, the residence halls are reasonably safe places to live. No off campus environment comes close to providing the security measures found in UW residence halls.

In addition to this information, here are some ways to be safe:

Outside

- Avoid walking alone at night. If you have to walk at night, try to see if someone can accompany you. Any student needing an escort may call the University Police at (307) 766-5179 (or, dial 911 in an emergency) and an escort will walk you to your car or home. Multiple outdoor emergency phones are available throughout campus if you need emergency help.
- As you are walking on campus or on the streets, remain alert by looking around you. Be aware of your surroundings and walk in well-lit, busy areas instead of the darker, more deserted streets. Stay away from poorly lit, dark buildings. Walk in a business-like manner. Look as though you know where you are going. **WALK WITH CONFIDENCE.**
- Don't carry a lot of money or valuables. If you must, don't make it obvious. Use Traveler's Checks whenever you travel. Keep wallets secure in a buttoned or inside pocket. Be careful of any loose handbags or satchels, and be sure to hold them close to your body in crowded areas.
- Never leave your purse or bag hanging from the back of your chair in a public place; keep it on your lap or around your ankle. Try not to leave any bags or purses unattended while shopping or using the restroom.
- If anything unusual happens to you when you are walking from place to place, such as being followed or an attempted assault in any way, report it to the University or City of Laramie Police departments immediately.
- Most important: **DO NOT BE A BYSTANDER.** If you see something suspicious while you are out at night, report it to 911 or try to intervene if you feel comfortable. Be an ally to others and you can expect others to be an ally to you in cases of emergency.

Inside

- Keep your door locked at all times. If you lose your keys, ask your landlord to change the locks. You should never leave a key in an obvious place like under a doormat or in a mailbox. You may want to leave an extra set of keys with a close friend in case yours are lost or stolen.
- Have your door key ready for use before you get to your door.
- When someone you do not know comes to your door, do not open the door unless you ask for, and are satisfied with the identification shown to you.
- If you are going to be away from home for several days, make arrangements to have your mail picked up and newspapers canceled so it is not obvious you are away.

Sexual Assault

“Victim blaming”

Before we discuss sexual assault, we would like to stress that in all instances of sexual and physical assault, *it is the fault of the assailant and not the victim.* This notion has been emphasized in more recent years in the US, and means that even if a person becomes intoxicated, or goes out alone at night in provocative clothing, he or she has the irrevocable right to report any attack, including rape. Looking at ways the victim could have prevented his or her rape, rather than focusing on the rapist, creates stigma and shame that further prevent reporting and prosecution of rapists. Below is a discussion of rape and ways you can prevent and report it. HOWEVER, not following these precautions does not mean you no longer have the right to be safe and protected by the law.

What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is non-consensual touching, groping, kissing and even sexual intercourse (rape). It can happen to anyone of any sex, gender, sexuality, race, etc. It can be committed by anyone, even friends and acquaintances. It is absolutely indiscriminate. This information is not meant to frighten, but instead to reveal how unpredictable rape can be. It is never the victims' fault if they are sexually assaulted; only the perpetrator is to blame.

Consent

During your time on campus, you may hear different ideas about “consent.” The SAFE project in Laramie (an organization devoted to supporting sexual abuse victims) defines consent as the ability to say “yes” before engaging in sex, rather than just the ability to say “no.” Consensual sex can only happen between two conscious individuals who are able to verbally and non-verbally signal to one another that they are ready and willing. Forcing someone to drink alcohol to the point of near-consciousness or unconsciousness means that person is unable to consent to sex.

Alcohol

While choosing to drink alcohol should have nothing to do with being sexually assaulted, we need to mention that potential perpetrators frequently use drugs and alcohol to make people vulnerable. Avoid taking drinks from someone that you did not see the person make; he or she may have laced the drink with more potent alcohol, or even drugs to incapacitate you. Do not leave your drink unattended at social gatherings. Do not let others pressure you into drinking more than you feel comfortable drinking. But, most importantly, remember that drinking alcohol or taking drugs does not mean that you are to blame if something happens to you. We mention this only to help students who are not familiar with drinking safety tips.

Do Not Be a Bystander

"Bystanders" are people who watch a crime happen and do nothing. Remember, helping others increases the chance that others will help you. If someone you know (or don't know) becomes intoxicated, keep an eye on them and make sure they only leave with someone you can trust. If there is no one to drive them home, Laramie has [a free on-call public transportation service called SafeRide \(307\) 766-7433](#). It does not matter if you are intoxicated; SafeRide will drive anyone home. Finally, report any suspicious activity you witness immediately by simply dialing 911.

Reporting Sexual Assaults

The UW Police Department takes a firm, sympathetic stance on sexual assault: "Many victims of sexual assault suffer in silence, telling no one about what happened. Embarrassment, fear of unfamiliarity with the legal system and the availability of support services and fear of retaliation may all contribute to the report of a sexual assault. At UW, all reports of sexual assault are taken seriously, and all victims are treated with respect. In order to deal most effectively with sexual assault on campus, we must be aware of all assaults that occur. We strongly urge anyone who is a victim of sexual assault to report it promptly."

If you are sexually assaulted, call or go to someone you trust immediately. Do not immediately shower or bathe. If you wish to change clothes, put the unwashed clothes in a plastic bag to take with you. The Laramie Ivinson Memorial Hospital, located on 255 N 30th St, has a group of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who are professionally trained to conduct humane, compassionate medical examinations immediately following sexual assault to supply evidence of the crime. Undergoing a medical exam does not mean you have to immediately press legal charges; the SANE will keep all physical evidence collected on record should the victim choose to report at a later date. Remember, nobody asks or deserves to be assaulted. Regardless of the circumstances, only the assailant is responsible for the assault. There is no excuse for this behavior. You are not to blame!

We recommend you call Laramie Safe Project at (307) 742-7273 before or following your medical examination; they will provide an advocate (support person) to come immediately to support you. The advocate will go with you if you want to report the crime. The advocate can also accompany you for the medical examination. You can visit the UW counseling center in Knight Hall 341 (307) 766-2187 or seek trauma treatment on campus by calling (307) 766-2927 during normal hours of operation. You may also call the Dean of Students Office on campus during office hours at (307) 766-3296 or the Laramie Police Department at **911 anytime**. Give them your location, and tell them you've been assaulted. The information is treated confidentially.

4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

American Currency

The basic unit of currency in the United States is the dollar (100 pennies or cents). Paper money is available in the amounts of \$1, \$2 (rarely used), \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50. Larger denominations are available but not frequently used. Since all U.S. paper money is of the same size and color, you should be careful to look closely at the denomination when counting out the amount you need. It is not uncommon to make a mistake and give someone a \$10 bill (another term for paper money) rather than a \$1 bill.

Six coins are commonly used: the copper penny (one cent or one one-hundredth of a dollar), the nickel (five cents), the dime (ten cents), the quarter (25 cents or 1/4 of a dollar), the half-dollar (50 cents or one half of a dollar), and the new gold-covered \$1.00 coin. You should always have some coins (called change) with you for pay telephones, copy machines, vending machines and general inexpensive items.

Banking

One of the first things you should do after you arrive in Laramie is to deposit your money in a bank. It is neither necessary nor practical to carry large amounts of cash with you. Your money is safe in a bank, and in some cases, it will earn you money in the form of interest. Although the function of banks is generally the same in most countries, there may be some differences in structure, procedures, and terminology. This section is designed to acquaint you with the banking system in the United States.

While U.S. banks offer a variety of services and accounts, we will deal only with checking and savings accounts and personal banking services. Banks are business establishments; they charge for some of their services. However, a savings account can earn you interest, and checking accounts are often free or very cheap.

Remember that services, costs, and interest payments are not the same in all banks. It is important to consider the quality of service, the fees, and the location of the bank when you make your selection.

Checking Account

If you open a checking account, called a "current account" in many countries, you can deposit cash or checks and use personal checks as a substitute for currency. There are several kinds of checking accounts. A regular account requires the payment of small fees for each check

used, as well as a monthly maintenance fee. In a minimum balance account, checking services are available without charge if you leave some money in your account. The amount may range from \$300-\$500, depending on the bank. If the balance should go below the required minimum, you will be charged a fee.

Deposits may be made either in person or by mail. Soon after opening an account you will receive a personalized checkbook printed with your account number, full name, address and phone number. We suggest you have your local address and telephone number printed on your checks. A social security is used only for restricted purposes and should be treated as confidential; we suggest you not put it on your checks.

You can withdraw your money, make purchases, and pay debts with personal checks. Such checks will normally include the date, name of the person, or agency to which the money is to be paid, exact amount in numbers and words, and your signature. The bank you choose will provide you with simple instructions for making out checks and keeping records. Staff members at your bank can help you start.

It is important to keep a record of all payments and deposits you make. You should always keep your checkbook balanced and in agreement with the monthly statement you receive. If the bank's records disagree with your records, inform the bank immediately, and they will work with you to locate the error.

Businesses are very careful about accepting a check from someone they do not know. Usually they ask to see two pieces of identification, and one must have the person's photo on it (for example, your UW ID card or Wyoming driver's license or identity document).

We strongly suggest you use a checking account for a variety of reasons:

- The bank provides safety against loss or theft;
- It is convenient to make easy transfers to deposits for any purchases, to satisfy debts or to make withdrawals by writing checks;
- A canceled check serves as your receipt of payment
- You will receive periodic balance statements; and
- You can make withdrawals by mail.

Savings Accounts

It is a good idea to put your money for the entire year in a savings account. The bank will pay you interest on your deposit, depending on how much it is, and how long you leave it in the bank. You may make withdrawals, but you should find out how many withdrawals you can make in one month. You may also be able to transfer money to your checking account directly from savings. There are also special accounts that offer higher amounts of interest, but they usually have restrictions on the use of your money. Usually the longer you leave the money in the bank, the higher the interest you will receive; early withdrawals may result in the loss of interest. In some cases, penalties on withdrawals may be avoided or reduced by giving 90 day written notification that you plan to withdraw your money. Remember, when you use a savings account, you can always earn some interest on your money.

Personal Banking

This service offers you banking privileges 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You will receive a special banking card and a personal identification number, enabling you to use the automatic teller machine at certain bank branches. Instructions on how to operate the machine will appear on its viewer. You can select the transactions you wish to make by following the instructions. This service enables you to make withdrawals and deposits, transfer funds from savings to checking accounts (and vice versa) and obtain your checking and savings balances. **A WORD OF CAUTION!!** Be very careful when using an automatic teller machine. People making withdrawals and deposits in large cities have been robbed. Be especially careful at night. Never give anyone else the opportunity to use your special bank card, even if the person offers to help. If you do not understand how to operate the machine, ask a bank employee to assist you. International students could be victims of people who try to cheat them out of their money when using these "cash machines." If you choose to use this convenient bank service, do so cautiously.

When you go to one of Laramie's banks to open one or more of these types of accounts, you may be required to fill out a signature card, present a University of Wyoming identification number, passport or social security number.

Recommendations regarding your money:

- Keep most of your money in the bank.
- Do not carry large amounts of money with you; there is always the risk of losing it.
- Keep canceled checks in order, they serve as receipts.
- Keep your financial records in order.
- Carry your identification card(s) with you at all times; banks require them before cashing checks as do most stores.

International Money Orders

- **Foreign Bank Draft/Check:** a note issued by a foreign bank must first be "cleared" for collection. It may take anywhere from 10 days to six weeks (depending upon the circumstances) before you get the money. In the meantime, if you are maintaining an active account with them, some banks will issue you a cash letter/voucher that can be used until your money arrives. If the foreign bank draft is from a major U.S. bank's branch office outside the USA, the draft can be treated as an "out of state check" and can generally be "cleared" within one week. Check with Laramie banks about this service.

- **Wire Transfer:** A message is sent via cable to the USA guaranteeing the bank the funds are paid. When such a message arrives in Laramie, the cash can be paid at once. To use a wire transfer, the person sending you the money must pay the cable costs and know the correct wire transfer address of your bank. A wrong number will cause a delay. A wire transfer can take from two days to several weeks. You may have a charge here if you do not have an account with the Laramie bank processing the transfer. If you want the money in cash, you will need a picture I.D. to pick it up. Some banks can deposit the money directly into your account. Again, check with Laramie banks to find out which has this service.

Check Cashing at the University of Wyoming

Limited check cashing is available to students, staff and faculty in the **Cashiers Office, Knight Hall, Room 170**. You may write and cash checks up to \$100 per week; make them out to the University of Wyoming. To cash a check you must show a valid UW I.D or driver's license. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semester, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday during the summer.

If a check is returned for insufficient funds, there is an additional charge. If it is taken care of within 15 days the charge is \$15; after that time, the charge will match the value of the check. If three checks are returned for insufficient funds, you lose the privilege of cashing checks on campus for the remainder of your studies at UW.

A Guide to Financial Terminology

- **BALANCE:** The amount available in a depositor's (your) bank account, representing the amount you are entitled to withdraw. It is the money you have in the bank.
- **BANK STATEMENT:** A periodic statement of your bank account that is sent to you to show all deposits made, checks written, and other charges during the period covered. The statement will show you current balance and may be sent with your canceled checks.
- **BARGAINING:** Most sellers in the U.S. do not bargain, although car salesmen, antique dealers, and people who hold garage sales are some who do. The price listed on a item is the price you will be expected to pay for it.
- **CHECKS:** The printed form used by a bank customer that orders the bank to pay money from his/her account. A draft drawn on a checking account is payable on demand. Once you sign your name, a check can be exchanged for cash in the amount on the check.
- **CHECKBOOK REGISTER:** The part of your checkbook where all the checks you write and the deposits you make are recorded.
- **CHECKING ACCOUNT:** A bank account against which checks may be drawn.
- **CREDIT CARDS:** These are issued by banks, gasoline companies, or stores for purchases when you want to delay payment, and want to avoid carrying cash or even traveler's checks. Purchases charged are payable within 30 days, and you will receive a bill in the mail. Credit card interest varies with bank and type of credit card. If you do not pay the bill within 30 days, you will be charged an interest rate for the amount remaining. That rate is usually high. As a transient student, you may find it difficult to obtain a credit card.
- **DEPOSIT:** Money added to a bank account.
- **INTEREST:** The sum paid to you by the bank in exchange for the use of the money you keep in a savings account
- **JOINT ACCOUNT:** An account held by two or more persons. Often the funds may be withdrawn on the signature of either depositor.
- **MONEY ORDER:** A draft sold by a bank for a fee. It is like a bank check and is used to send money from one place to another when personal checks will not be accepted.
- **OVERDRAFT:** When you write a check for more money than you have in your account. You will be charged a fee for the processing involved. It is illegal to write checks for more money than you have in your account.
- **PASSBOOK (BANKBOOK):** A record of your savings account showing deposits and withdrawals as well as the interest paid to you by the bank. In order to make a withdrawal from your savings account, you may be required to present your passbook.
- **SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES:** Many banks maintain locked boxes within their vaults to be rented by the year. The contents of the safe deposit box are known only to the key holder since the bank does not have access to it except in the case of death. A safe deposit box is a good place to keep valuables that can not go into a bank account (i.e., jewelry, native currency that you do not want to exchange, and legal papers.)
- **SALES TAX:** The amount of money added to the purchase price of an item to support state and local governments. Most items are taxed. While the amount of sales tax varies throughout the country, you pay an additional six cents for each dollar you spend on a purchase in Laramie. Grocery food is untaxed, but prepared food and food from restaurants is.

List of Laramie Banks & Credit Unions

The following banks are located throughout Laramie and are relatively close to the University. Please refer to the banks' websites for details about hours, locations, and contact information.

| | |
|---|---|
| American National Bank | Security First Bank |
| Bank of the West | U.S. Bank |
| Blue Federal Credit Union | UniWyo Federal Credit Union |
| First Interstate Bank | Wells Fargo |
| First National Bank | Western States Bank |
| Laramie Plains Federal Credit Union | |

5. COMMUNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States has one of the most modern, complex, and efficient communication systems in the world. Through the postal service, telephone, and telegraph systems you can easily communicate to almost all parts of the world.

Postal Services

The post office has many rules, regulations and pricing schedules for sending packages or letters. It is always a good idea to check with postal officials if you are mailing anything more than a standard letter or package. The city branch is located at **152 North 5th Street**. There is a drop off for the U.S. Postal Service located on the **UW campus in McWhinnie Hall, (307) 766-4297**. This is a limited resource and not a branch post office. There are also mailboxes throughout Laramie, including the residence halls, where you can mail letters. To call the local branch, dial **1-800-ASK USPS OR 1-800-275-8777**.

Types of First Class Mail

First class domestic mail is almost always sent by air, so you need not bother specifying airmail delivery for destinations in the United States. For more information, services and costs, consult the [USPS website](#).

Telephone Services

Faculty, staff, and students have three types of phone service available.

Campus Phones

Located in every building and office on campus, these inter-university telephones may be used to call all other locations on campus and throughout the Laramie area at no cost.

If you live on campus: Local telephone service in the Residence Halls and University Apartments is free. If you are living in the dormitories, depending on the hall, you will need to ask the person at the front desk if it is possible to have a phone installed in your room (you will most likely have to pay for the phone yourself). All campus apartments (Riverrun, Spanish Walk, Landmark) are automatically equipped with a telephone. If you wish to make an international call, you will have to purchase an international calling card (below).

Cell Phones

Compare plans and prices before signing up. Be sure that the cell phone service carrier you choose provides good service in Laramie and the other areas you will be visiting. Many cell phone providers require social security numbers, but there are a few companies who have created cell phone plans specifically for international students who are not eligible for social security numbers.

Private Phones

Private phones are available only by arrangement with the telephone company. You will have to purchase your own phone equipment, and you will receive a monthly bill for the calls you have made.

- **If you live off campus:** Call Qwest Communications, 1-800-244-1111. A customer service representative will take your order over the telephone. Their hours are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. Be prepared to give them the name of the long distance carrier you wish to use. To change later will require a fee. There may be no advance payment charge or required deposit. Your phone service should be in operation within a few business days. If you wish to purchase your own telephone unit instead of renting it from Qwest, you may do so at Wal-Mart, AT&T or some drug stores. To get long distance service or long distance calling cards, you should refer to a telephone book directory for company listings.

Calling Cards

Prepaid calling cards are cards you can buy at grocery stores, WalMart, over the internet, etc., and use to call from any telephone locally or long distance. This is an alternative to having long distance service on your telephone line in your residence and can be less expensive to call overseas, depending on what type of card you buy.

Public or Pay Phones

These telephones can be found in all residence hall lobbies, most campus buildings, stores, and along some major highways. The cost of long distance calls depends on the time of day, the day of the week, where you are calling, how long you talk, and the carrier. When you are making a long distance call at a pay phone, be certain you have a lot of change (nickels, dimes, and quarters) since you will be asked by the telephone operator to insert the exact amount.

How to use telephones

Telephone numbers in the U.S. have seven digits. In addition there is a three-digit "area code" designating the part of the country in which the phone number is located. The area code for Wyoming is (307). Area codes are typically used for making long-distance calls; however, ten-digit dialing is required in some larger cities, although you will not be charged an extra fee for those local calls.

A toll-free number is one for which the caller incurs no cost. Toll-free numbers begin with the following area code prefixes: 800, 877, 888, and 866. Although some toll-free numbers may have restricted access areas, most can be made from anywhere in the U.S., including from pay phones.

To call from one campus number to another, dial the last five digits. For example, to call ISS from another campus phone, dial 6-5193. To call ISS from an off campus location, dial the 766- prefix first, (i.e. 766-5193). To call a number off campus from an on campus phone, dial 9 first, then the number.

If the person or firm you are calling agrees to pay for the call, you can make a collect call by asking the operator to reverse the charges. For collect calls, follow the same procedure as for person to person calls. Dial 0, the area code, and the number; then tell the operator you wish to make a collect call and give your name.

If you need immediate assistance or in case of a real emergency, dial 911 for the ambulance, fire, or police departments. The charge for ambulance service is expensive, so if possible, ask a friend to take you to the emergency room at the hospital.

You will notice a series of outside telephones located throughout the UW campus. These telephones are connected directly to the University Police in the Iverson Building. In addition, these telephones are monitored visually on closed circuit cameras. If you need immediate assistance, pick up the receiver. You will be connected to the University Police who will respond to your situation quickly. **These phones should only be used in case of an emergency.**

Newspapers

Local newspapers are a good way for you to find off campus housing, film listings, entertainment and activity calendars, sales in local stores and general news. Laramie has one daily newspaper, the *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, which can be delivered to your home each weekday morning except Monday. In addition, there are a number of regional dailies available including the *Casper Star Tribune*, *Wyoming Eagle Tribune*, and the *Denver Post* that can be delivered to your home if you wish. Most of these newspapers offer a discount price for students, which is available during registration. Look in the Laramie telephone book under "newspapers" for the appropriate number.

The *Branding Iron*, published Tuesdays through Friday during the regular academic year, is UW's student newspaper. Available in a number of locations throughout the campus, the BI is a good source of information about campus news and activities.

6. HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Student Health Services at the University of Wyoming

Student Health Services provides medical care for UW students. All full-time UW graduate and undergraduate students are eligible to use Student Health by paying their tuition and student fees. Part-time students may purchase the optional fee package each semester for eligibility. ***International faculty, staff, their dependents and dependents of UW students may not use the Health Service.***

Student Health is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, while the university is in session for the fall and spring semesters. During summer session, the hours are 7:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the Christmas holiday and Spring Break the hours are 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The Student Health Service is closed evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Services Offered by the Student Health Services at UW

The clinic provides evaluation of medical problems and treatment of minor injuries. Other services include mental health counseling, allergy screening, vaccinations, immunizations, and pharmacy. Many of the services are covered by the mandatory health fee charged to full time students. The pharmacy, laboratory, allergy screening, vaccinations, and immunizations all require an additional charge.

In the event that more specialized care is required, students can be referred to outside healthcare provider. It is important that students requiring medical care be seen at Student Health Service **FIRST** to facilitate coverage by Student Medical Insurance.

Health Requirements for International Students at UW

All international students born after 1956 must have two **MMR (measles, German measles and mumps)** immunizations; the immunization is available at the Student Health Services for \$70.50 (Price can change without notice).

Tuberculosis (TB): All international students must have a record of recent PPD and may need a chest X-ray. If records are not available then a TB blood test (\$6) is required. If the blood test is positive, a chest x-ray and a visit with a provider at Student Health Services will be ordered. The cost of the chest x-ray is the responsibility of the student. If treatment for latent (inactive) tuberculosis is recommended, medication will be provided free of charge by the Wyoming Health Department and monitored monthly by the Student Health Services. Students with a positive blood test and positive chest X-ray will be treated on an individual basis.

Pharmacy

At the Student Health Service Pharmacy you may purchase medications at a lesser cost than local pharmacies. If a certain medication cannot be provided by the Student Health Service Pharmacy, you can ask for recommendations to other pharmacies, or call them yourself to check prices, before you order your prescription. Non-prescription medications are also available.

How to Use Student Health

The following information will help you understand the policies and procedures of the University of Wyoming Student Health.

- Appointments can be made in person at Student Health, by phone (307) 766-2130, or online at www.uwyo.edu/shser.
- You can request a specific healthcare provider or be scheduled for the next available appointment.
- Arrive 10 minutes early before your scheduled appointment.
- Please bring your student ID card to check-in.
- Office visits at Student Health are covered in your student fees. Any additional services will be billed to the Student Health Insurance or charged to your student account if you do not have the University's insurance.
- Follow any follow-up instructions the healthcare provider gives you.
- Student Health will refer students to a specialist if needed. A referral is required for treatment outside of Student Health if you have the Student Health Insurance plan, [some exclusions apply](#).

University Counseling Center

The University Counseling Center provides psychological services and personal development counseling for all UW students. The center (UCC) offers four programs: 1) counseling services (including counseling and brief psychotherapy, group counseling and programming, crisis intervention services, and campus outreach and consultation); 2) testing and assessment services; 3) drug education and prevention services; and 4) professional psychology training opportunities. Through these services, UCC staff works closely with both academic and non-academic offices to increase student success at UW.

All daytime services of the center are located in Knight Hall, room 341. After hours and weekends, the crisis help-line phone number is (307) 766-8989. Counseling and drug education services are free and confidential to all UW students. Appointments must be made in person with the receptionist. The center assures all students of its non-discriminatory policy in providing counseling and outreach services, and is committed to understanding and assisting with the unique needs of students with diverse and multicultural backgrounds. **For more information, please contact the Counseling Center at Knight Hall, Room 341, (307) 766-2187.**

Healthcare in the United States

Healthcare in the United States can be expensive and difficult to navigate. There are several items that are important to know before seeking medical treatment.

The United States Healthcare is privatized. Healthcare providers are not employed by the government. There is a third party payer system that makes it so that insurance is essential.

Health insurance companies have agreements with different healthcare providers to offer services at discounted prices. These providers are considered to be "in-network" or "contracted" providers. Your insurance provider will cover more at these providers than with other providers where they do not have a contract. When looking for a provider, you will want to work through your insurance company to locate the in-network providers.

Students' first line of treatment should be Student Health. Students pay for access to Student Health Services because of their student fees. They are able to see a provider there at no additional cost.

Dependents

Family members do not have access to Student Health Services and will need to seek treatment outside of Student Health. It is important that when selecting a healthcare provider that you verify that the provider is in-network, which can be done by contacting your insurance company. Most insurance companies will have a locate provider option on their website or you can call the phone number on the back of the card. You can narrow down the selection by asking people in your office or lab about which provider they would recommend.

Choosing Treatment Options

It can be difficult to decide if a sudden illness or injury needs immediate emergency care. Choosing the right health setting – Primary Care Physician, Urgent Care, or Emergency Room is important; knowing which provider to see, depending on the medical situation, can save you time and money.

Primary Care Physician

Your Primary Care Physician will be your care coordinator. You will visit them in non-urgent situations (i.e., annual exam).

Urgent Care

There are several Urgent Care facilities in Laramie that offer evening and weekend hours. Visit urgent care when you need care fast but your Primary Care Physician is unavailable. Urgent Care Centers can treat:

- Sprains & Strains
- Minor broken bones (example: finger)
- Minor infections
- Small cuts
- Sore throats
- Rashes

Emergency Room/Hospital

You may be tempted to seek treatment at an emergency room first, but this may not be the best choice since they can be expensive and you could wait a long time before seeing a provider if it is not a true emergency. There are times where you should go immediately to an emergency room:

- Heavy bleeding
- Large open wounds
- Sudden change in vision
- Chest pain
- Sudden weakness or trouble talking
- Major burns
- Severe head and spinal injuries
- Difficulty breathing
- Major broken bones

In the event of a true emergency, please seek treatment at the closest emergency room and it should be billed as in-network. The purpose of this is so that people in the middle of a heart attack are not looking up where the closest in-network provider is located.

Telehealth Services

Many insurance companies will have Telehealth services where you can contact a medical provider through an insurance app on your phone or by calling a phone number. This keeps medical costs down for you and the insurance company. Many of the services will connect you with a medical provider that can answer medical questions about where to go for treatment (i.e., Urgent Care vs Emergency Room), provide medical advice, and in some instances prescribe medication over-the-phone. We strongly encourage students to use this resource if Student Health Services is not available.

Please contact your insurance company to see what services they have available.

Phone calls to Student Health Services (307) 766-2130 after hours are answered by a nurse answering service. The service is able to answer medical questions and can also help you decide if you should wait for Student Health Services to open to receive treatment or if you should go to an Urgent Care or Emergency Room.

Student Health Insurance (All UW Int'l Students and Some Int'l Scholars)

Student Health Insurance is designed to help students maintain good health throughout their academic study and decrease the financial burden that can be caused by unexpected health expenses. The University Of Wyoming Board Of Trustees elected to offer a program which had the least impact on the students, yet still maintain a comprehensive program at a reasonable cost.

Health care in the United States is different than most other countries. Healthcare providers do not work for the government. Everyone has to pay for their own health care and insurance. Medical costs in the United States are very high compared to many other countries. Consequently, having adequate health insurance in the U.S. is extremely important.

In accordance with UniReg 248, Section 4.e, "all international students attending the University of Wyoming are required to purchase the Student Health Insurance provided by the University of Wyoming." The only exception to this is if the student's government is providing and paying on an insurance policy for the student who meets or exceeds the coverage provided by the UW policy. If this is the case, you must provide documentation. A waiver must be approved by the Student Health Insurance office before the add/drop deadline of every fall and spring semesters.

UW's International Student Health Insurance Policy is designed to give the best possible coverage and meet the unique needs of the international student for the lowest premium. These coverages include a \$400 deductible, \$7,150 out-of-pocket maximum, prescription benefits, and medical evacuation or repatriation of remains to the home country. This policy also meets government standards for maternity coverage. You should contact [Student Health Insurance](#) for the current single, spouse, and family rates. The office is located in Knight Hall, room 248, or you can call (307) 766-3025.

Enrollment Requirements

International students are automatically enrolled into the Student Health Insurance at the beginning of fall and spring semesters, as long as they are enrolled in at least one credit hour. Students must actively attend classes for at least the first 31 days after the date for which coverage is purchased.

International students are not eligible for student health insurance if they are only online or remote.

Students that arrive after the add/drop deadline must contact the Student Health Insurance Office to enroll or waive the insurance for the semester they arrive. Students are also required to contact the office if they are planning to enroll their dependents.

7. CHILD CARE AND SCHOOLS IN LARAMIE

Child Care

More than 11 million children younger than five years old attend some type of child care arrangement; spending on average 36 hours a week in child care. These programs provide early learning opportunities for these children and can have a profound impact on their development, safety, and readiness for school. Common types of child care settings include child care centers, family child care homes, preschool programs (offered for children 3-5 years old), and school-age programs.

Most universities do not provide a child care service; therefore, it is the parent's responsibility to find an affordable child care service. Enrolling your child in day care may seem confusing and difficult at first, but it is a really simple process. You can have your child enrolled quickly by following a few simple steps.

[ChildCare Aware of America](#) has resources available if you would like to learn more about finding and evaluating a child care facility.

Learning about Day Care Centers

Once you have a list of day care centers, make another list of questions before you call them. Don't be afraid to ask questions; day care staff members are friendly and want to make it easy for you to enroll your child. The following questions are a good starting point:

- When is the day care center open (including business hours and holiday/weekend availability)?
- Do you have age enrollment requirements?
- What is the cost per hour/per week when my child is enrolled?
- Is financial assistance available for low-income families?
- What kinds of meals and snacks are served?
- Will the children participate in field trips? If so, could you give me an example of the types of field trips you might offer?

IF YOU ARE NOT PLEASED WITH THE REPLIES YOU GET FROM A SPECIFIC DAY CARE CENTER, ELIMINATE IT FROM YOUR LIST!

Visiting a Day Care Facility

Child care programs are available for tours and be scheduled through the facility. When you have determined which providers you want to visit, plan on the following:

- Call and schedule a tour.
- Plan on staying for at least one hour so that you can see the different activities.
- Ask to spend time specifically in the room where your child might be so that you can see how the providers work with the children.
- Ask to meet all of the caregivers that might be working with your child.
- Ask questions about the program to staff and the owner/director.

[ChildCare Aware of America provide several checklists](#) depending on the type of facility you are looking at. You will need to check with the program to see if they have an available spot for your child's age.

LARAMIE DAY CARE CENTERS

Many University of Wyoming international students require day care facilities for their children while they are in class or at work on their research. The State of Wyoming Department of Family Services has a list of Child Care available at <https://findchildcarewy.org>.

Public School Education

In the U.S., parents are responsible for seeing that their children receive an adequate education through the eighth grade (approximately ages 7 through 14.) Additional education is optional; however, many people continue formal education past high school. During this learning process, students must achieve levels of competency determined by the state. Two ways to achieve this requirement are private institutions or the public education system.

There are many options for education in this country. Consider all possibilities before you make a decision. In the search, don't be afraid to ask questions and be persistent. Information can be obtained from the Albany County School District at (307) 721-4400 or at the Lab School office at (307) 766-2155. Also, consult the internet for local schools; talk to friends and your adviser or counselor.

Some things you need to know include: entrance requirements, paper work, waiting lists, remedial or advanced placement procedures, transportation, curriculum, meal plans, and the general treatment of international students. It is also a good idea to call ahead for an appointment to visit the school. People are usually very helpful, friendly, and patient, so don't be afraid to ask questions.

Enrollment in a Laramie Public School

Laramie has several public schools available that can be located through [Albany County School District Website](#). Once you select a school, contact the school to make an appointment. You will need to bring the following documents with you to the appointment:

- Child's birth certificate (or other acceptable documentary evidence of birth)
- Physician-signed immunization record

The public education system in the United States is totally funded by the government through taxes. Transportation to and from school is provided by the school district buses at no charge. Lunch, occasional field trips and extracurricular activities are the only costs to the

student and/or parent. The school provides a low cost lunch program, or the student may bring his or her own. Examples of extracurricular activities include trips to museums, zoos or other educational institutions. In Laramie, the admission of a student is entirely up to the individual school principal. If one school does not have the ability to meet the needs of a student, the principal may ask that your child be placed in another school where special education or training is available.

Students are divided into grades, kindergarten through sixth based on their age and past education. There is no placement exam. Each class has or is assigned a separate classroom. The curriculum is based around block classes of science, math, English and history. Other classes include physical education, art and music. A tutor is provided if language barriers are a problem.

LIFE IN LARAMIE

1. WHAT TO DO IN LARAMIE

Entertainment is easy to find in Laramie, with the University of Wyoming's consistent contribution of numerous cultural events, our local museums, and coffee houses filled with art and very often, live music. There are movie theaters, colorful restaurants and sporting events galore!

Downtown

Laramie's shopping is made up of unique stores filled run by some of the friendliest shopkeepers you'll meet. Stores offering everything from antiques to contemporary clothing, coffee, books, imported goods, gourmet food and more thrive in downtown Laramie. In addition, Laramie has large national chains for your shopping convenience.

Events are scheduled throughout the year downtown and can be found at the [Downtown Laramie website](#).

Student Activities and Organizations

Over 240 student organizations exist and international students are active in many. While academic studies are often demanding enough to keep you busy, becoming active in a student organization can give you valuable learning and leadership experience, as well as offer a unique cultural lesson. For more information, contact the *Campus Activities Center, located in the basement of the Wyoming Union*. Information regarding student organizations and activities can be found on the [uwconnect calendar](#).

Recreational Opportunities for International Students and Scholars

Are you interested in exploring more of Wyoming or the United States, to visit such attractions as Vedauwoo rock formations, the North Platte River, Moab Utah, or even Baja Mexico? The Outdoor Program (OP) coordinates special learning experiences and trips for UW students to these and other exciting destinations. Many exciting student expeditions are offered throughout the year and they normally include transportation, meals, equipment, and lodging. When traveling you will either be camping in a camp ground or staying in a lodge or hotel; depending on the season and location. The trips are a great way to learn a new activity like backpacking, fly fishing, rock climbing, or biking. The trips are open to students that have little or no experience. Not all trips require learning a new skill; there are multiple trips with hiking options. Past programs include:

Fly Fishing & Backpacking in the Snowies – Includes fly fishing and camping in the Snowy Mountain Range. OP will cover the basics of casting, fishing knots, and fly selection.

Hiking In Vedauwoo State Recreation Area – A lovely afternoon exploring the outdoors near Laramie. Vedauwoo is a beautiful recreation area just outside Laramie with beaver ponds and massive mounds of rock.

Black Hills Adventure: Camping & Hiking – Weekend trip to visit Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, go underground at Wind Cave National Park, and tour the Crazy Horse Memorial. See bison, elk, burros, prairie dogs, and more on the Custer State Park Wildlife Loop.

Thanksgiving rock climbing trip to Moab, UT – A fall study break in the Southwestern US, climbing on soft sandstone and feasting on camp turkey. Transportation, most meals, and camping equipment provided.

Many other learning/adventure activities – Please ask in the OP office for specific dates, times, and costs for other programs, including: Caving trip to Cave Creek, Wilderness First Aid class, Fly Fishing clinics and fly fishing trip to the North Platte River, Medicine Bow Peak hike, Kayaking skills sessions, Introduction to Rock Climbing, Snowshoe outing in the Snowy Range Mountains, Cross-country skiing at Happy Jack Recreation Area, and a surfing trip to Baja Mexico!

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO SIGN UP – The Outdoor Program is located at Half Acre Recreation and Wellness Center Room 141. Their phone number is (307) 766-2402 and e-mail is op@uwyo.edu. They are also on web at www.uwyo.edu/op.

Other Recreational Opportunities

The Intramural Sports Program at UW are extensive, and many students, faculty, staff, spouses, and dependents participate throughout the academic year.

Activities, programs, facility regulations, facilities schedules and recreational opportunities are explained in the Intramural Sports Handbook. Pick up a copy at the Wyoming Union Information Desk, Half-Acre Gym, Corbett Physical Education Building, the Indoor Tennis Complex, or at [their website](#).

The Intramural Sports Program are open to all members of the University community. The Intramural Sports office does not assume responsibility for accidents or injuries incurred during intramural and recreational sports activities. Participants should be covered by personal insurance programs.

For more information stop at the Intramural Sports Office in Half Acre Gym, room 223, call (307) 766-4175, or [visit their website](#) for more information.

City Parks & Recreation

Laramie is home to several wonderful community parks and recreational activities. These are maintained by the [City of Laramie](#).

Tipping

Tips, or service charges, are not added to the bill in U.S. hotels or restaurants. Nevertheless, tips are often expected and needed by employees. It is often customary to tip the waiter or waitress in a restaurant 15-20% of the amount of the check, if the service is satisfactory. Tips are not expected in cafeterias or “fast food” establishments. In a hotel, the bellhop who assists you to your room expects several dollars. Tip taxi drivers 15-20% of the fare. Other services like hairdressers and barbers usually expect tips also around 15-20% percent of the total bill.

2. DRESS

You will find that most people dress very casually on campus and, particularly during warm weather, most dress for comfort rather than fashion. Clothing is often considered an expression of one’s personality, there are no “rules” for what to wear to class, and you are free to wear what you prefer within good judgment and taste.

For more formal occasions (i.e., theater, dinner) a coat (sports jacket, sweaters) and tie are more appropriate for a man, and a dress or skirt/slacks and blouse for a woman. If you are invited out and are unsure what to wear, it is perfectly appropriate and acceptable to ask. Remember, that your native clothing is also appropriate.

3. HOLIDAYS IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States has adopted legislation which moves the celebration of several holidays to the Monday nearest the date of the event the holiday commemorates. The purpose of this legislation is to create as many three-day weekends (i.e. Saturday, Sunday, Monday) as possible during the year.

There are nine legal national holidays in the U.S. New Year’s Day, Independence Day, and Christmas Day are celebrated on the same date each year: January 1, July 4, and December 25th. Thanksgiving is celebrated on the last Thursday of November. The other holidays are observed on Mondays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January); President’s Day (February); Memorial Day (May); Labor Day (September); Columbus Day (October); and Veterans Day (November). Many businesses, schools, and all government offices close in observance of these holidays. University closures can be found on the [UW Administrative Calendar](#).

4. FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS

Social Security Number

You are not eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN) unless you are employed or hold a graduate assistantship (GA). To assist you in obtaining a Social Security number, the U.S. Social Security Administration sends representatives to Laramie from its district office in Cheyenne twice a year. Look for notification of their visits in early September and January.

If you need a number quickly, you can pick up a Social Security application from ISS and take it to the district office in Cheyenne for processing. Their office is located at 3001 D. Pershing Boulevard, Suite 140, Cheyenne, WY. Questions should be directed to Mr. Virginia Slezman at (307) 772-2139.

To apply for a Social Security number you need:

1. A completed Social Security Application,
2. A letter from your employer,
3. A letter of employment eligibility from ISS (students) or from your department (research scholars),
4. Your I-20 or DS 2019,
5. Your passport, and
6. Your I-94 card.

After you receive your Social Security number you are responsible for notifying the Office of the Registrar, Knight Hall, Room 167. You should also notify Human Resources in Wyoming Hall, Room 139.

Taxes

All F and J visa holders must file a federal income tax return with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), even if they have no source of income. It is extremely important to remain in strict compliance with U.S. tax regulations. Regulations change frequently, but information booklets and forms can be obtained from local banks, the post office, libraries, ISS and the IRS during the first months of the year. ***Those with U.S. source income must file by April 15th; those without U.S. source income must file by June 15th.*** Keep all your bank statements and records for five years.

Almost all international students, unless they are married to a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or a resident alien for tax purposes, should file a 1040-NR form for non-residents. Non-resident aliens should not file form 1040-A or EZ.

If you are the recipient of a U.S. based grant or scholarship, you do not have to pay taxes on the amount of your grant that is used to pay your educational expenses (tuition and fees); however, the remainder of your grant is subject to tax. While ISS has some information, tax forms and handouts, specific information is available from the Internal Revenue Service 5353 Yellowstone Taxes Room 209 A, Cheyenne, WY 82001 1-800-829-1040. If you go to the IRS office, you will get assistance in filling out your tax forms. ISS does not provide individual tax consulting. Please remember tax laws are often subject to change; check each year on the current requirements. Every spring, ISS sponsors several workshops on taxes for internationals. Watch for announcements in "The Talking Stick" for dates, times and locations of these special workshops.

I-9 Form

Employers are required by the U.S. Federal Government to verify the legal status of all employees. A simple form, the I-9, must be completed prior to the commencement of your employment. Two forms of identification must be presented to the employer to verify your eligibility for employment. The I.D. could include your passport, student I.D. and Social Security card. International students employed by the University of Wyoming complete the I-9 Form at Human Resources, Wyoming Hall, Room 139. **Under no circumstances may you begin employment until this step has been completed.**

W-4 Form

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service requires employers to withhold federal and state income taxes throughout the term of employment of all employees. There are some countries that have tax treaties with the United States. Inquire through the district Internal Revenue Office in Cheyenne to see if you are eligible for the benefits of any tax treaty. All employees must complete a W-4 form, regardless of tax treaty eligibility. If you are not eligible for any tax treaty benefits complete the W-4 form claiming "1" (one) allowance on line 4. Foreign nationals, in general, may not claim allowances for dependents. For more information, contact the IRS or the UW Payroll Office, Old Main, Room 107.

F.I.C.A. Tax ("Social Security" Tax)

F-1 and J-1 students are not required to pay Social Security taxes while employed in the United States. This tax, which stands for the Federal Income Compensatory Act, is usually withheld from paychecks, just as federal and state taxes are withheld. To be sure these taxes are not withheld from your income, contact the Payroll Office. J-2 dependents who have received authorization from the Immigration Service to pursue employment, must pay FICA taxes.

Your Civil Rights

Foreign nationals in the U.S. are subject to the same laws and guaranteed the same civil rights as U.S. citizens under the United States Constitution.

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech to all people, provided it is exercised in an orderly and peaceful manner. It also guarantees protection against improper arrest, investigation, or conviction. One has the right to remain silent if questioned, and the right to retain an attorney for defense in court. An attorney will be assigned by the court if the defendant cannot afford one. Above all, one is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The burden of proof lies with the prosecution to prove the accused is guilty.

Foreign nationals are subject to deportation if they commit violations in two main categories:

- 1) Violations of the requirements and conditions for entering The United States, and
- 2) Misconduct with the U.S. (drug laws that are very strictly enforced.) Convictions of a drug related crime might be grounds for deportation. It is illegal to smoke or possess any amounts of marijuana.

Contact ISS immediately if you receive an "Order to Show Cause" why a deportation order should not be issued, if you have reason to believe you might be subject to deportation or for any other legal problem.

No Smoking Ordinance

Laramie, like many communities in the United States, has a no smoking ordinance, prohibiting smoking in any public place except where a designated smoking sign is posted. All UW buildings are considered public places, and you are prohibited from smoking in them. Several buildings, however, have a designated smoking area. If you can't find a designated smoking area, ask someone where it is, or go outside. The ordinance can be enforced by fines and/or arrest. The law was passed to assure non-smokers the right to breathe clean air. If someone tells you that you are smoking in an area not designated for smokers, you must put out your pipe, cigarette, or cigar immediately, or you

could be subject to legal action. **NOTE:** Please remember that similar ordinances may be observed in other areas and locations during your travels in the United States.

Liquor Laws & Policies

Liquor laws in the U.S. are set by each state. In Wyoming, it is illegal to purchase or consume alcoholic beverages if you are under the age of 21. Any person of legal age who buys or gives alcoholic beverages to those under 21 may be subject to arrest. Public drunkenness and driving while intoxicated are also against the law. Even if you have only had a couple of drinks, have someone who has not been drinking, or a taxi, take you home.

Store, restaurant, and bar owners and/or staff can be prosecuted for selling to or serving anyone under age 21, and they may ask for proof of your age. Since they are legally responsible, they may refuse to serve you if they have any doubt about your age and you do not have a driver's license, passport, or other proof of age.

All students are expected to comply with all laws and university policies relating to alcoholic beverages. Violators are subject to criminal prosecution and /or disciplinary action. University and Laramie resources are available for confidential counseling in these matters.

Drug Laws & Policies

In general, people may only possess and/or consume drugs that are prescribed by authorized medical personnel or government approved "over the counter" medicines available in drug stores and supermarkets. Narcotics laws are strict in the U.S., and violations are taken seriously by the criminal justice system.

All UW community members are expected to comply with federal, state, and local laws, as well as university policies, related to illegal drugs. Violators are subject to criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action. University and Laramie resources are available for those who need confidential counseling for substance abuse problems.

Customs

Once you have passed the immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry, you will be asked to declare to a U.S. customs inspector what you have brought into the country. Usually, you will fill out a declaration form on the place and make a verbal statement to the official, who may or may not inspect your baggage.

You may bring in anything for your personal use without paying duty, including clothing, jewelry, and sports equipment. Quantity limitations are as follows: alcoholic beverages (one liter=33.8 fluid ounces if you are over 21); cigarettes (one carton =200 cigarettes), cigars (100) and smoking tobacco (2 kilograms = 4.4 pounds.)

A total of \$400 worth of gifts may be brought in duty free every six months. A value of more than \$400 will be assessed duty.

Any amount of money may be brought into or taken out of the U.S, without paying duty. You must simply make an accurate determination of the amount you are carrying upon your arrival.

If you are carrying more than \$10,000 in any form of currency or other negotiable (i.e., Traveler's Checks or cashier's checks) on you, you must declare it to customs. No duty will be assessed.

Certain articles may not be brought into the U.S., including meats, vegetables, fruits, plants, drugs without a physician's prescription, products made from endangered species, pornographic materials, lottery tickets, and switchblades. Items canned or otherwise hermetically sealed are acceptable.

For more information, contact the nearest U.S. consulate.

If Tragedy Should Strike...

Most people, including most Americans, do not often think about what questions might arise if a tragedy should strike them. For instance, there might be a question about what did the deceased person intend in regard to the distribution of the property or money that he owned prior to his death. Another question might be how can the transfer of property or money to another be accomplished quickly and easily after a death.

If you should die while you are in the United States, any property (such as a motor vehicle or an American bank account) that you own in the United States will be subject to American law. If you do not have a will (a formal document that states what you want to become of what you own), your property in the U.S. will not be automatically turned over to your next of kin. Certain legal procedures and/or legal documents must be initiated or prepared before your relatives can claim items of property such as vehicles or accounts. Even if you have a will, certain formalities must be met before those to whom you left your property in your will can claim it. Having a will is a very good idea, however, because a will clearly shows what you want to become of your property. In the U.S. it is common for husbands and wives to leave their property to each other in a will, or if both husband and wife should die together in an accident then to their children. But if you are not married and have no children, if you have a will prepared for you under American law, you can leave your property to anyone you want to have it.

In the United States, one way that people try to avoid the formalities of having property transferred as a result of wishes expressed in a will, is to hold property jointly with another person. Commonly in the U.S., husbands and wives hold property jointly. That is, if they purchase a motor vehicle, the title to the motor vehicle will be in the names of both husband and wife. If they have financial accounts of any kind, the accounts might be in the names of both husband and wife. The legal consequence of holding property jointly in the United States is that if one of the owners of the property should die, the property automatically becomes the sole property of the surviving owner without any need to have to go to court to transfer the property. Yes, husbands and wives can hold property jointly in the United States. In fact, any two or more people, related or not, can own property jointly. However, be aware that if you and your best friend open a joint bank account, for instance, your friend has an equal right, just as you do, to all the money in the account and should you die, the money remaining in the account will be, under law, the property of your friend.

It is possible that while you are living in the U.S., either foreseeable or unforeseen events might occur that prevent you from making decisions on your own regarding your property or your finances or even your health. You might be temporarily absent from the U.S. on a visit to your home country or tragically you might be involved in an accident that renders you unable to make decisions. Under American law, documents called powers of attorney are recognized. These documents, and there are many different kinds, are unable for you to transfer the power of attorney to transfer money from one of your accounts to another could be prepared. A power of attorney to sell your car could be drafted for you. There are even powers of attorney to transfer the decision making authority in regard to what kind of health care you might want to receive if involved in an accident to someone else. The person to whom you transfer this kind of power must be someone you trust completely and that person is under a legal duty to act in your best interests.

If you have questions in regard to American law and in particular in regard to American wills, powers of attorney, or the legal consequences of various kinds of property ownership in the United States you should contact:

Students' Attorney Office
128 Knight Hall
Telephone: (307) 766-3296

5. TRAVELING IN THE UNITED STATES

In this country, individuals are free to come and go as they please. Consequently, we have a very "mobile" society. People frequently travel both short and long distances. This mobility applies to you as well. As long as you maintain the requirements of your particular visa, you are free to travel in this country as you please. You should make your travel plans and any necessary reservations well in advance, particularly if you will be traveling over a holiday period. International students, who will be leaving the U.S. for a holiday or vacation, MUST first stop at the International Students and Scholars Office to have their travel documents authorized for international travel.

Travel Safety Tips –

Be Aware: Many potential problems can be avoided by simply being aware of your environment.

Be Smart: If you have the choice of going down a dark alley or a lit street that looks safe, choose the street.

Be Informed: Keep up on the news through conversations, radio, Internet, or TV.

Be Traceable: Let people know where you are going. Leave a note with your roommate. E-mail your family the name and number of the place where you will be staying.

Be Together: It's always safer to travel with a group or, at least, one other person.

Listen to Your Gut: That little voice in your head that says, "I don't know why, but this doesn't feel right" is a good voice to follow.

Don't Sell Your Passport or Buy/Transport Illegal Substances: Just don't.

If It Sounds Too Good to Be True, It Probably Is: Enough said about that.

Know Where Your Consulate/Embassy is Located: ISS has a listing of all these and will be happy to help you.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Here are some characteristics of American social relations that may help you to understand the American way of life and American citizens a little better.

1. CULTURE SHOCK

When you leave home and all the things with which you are familiar, you encounter many new and confusing situations. These situations naturally create stress; the reaction to this stress is called "culture shock."

Culture is a particular way of doing things. All people everywhere eat, talk, play, work and think, but not all people eat the same thing, talk the same language, play the same game, do the same work or think the same thoughts. When you leave your own culture and go to another, you naturally carry your own background and personality with you. On your arrival in the United States, you may experience a whole variety of different feelings and reactions:

- You may feel generally disoriented and confused;
- Feel nervous and unusually tired; want to sleep a lot or have trouble sleeping;
- Feel frustrated, hostile and angry towards the people in the new place;
- Become unusually angry over minor irritations; and
- Become dependent on others from your home country.

If you do experience these things, they you are probably experiencing **culture shock**. Culture shock occurs when an individual leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one. People experience culture shock in different ways. The food is not what you are used to and people look, speak and act differently from people at home. You may not be able to convey your full personality in English. Your family and friends are far away. As a result, you may feel confused or unsure of yourself. You may even have doubts about whether you made the right decision coming to the University of Wyoming.

For more information about the ongoing process of culture shock, we recommend reading [Worldwide Classroom: Culture Shock & The Problem of Adjustment to New Cultural Environments](#).

Coping with culture shock requires special effort, but it is important to remember that you are not alone. Most international students experience culture shock during their first few weeks when they are in a new environment.

Some Suggestions for Coping with Culture Shock

J. Daniel Hess makes the following suggestions for people feeling culture shock in his book, *The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning*.

Find people to interact with and ask them questions. As you take an interest in them, your feelings will have a focal point outside of yourself.

Surround yourself with familiar things. Choose a favorite jacket, a photo album, music, etc. Make your environment pleasant and supportive.

Slow down. Simplify your daily tasks. Relax and let your emotions catch up with the new environment around you.

Develop patterns. Following the same routine every day will help you grow accustomed to things. Minimize new, stressful tasks at first.

Express your feelings. Be artistic, sing, laugh, pray, cry, etc.

Re-examine your expectations. Don't scold yourself for failures but rather accommodate the variables.

Keep working on language skills. If you make mistakes, which everybody does, keep trying. Also, keep your sense of humor. Being able to laugh at your mistakes will enable you to learn from them.

Acknowledge your feelings. The support you will get from friends and family who know you are feeling sad will warm you.

Make a few small decisions and carry them out. Success in carrying out these small decisions will increase your confidence.

Know that the stress which accompanies culture shock will go away if you allow the process of cultural adjustment to take place. It may take some time, a few weeks, months and maybe even longer for you to become comfortable in this new place.

Further suggestions to help you adjust include:

Examine your expectations: Are your expectations of the United States and Laramie reasonable? If you have unreasonable expectations then you may often be disappointed or become unhappy. Make an effort to be aware of your own preconceived ideas and stereotypes of the culture in the United States and in the Rocky Mountain West. With this in mind, try to interpret people's behavior from their particular perspective. Be willing to test, adapt and change your own stereotypes to fit your new experience.

Avoid being overly influenced by dramatic events. Newcomers to a society may have a particular, very noticeable experience from which they generalize about the new society and the people who live in it. In fact, the experience might be very unusual, not a safe basis for generalization. This suggests that if you have a dramatic experience which you find influencing your opinions or feelings about the local people, you would be well advised to discuss the experience with other people and get an idea whether it is typical or unusual.

Realize how the status of your role here compares to the status to which you are accustomed. Different societies attach different importance to roles or positions; for example, in many countries, the role of “university student” or “professor” is accorded more respect or status than it is in the United States. It can be difficult to adjust to having a lower social status than you are accustomed to. It helps to recognize that you personally are not being downgraded, but that you happen to be in a society where respect is expressed differently than is the case at home.

Realize you may be treated as a stereotype. Foreigners anywhere are treated (at least at first) not as individuals but as representatives of groups to which they are perceived to belong. On many occasions, international students will be responded to as “a foreign student” or “a student from country X”. The nature of that response will depend on each native’s previous experience with and ideas about “foreign students” or “students from country X,” not on anything about you personally. Try not to let this discourage you. Avoid becoming angry with people. You may be able to start some interesting conversations about the subject of stereotypes-what people’s stereotypes are, where they came from, and so on. Remember that you probably have your own stereotypes about the host nationals.

Learn the local criteria for success. Find out what is considered a good performance in studies, research, social relations, and other aspects of your life here. You can get information about this from teachers, native students, secretaries, neighbors and many others.

Get involved: Remember, the more you put into the experience, the more you will learn from it. Try to make an effort to meet people, form friendships, get involved in activities, i.e., sports, music, movies, clubs/organizations, etc., and learn about others and their culture.

Remember, moving to a new culture is a learning experience: There is value in learning, experiencing, and understanding a way of life different than your own. It may surprise you to discover that you will learn things about your own culture that you may not have thought about before. It is a rare opportunity, not only to broaden your viewpoint, but also to mature personally and to realize and establish your values. *Try to remember that thousands of people have come to Laramie from other countries and have survived (even when they arrived in the cold of winter).*

Learn from the experience. Moving into a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It gives you the opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living and compare it to your own. Here are some questions that you might try to answer as you encounter the local people:

- How do they make friends?
- How do friends treat each other?
- Who respects whom, and how is respect shown?
- What attitudes do they have about their families?
- What is the relationship between males and females?
- How do people spend their time? Why?
- How do they deal with conflicts or disagreements?
- What do they talk about?
- What kind of evidence do they seek or use when evaluating an idea or trying to win an argument?

You can compare the answers you get to the answers you would get to the same questions in your country, and you can help yourself develop a better understanding of your own society and of the one where you are living now.

Prepare for reverse culture shock when you return home. Almost all students who study in foreign countries experience some degree of culture shock in reverse when their studies are completed and they return home. Some students find these adjustments even more painful and difficult than the problems they faced when they first arrived, partly because they didn’t expect them at all. Among re-entry problems are those of identity and insecurity. There may be a need to make readjustments in lifestyle and interpersonal relations, family and community pressure to conform to, and frustration as a result of conflicting attitudes.

Be aware that living in another culture, re-entry back to your own culture can cause anxieties. You may like to seek counseling or at least have an informal conversation about this with an International Students and Scholars staff member.

2. TRAITS OF AMERICANS

Although it is impossible to characterize the traits of a group of people, the following are certain generalizations that can be made about Americans as a whole. They should, however, be recognized as generalizations. Don’t be surprised if you find exceptions.

Individuality

Most U.S. citizens like to be treated as individuals rather than as members of a certain class or group. They dislike the implication that they are dependent upon other people. Families and friends are important, but individuals are expected to consider their own needs, desires, and values. People are also held individually accountable for things they have promised to do, and international students may find that they are expected to do more of their work independently than they are accustomed to at home.

Informality

In most cases, young people in the U.S. avoid elaborate social rituals. That is not to say that they do not value good manners, but they tend to prefer being casual and informal. Please do not take this casualness as a lack of respect.

Directness

Honesty and frankness are more integral to our culture than saving face. We may raise conversational issues which may be sensitive and embarrassing. Please try not to be offended. Frankness might appear to be rudeness, but in most cases, it is not intended that way. We are quick to get to the point and may not spend as much time on polite social talk as do many other nationalities. We also tend to ask many questions, some of which may appear to be unusual, uninformed, or elementary. Try to be patient in answering them, as they represent genuine interest in knowing more about you.

Achievement

The high value placed on achievement and equality leads Americans to compete with each other, and you'll find both friendly and not so friendly competition everywhere. A style of friendly joking, getting the last word in, and the quick reply are subtle forms of competition here. Although such behavior is natural for us, it may appear quite overbearing to you or others. Although competitive, we also engage in cooperative behavior. Though a large part of cooperation stems from liking and wishing to help others, it may also be a way of achieving a goal. The idea behind this is to help the entire group accomplish a task. While this may appear opportunistic, the goal is to get things done and learn in the process so, in the future, the individual can succeed independently. If a group of students wants to study or work together on a project, be sure it is all right with the professor. Some see cooperation on a project as "cheating" unless they authorize it.

Being Direct

Discussing issues or ideas openly with other individuals is considered not only proper, but often a responsibility as well. We may even bring up issues that are sensitive or embarrassing to others. Exceptions are salary or age. In addition, we do not spend time on polite social talk, which many other nationalities do, particularly in a business situation. You may be surprised to find that the briefest of introductions is immediately followed by getting right to the point.

Non-Verbal Language

Perhaps one of the most common causes of misunderstanding between people from different cultures is lack of understanding of nonverbal signs and symbols, such as facial expressions, gestures, postures, and intonations that occur in all verbal exchanges.

It would never occur to most of us, for example, that handing someone something with his or her right hand may be more acceptable than with the left, yet in some cultures it is offensive to hand someone something with the left hand. Nor would it occur to a woman of this country that looking directly at a man could be interpreted as bold, flirtatious, or disrespectful. To her, it signals directness and honesty. The actual distance maintained between people while they talk varies from culture to culture, but there is no conscious thought about such things. In our culture, when a person arrives late for class, it is expected that you come in quietly, take a seat and join in at whatever point the discussion has evolved. In many other cultures, it is necessary to obtain permission from the instructor even to enter and be part of the class, but that is generally not the case here.

To avoid misunderstandings, keep in mind the possibility that the non-verbal language which you exchange with people from other cultures may not mean what it does in your own culture. Sometimes you may need to clarify your message or intent or ask your U.S. friend to clarify his or hers.

The Importance of Time

In the United States, time is treated like a tangible asset and is used carefully and productively. Being "on time" (arriving at the stated time) for class or meeting with advisers, instructors, or even with friends is often very important.

Appointments and Dates

Our attitude toward appointments is indicative of this philosophy. Since most daily activities are well planned; it is customary to make advance appointments for any visits to business or professional offices or to meet with most faculty members or university administrators.

Once you have made an appointment, punctuality is essential. If you fail to keep an appointment, it is extremely important for you to call and give an appropriate explanation. In addition, if you know you are going to be late, it is a good idea to call and inform the person you are meeting with that you will be delayed. If you are late, and have not called ahead, you may arrive at the place of the appointment to find your appointment taken by another person or the person you are meeting with to be abrupt and even unpleasant. Some faculty members, administrators, and health care professionals will cancel an appointment if you fail to be on time. Some may even charge you for a missed appointment. Finally, since public lectures, concerts and presentations begin on time, it is good to be punctual for these events as well.

Changing plans for an appointment or date does not present the same problems as breaking a date. If you have agreed to go to a movie and then decide that a party would be preferable, it is acceptable to call the other person and propose the change in plans. The other person can accept or decline the proposed change.

Accepting Invitations

"Drop in anytime" and "come see me soon" are idioms often used in social settings, but are seldom meant to be taken literally. It is wise to telephone ahead of time before visiting someone at home in this country. A written invitation to an event that says "RSVP" requires a response. Write a note or telephone to let the person who sent the invitation know whether or not you plan to attend the event.

Never accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. To refuse, it is enough to say, "Thank you for inviting me, but I will not be able to come." If, after accepting, you are unable to attend, be sure to tell those expecting you as far in advance as possible that you will not be

there. When you are invited to a meal, explain to your prospective host ahead of time if there are foods you cannot eat. Cultural preferences and religious restrictions of diet are understood and respected. Your host will appreciate knowing in advance what foods and beverages to prepare so the meal can be enjoyed by everyone. If when you arrive there are foods you cannot eat, it is polite to merely say, “No, thank you,” when the food is passed to you. Most get-togethers have a lot of different foods, and there will no doubt be several dishes you can eat.

Although it is not necessarily expected for you to give a gift to your host, it is considered polite to do so, especially if you have been invited for a meal. Flowers, fruit or a small gift from your country are all appropriate. A thank you note or telephone call after the visit is also considered polite.

Gift Giving

To whom are gifts given? As a rule, gifts are given to relatives and close friends. They are sometimes given to people with whom one has a casual but friendly type of relationship, such as a host or hostess, but it is not necessary or even common for gifts to be given to such people. In other parts of the U.S., the giving of gifts to hostesses is more common than it is here. Gifts are not usually given to teachers or others who hold an official position. The offering of gifts in these situations is sometimes interpreted as an effort, possibly improper, to gain favorable treatment from that person.

When are gifts given? Christmas is the only national gift-giving day, when most Americans, with the exception of some adherents of non-Christian religions, give gifts. Otherwise, gifts are given on occasions which are special to the recipient—birthdays, graduation from high school or college, weddings, and child-births. Gifts are sometimes given when someone has a new house or is moving away. If you have visited several times for dinner, you may wish to bring a small token of appreciation for the host or hostess (or even offer to bring something tasty to share with the other dinner guests). Always bring a small gift when you are invited as a house guest for a visit lasting a day or more.

What gifts are appropriate? Generally, an effort is made to select a gift which the giver knows or supposes is one the recipient needs, wants, or would enjoy. The amount spent on the gift is something the giver can afford; generally, it is not expected that people on limited budgets will spend large amounts on gifts. Expensive gifts are to be expected only when the people involved have a very close relationship with each other. Cards, rather than gifts, are given to acquaintances who are not close friends. This is especially true at Christmas, when it is common for people to send cards to their acquaintances and business or school colleagues.

How are gifts acknowledged? If a gift is opened in the presence of the giver (as is often done), a verbal expression of thanks is appropriate. If a gift is opened in the absence of a giver, a thank-you note should be sent. The note should make specific mention of the particular gift that has been sent.

We usually give gifts only on special occasions such as Christmas, birthdays, or anniversaries. When giving gifts, it is advised that you not expect to receive something in return.

Personal Hygiene

Americans are extremely hygienic, perhaps too much depending on your perspective. For example, Americans bathe often and will also brush their teeth at least twice if not three times a day, as recommended by our dentists. Moreover, Americans are avid users of perfumes, colognes (masculine perfume) and body sprays/mists, which can be found in almost any supermarket and clothing store.

Depending on the culture you come from, you may find it useful during your first few months to evaluate if you are bathing and grooming frequently enough for American standards. You may find this obsession with personal cleanliness excessive, pointless and wasteful, but like anywhere in the world, standing out because of your personal odor will lead others to avoid you. Other Americans will not tell you if you smell bad, but know that they can be sensitive to offensive body and mouth odors.

3. RELATIONSHIPS

Names and Titles

American names generally have three parts: first (or given) name, middle name or initial, and last (family) name. In most cases, the first name appears first, then the middle name or initial (if it is used—often it is not), and finally the last name. For example, “I would like you to meet my friend, Albert Einstein.” On many forms and applications, though, the last name is listed first, followed by a comma and then the first and middle initial. For example, a person named John Fitzgerald Kennedy would probably give his name as Kennedy, John F., on official forms.

First names are used in the U.S. more frequently than elsewhere. People usually call each other by their first names immediately after they have met. These general rules apply:

- Address people of your own approximate age and status by first name. This would apply to fellow students and neighbors.
- If the other person is clearly older than you, you should use Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., or Dr. and the last name. For example, you would address Marlon Brando as “Mr. Brando.” The older person will probably address you by your first name from the beginning. Ms., pronounced “Mizz,” is used for both unmarried and married females. Faculty with a doctoral degree and medical or dental doctors should be addressed with Dr.

- If the other person has a title such as “Ambassador” or “Dean,” use that title and the last name. For example, you would address Senator Edward Kennedy as “Senator Kennedy.” Any faculty member can be addressed as “Professor,” whether he or she holds the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor.
- If someone asks you to address him or her by first name, you should feel free to do so.
- Americans do not use a title followed by a first name. For example, you would not address Elizabeth Taylor as “Miss Elizabeth,” but as “Miss Taylor” or, if she asked you to, as “Elizabeth.”
- The use of “nick names” is fairly common among Americans. A nick name is not the person’s real name, but a name assigned because of certain physical characteristics, behavior patterns, a shortened version of their first name, or some other factor. Being called by a nick name is usually an indication that you are viewed with friendly affection.
- If you are in doubt about what to call a person, ask the person, “What should I call you?” Conversely, Americans will sometimes be confused about what to call you. If you see that a person does not know what to call you, tell him. Say, “You can call me _____.”

Ritual Greetings

When two people are first introduced, the dialogue goes, “Hello, how are you?” “Fine, thank you. How are you?” “Fine, thanks,” or less formally, “Hi. Nice to meet you.”

After the first meeting, there are two kinds of greetings. The more formal is “Good morning,” “Good afternoon,” etc. The less formal is simply “Hello” or just “Hi.” Any of these may be followed by “How are you?” or even “How’s it going?” The answer is usually “Fine, and you?” whether you are fine or not. A stranger will feel uncomfortable if you take their time complaining about your day when they were just being polite.

While not all Americans are like this, it is common for them to ask each other how they are doing as a polite gesture and not out of genuine interest. Don’t be offended if someone asks you how are you doing even as they are already turning away to go about their business. With acquaintances or friends, you are permitted to give a more elaborate answer than the standard “fine, thanks,” given how well you know the person and how you are actually doing.

The American ritual parting remark, “see you later,” or “see ya,” means “goodbye,” and only lightly implies that the person expects to see you again soon. You would not say “see you later” when you know you will not be seeing the other person for some time.

Making Friends

How people in the U.S. form and maintain friendships may be a difficult thing for international students to understand. We tend to make social contact easily. Sometimes these contacts lead to lasting friendships and sometimes they do not. In our mobile society, friendships can be very casual and transitory. You will probably be greeted by many residents with considerable warmth, only to find that friendships do not always result. United States citizens have many interests and engage in a variety of activities, so the warmth expressed in one meeting between individuals, while genuine and sincere, may be confined to that occasion.

Among college-aged people, it is common to meet someone at social gatherings (such as parties or dinners) and only become that person’s friend after several other greetings at other social gatherings. If you genuinely are interested in becoming someone’s friend (and feel the feeling is reciprocated) you can speed things along by asking that person if they have a phone number or a Facebook where you could reach them. Follow up with that person and invite them to do something, such as go to another social gathering together or maybe visit one-on-one over coffee. Don’t be offended if the person refuses because they are busy; college can be stressful and not everyone prioritizes socialization during their studies.

Living with Students

One of the many positive aspects of your stay in the United States will be the opportunity you will have to get to know our students. However, since many U.S. students are uncomfortable about their lack of world travel and their limited knowledge of languages, they may be difficult to get to know, appear somewhat indifferent at times, or even unhelpful to foreigners. If you keep trying, however you will find that most are warm, friendly, helpful, and very interested in learning about you and your country.

We expect that one of the first impressions you will have of living or working on-campus is one of noise: loud stereos, televisions, computers, phones etc. Some of our students are convinced that loud background music makes it easier for them to study or work. However, most students lower the volume or talk more quietly when asked. But, please don’t expect them to be completely quiet most of the time.

You will also find many students to be jovial and fun loving. While most study hard, they also play hard. Leisure activities include informal parties, movies, and recreational sports. Students also laugh at themselves a great deal and enjoy kidding one another. If someone makes a joke at your expense, please realize that it is done good-naturedly and is usually a sign that that person considers you a friend.

Finally, don’t be afraid of asking other students questions. Most enjoy being helpful.

Dating

Social customs in the U.S. may seem strange to you at first. Visitors are often surprised at the informality between men and women here. Our women are generally less inhibited or shy than women from other countries. This relaxed, easy, and independent attitude may be misunderstood by people who come from more traditional societies in which the woman’s role is much more restricted. In the United

States, women exercise a great deal of personal freedom of choice. In many societies it may be considered taboo for unmarried women to live by themselves or share living quarters with other unmarried women or men; however, this is not the case with industrialized societies such as the United States. In addition, it is not uncommon for women to go to public places without a male relative or companion. It is, therefore, always better to treat U.S. women equally; be open with them, and be open about yourself.

Generally, an invitation for a date comes from the man, but this is not always the case. If you want to get to know someone, it is often wise to ask the person to join you for coffee or a soda or even to get together to study. These short sessions may prove to be the beginning of a strong and lasting friendship. On weekends, one person may invite another person for an evening date to dinner, a concert, athletic event, or a movie. Remember, however, that two or three dates do not indicate an intimate relationship. It is possible that steady dating could go on for a while without necessarily maturing into a durable or lasting relationship.

While Americans are very direct, it is not common for someone to directly state that he or she does not want to go out. It is also considered impolite and inconsiderate to break a date (cancel) without giving prior notice to the person. A date should be broken only for compelling reasons; otherwise, the person will assume you have changed your mind or do not want to go out and may be hurt and insulted. You can change your plans if the other party is agreeable. Also, the one who issued the invitation should offer to pay for any expenses related to the date. However, students are often on restricted allowances and, with mutual consent, may decide to share expenses.

Dating does not presume a sexual involvement or a long-term emotional commitment. In practical terms, a date implies nothing more than an agreement to meet at a specified time and place for a social event. The “Hollywood” image of U.S. morals and sexuality is often misleading to visitors from other countries, since our films often depict serious sexual relationships resulting after a brief friendship or dating relationship. In addition, our tendency to speak freely and use sexual references in conversation can lead to further misunderstandings. While there is little doubt that we have less fear in becoming sexually involved than in many other cultures, it is also true that every individual is respected for his or her own personal values regarding dating, sex, and relationships. Do not interpret open sexual language as a sign of permissiveness or sexual interest. You are not obligated to engage in any sexual activity because you have accepted a date from another person. Sexual harassment, acquaintance rape, and rape are very serious offenses in this country and at the University of Wyoming.

Technology

Social technology is very popular in the U.S. and is rapidly changing. You will have most likely heard of Facebook and other social media platforms (Twitter, Tumblr, Google +, etc.) but may not have had access to these websites in your home country. While they do not guarantee lasting friendships, many people your age in the U.S. depend on these websites and will try to use them to contact you or interact with you. While it is advisable that you carry a cell phone during your time in the U.S. for basic communication, do not feel pressured to use social media if you feel it will distract you from your studies or create superficial relationships. But, know that many young Americans will be confused to hear that you do not use some form of social media and expect to put in some extra effort to stay in touch with new friends.

A Final Word

If you have difficulty in understanding campus ways and social life, do not hesitate to talk with your fellow students, the staff of *International Students and Scholars*, the *Dean of Students Office* or the *Counseling Center*. Social relationships may be very different here than in your country, but this does not mean that you should feel pressured to abandon customs and beliefs that are important to you. Do what comes naturally and feels comfortable to you and you may find that Americans find your social personality refreshing and magnetic, but always take care to gauge the reactions of others and adjust your behavior if you feel you are being offensive. Try to keep an open mind and a sense of humor while exploring this new culture. With time, patience, and goodwill, you will discover that this initial period of transition and adjustment can present a variety of challenging, but very rewarding experiences.

EDUCATION IN THE USA

The following characteristics can help you understand how U.S. cultural values influence behaviors and expectations in the classroom. The value placed on individualism, achievement, importance of time, work ethic and pragmatism are evaluated in the following section.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U.S. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. cultural values listed in the previous section shape the academic environment in the following ways:

1. Active classroom participation is expected.
2. Time pressure is high - often there are many small assignments due each week - and time management is an important skill to develop.
3. Critical thinking must be developed.
4. Independent thinking is highly valued.
5. Presenting ideas concisely in class is expected.
6. Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.
7. Competition is a common mind-set.
8. Achievement and hard work are highly valued; the finished product is most important.
9. Students must be responsible for themselves.
10. Equality—all students should be treated equally.
11. Informality is normal.
12. Direct and straightforward communication is expected.
13. Friendship is usually based on doing things in common—sports, studying, etc.
14. Combining theory and practice—the practical application of ideas—is emphasized.
15. Problem-solving orientation—“If it’s broken, we ought to be able to fix it!”
16. The scientific method and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.

Developed by Dr. R. M. Paige and S. L. Smith, University of Minnesota, October 1988; revised by R. Stuck, 1993.

2. GOALS OF THE ACADEMIC SYSTEM

Broad Education

The American academic system, as a whole, is intended to provide a broad education for as many people as possible. There is no screening examination, which directs a student, at an early age, into an academic or non-academic area. A high proportion of the population completes secondary school, which is not as challenging as it is in countries where access to education is more limited. A significant proportion of the population attempts some kind of post-secondary education and post-secondary study, and the undergraduate level is again not as challenging as it is in some other systems. You may be disconcerted to find that Americans who have completed many years of formal education do not seem as well educated as people at home who have had a comparable amount of education.

Specialization

The American educational system also produces specialists, people who have studied a limited range of topics in depth. Specialization comes later in the U.S. system than it does in most others. It is not until the third (“junior”) year of undergraduate work that students concentrate on their “major” field. There is further specialization in graduate work, especially as students undertake research for a thesis or dissertation.

Evaluation

It is considered important here to evaluate the work that students do in each class. Therefore, there is a “grading system,” which is used to rank and compare students’ academic work. A student’s grades receive considerable attention in competition for scholarships and fellowships, for admission to universities and graduate schools, and for jobs.

Adapted from University of Denver, International Student and Scholar Handbook

3. KEYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The American academic system differs from all others in the world. To succeed in it, you will need to learn how it is organized and how it works. You will need to learn, as the Americans say, “how to play the game.” Listed below are some suggestions that you should keep in mind as you begin your studies. You will learn more of the informal rules for academic success as you undertake courses and have the opportunity to talk with experienced students in your field of study. The more you discuss topics such as these with experienced students, the sooner you will be able to develop a helpful understanding of the way in which your academic department functions.

Understand the Student's Goal

In the American educational system, the best student is the one with the highest grade-point average. Getting the highest possible GPA means getting the highest possible grade in each class, not just those classes in which you are particularly interested. Within each class, getting the highest grade means getting the highest mark on each assignment and examination. Academic success in the American system requires consistent, disciplined studying for all assignments, examinations, and courses.

Evaluate Your Expectations

An adjustment period is necessary before you will be able to perform to the best of your ability. In general, international students earn lower grades during their first semester in this country. Then, as they become accustomed to the system and as their English improves, their grades improve. If you need assistance with your academic writing skills, grammar, or pronunciation, contact the [English Language Center](#) in the Cheney International Center, room 28, elc@uwoyo.edu or (307) 766-3630.

Select Your Courses Wisely

Especially during your first semester, do not take more courses than necessary. Make sure you have a combination of more demanding and less demanding courses, rather than only "difficult" ones that require unusually heavy amounts of work. When arranging your course schedule, consult not only your academic advisor, but also experienced students who are familiar with available courses and teachers. You may be tempted to take more courses than necessary in order to try to earn your degree faster. The usual result of taking too many courses is discouragement and poor academic performance.

Work Hard from the Beginning

It is not possible, in the American system of higher education, to wait until the latter part of the semester to begin studying. If you do not begin studying on the first day of classes, you are likely to get behind and experience academic difficulty.

Know How to Study

The study habits that were appropriate for the educational system in your country may not be appropriate here. You may have to learn to approach your studies in a different way while you are studying at a U.S. institution.

Talk With Your Teachers

Teachers here expect students to ask questions in class or immediately following class. They expect students to see them in their offices when the students are having problems in class. If you are not doing well in a class and you do not see the teacher to discuss the situation, the teacher is likely to assume that you are not really interested in his or her class. In other words, most teachers will have a negative or at best indifferent evaluation of a student who never raises questions or challenges in the class, or who does not visit the teacher outside of the class to discuss any academic difficulties he or she is experiencing.

Ask Questions

Any time you feel unsure of what is expected of you in a class, or of some aspect of the material being presented, ask the teacher and some of your fellow students about it. If you do not ask, it will be assumed that you understand everything or that you are not interested.

Understand the Assumptions behind the Educational System

From your past experience in other educational systems, you have developed certain assumptions about the nature and purposes of education, and about the way your field of interest should be studied. For example, you may have been taught that it is important to be able to memorize large quantities of information that are provided by professors, authors, or other experts. Here, by contrast, you may find that being able to memorize material is less important than being able to synthesize (that is, bring together and mix in a new way) material from many sources, developing your own ideas and viewpoints. U.S. faculty members tend to agree that learning how to approach studies independently and to develop one's own approaches and ideas is the most difficult task facing new international students, especially at the graduate level. It is important for you to realize that differences of this kind exist between the U.S. and other education systems, and that you will have to adjust your thinking if you are going to succeed academically. Whether or not you personally accept the values of the education system here, you will have to act in accordance with them while you are here.

Further Strategies for Success

On the first day of class, students should get the following information and keep it for future reference:

1. The instructor's name, office location and office hours. **Please note: All instructors are required to keep certain hours when they will be available for consultation with individual students.** If you find that you are having difficulty with the course or simply have questions concerning the course, you should feel free to go to your instructor during office hours or make a special appointment. Be sure to arrive at the appointed time. If you find you cannot keep an appointment or you will be late, call the instructor with your change of plans;
2. How many tests, quizzes, reports, papers will be required and exactly how your final grade will be determined. In the U.S. system you are usually graded on an accumulation of scores on a variety of exercises rather than on one big examination at the end of the semester. Moreover, it is up to each instructor to devise a grading system. Therefore, you will find the requirements for each class different according to the grading methods of the instructor; and

3. An understanding of what is expected of you in each course (typically outlined in the course syllabus). Specifically, you should be aware of:
 - a) **Title and authors of books you will be required to purchase**, as well as other books you may be required to read that may be "on reserve" in the library. Often an instructor will require readings out of journals or library books. The library holds these books in a special section called the "Reserve Collection." You may borrow these books for a limited time to complete your reading assignments. These reading assignments are usually supplementary to the basic text;
 - b) **Whether or not your instructor will allow "make-up" tests/quizzes**. A make-up test or quiz is given to a student who, for reasons of illness or accident, misses a scheduled test or quiz. Make-ups are usually permitted only when an illness or accident requires a doctor's care; and
 - c) **The attendance policy for the course**. Find out how many unexcused absences the instructor allows before he or she considers lowering your grade.
 - d) **Be sure to turn off or silence your cell phone during classes**. Many faculty and students take exception to the rudeness of a cell phone going off during a class or other activity.

Study Skills

Different academic systems reward different kinds of mental activity. Individuals may come from a system where the successful student was one who could memorize the largest amount of material or master the work of one particular scholar. The system here in the United States may require different study skills than those, which brought you success at home. In the U.S., the students who are rewarded are those who can study a large amount of material concerning a broad range of subjects and then synthesize the information from these sources. To succeed in this system, it is important that you:

1. **Organize your time**. There is usually a lot of work to do in a short amount of time. Make a schedule for the entire semester by looking at the course outlines.
2. **Read effectively**. You will not be able to memorize all the material or even study it all in depth. You will be expected to familiarize yourself with the main points. To draw the main points from a large number of readings, here are some things you can do.
 - a) **Skim** - look over a reading assignment quickly, paying attention to the table of contents (if it is an entire book), the titles of the chapters, the headings of the various sections of the chapters, the "topic sentences" that begin most paragraphs and the summary paragraphs or sections;
 - b) **Read** - go over the material again, this time more carefully, looking for the main points and the conclusions. Write down notes about the main points, following the outline of the reading itself;
 - c) **Question** - don't just accept what the author says. Ask questions. Why is the writer saying this? What is the evidence?; and
 - d) **Review** - skim it again; look at your notes again. Try to retain in your mind the main points of the reading.

Adapted from University of Denver, International Student and Scholar Handbook

4. ORGANIZATION OF THE ACADEMIC SYSTEM

Privacy of Student Records

The International Students and Scholars office holds all student records in confidence with the laws of the United States and policies of the University of Wyoming. Files containing personal information that are kept in this office are not available to any person or agency, except as the law provides. The director, immigration coordinator, and the staff are very careful to protect the privacy of each student.

By law the university, including ISS, is authorized to disclose only "directory information" to the public. This information is limited to:

1. Name
2. Local address
3. Telephone listing (local and permanent)
4. Permanent address
5. College
6. Major field of study
7. Dates of registered attendance
8. Degrees and awards received and respective dates
9. Classifications
10. E-mail address

UW cannot and will not release other information (such as academic standing or financial support) except (1) to school officials within the institution having a legitimate educational interest; (2) to federal and state educational authorities concerned with auditing government supported educational programs, provided that the personal identity of students is protected; (3) to officials at an institution to which a student is applying, (4) under a court order for which a student has advance notice or; (5) in an emergency situation where human life is in danger. ISS respects your right to privacy.

University of Wyoming Organizational Structure

Most American colleges and universities have the same basic structure. A board of trustees ultimately decides policy for the institution. Boards like the UW Board of Trustees, are usually made up of prominent business people and leaders from throughout the community

and/or the state. The board appoints the chief officer called a chancellor or president of the institution, who is responsible for the overall operation of the college or university.

One significant difference between state and private institutions is how members of the board of trustees are selected. At UW, like many public institutions, the political governing body to which the institution reports appoints them. In the state of Wyoming, the governor appoints the members of the board. In fact, Wyoming's governor sits on the board as an ex-officio member. At private institutions, members of the existing board of trustees, often upon the recommendation and counsel of administrators, faculty, alumni, and students usually nominate new board members. You should note that at UW, the president of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming (ASUW), sits on the Board of Trustees and is active in decisions that will affect the university in general and students in particular. In some states, citizens of the state elect members of an institution board of trustees.

The administrative heads of the major units at UW are called vice-presidents and report to the president. They include the vice-president for academic affairs, vice-president for student affairs, vice-president for finance, vice-president for research, and vice-president for institutional advancement.

The Division of Student Affairs is responsible for the regular non-academic support services that are provided to students. All student organizations also work directly with this office. As a student at UW, you will use this division's offices and services.

Learning outside the Classroom

Remember, the main purpose of undertaking an education is to learn. You will find that UW provides a variety of activities both inside and outside the classroom to enhance your learning experience. There are many UW organizations that may interest you (i.e. International Student Association, ASUW, athletic teams, musical groups, honoraria, religious and political organizations). They all offer important additions to the traditional learning experience- once again, we strongly urge you to participate. Participation in activities outside the classroom will help you become a stronger student overall, and you will be recognized for your efforts academically.

University Classes

At the university, classes are taught in a variety of ways. The format used is determined by the content being covered, the style of the faculty member, and the number of students. During your stay at UW you will most likely encounter many different types of courses. The most common are the following:

Lectures

You may be the most familiar with lectures. In a lecture class, which on this campus may range from 20 to 250 or more students, the faculty member usually follows a prepared outline. Films, videos, slides or other visual materials are used quite often. During the lecture it is very important for you to take notes, writing down the information that is being emphasized, since it will most likely be covered on course tests. While questions are usually encouraged, there are many students in a lecture course, and therefore your questions should be directly related to the content being discussed. As many lecture rooms are quite large and hearing the faculty member can be difficult; you should try and sit in one of the front rows.

Discussion Classes

To provide you with the opportunity to ask more detailed questions and to discuss the topics being covered, many large lecture courses combine one, two or even three lecture courses with smaller 'once a week' discussion groups. These discussion groups, led by a faculty member or graduate assistant, are usually specifically designed to answer student questions or discuss the content of the lectures in some detail. If you are not sure about something, don't be afraid to ask; the discussion session has been designed to help you. Don't forget--many lecture classes require that you register for an accompanying discussion class. Check the current Class Schedule for more information

Laboratory Classes

Usually combined with lectures or lecture discussions, laboratory classes are a key part of many science and professional courses and provide you with an opportunity to work with materials and equipment in practical situations. The traditional science laboratory meets once a week for several hours and is under the direction of a laboratory assistant or faculty member. Quite often you will be working with another student as a "laboratory partner." While the laboratory classes are combined with other classes, they are kept separate for registration, testing, and grading. Once again, certain lectures require that you sign up for an accompanying laboratory class.

Seminars

The seminar is an interactive style of course which is mainly practiced among senior and graduate level classes. In this type of class, small groups of students (usually fewer than 20) can work together with faculty members and their classmates. While a professor has information to impart, there are things he/she can learn from students and that students can learn from each other. This type of open discussion may be a new experience for you, but it is important for you to become involved and actively participate.

Independent Study Classes

In this type of course, usually available (with several notable exceptions) only to upper division or graduate level students, you decide what you want to study and arrange with a faculty member to fulfill certain requirements on an individual basis. Generally, the requirements will include extensive reading or experimentation on a specific subject that will lead to a written report at the end of the semester. This, however, is usually an individual decision between you and the faculty member who will supervise and evaluate your work.

The Credit Hour

The credit or semester credit hour is one of the most important units of measurement in higher education. It is used to measure the depth of the course content and the amount of time a course meets. A credit hour denotes a unit of academic work. Usually, one credit hour is earned in a course meeting one hour per week for a semester. Thus three credit hours is earned in a course meeting three hours per week for a semester. It is important to note however, that there are exceptions.

Full-time undergraduate refers to undergraduate students enrolled for more than 12 hours, and part-time undergraduate refers to undergraduate students enrolled for less than 12 hours. Undergraduate students must petition for more than 19 hours unless students are in engineering major. At the graduate level, 9-17 hours is considered full time and less than 9 hours is classified as part time.

A bachelor's degree at UW requires following minimum earned credit hours:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| College of Agriculture | 132 hours |
| College of Arts & Sciences | 120 hours |
| College of Business | 128 hours |
| College of Education | 130 hours |
| College of Engineering | 132 hours |
| College of Health Sciences | 128 hours |
| | (Minimum) |

A master's degree generally requires (depending on the subject field) 24 to 30 graduate levels credits if you remain in your undergraduate field. If not, additional credits may be necessary. A doctoral degree usually consists of 50 to 60 hours beyond the bachelor's or undergraduate program. This may, or may not, include credit hours for a dissertation. Requirements vary considerably between departments and programs. For more information you should consult either the *University* or *Graduate School Bulletins* as well as with your faculty advisor.

The University of Wyoming distinguishes courses by numbers indicating four levels of instruction. They are as follows:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 0000 0999 | Preparatory, remedial, & non credit |
| 1000 2999 | Primarily for first year students & sophomores |
| 3000 4999 | Primarily for juniors & seniors |
| 5000 5999 | Primarily for graduate students |

At UW, prerequisites are the primary factor, which usually govern whether or not a student enrolls for any particular course. However, individual departments and/or colleges may place additional restrictions on course enrollments. You should refer to the current university *General Bulletin* for more information.

Tuition Charge

All University of Wyoming students are charged tuition per the credit hour. Generally graduate students pay more per credit hour. Some other academic programs such as Social Work, Pharmacy and Law charge more per credit hour.

Grade Point Average

Your grade point average (GPA) measures your overall academic performance. Your GPA is determined as follows: first, each grade has a value. The number of credit hours assigned to a course then multiplies this number. For example, a B (3.0 points) in a three credit course earns you a total of 3.0×3.0 or 9.0 grade points. All points you earn are added up and divided by the total number of credits you earned, giving you your semester GPA.

The same general procedure is used to determine your cumulative grade point average--your average for all your previous work at UW.

In general, undergraduate students must maintain at least a 2.0 or C grade average to remain in good academic standing and to graduate. A 3.0 or B average is required on the graduate level. Consistent performance below these levels may result in probation and suspension. *This in turn could affect your immigration status.*

Academic Calendar

The academic year at UW includes a fall and spring semester. In addition, there is a 12-week summer session. Check the current Class Schedule for specific academic deadlines and dates. A brief academic calendar for the 2006-2007 year is listed in Appendix One. It can also be found in the University Bulletin, in each Class Schedule, and in the 2006-2007 Student Planner.

5. PROBLEMS WITH A CLASS

If you find you are not doing well in a class or do not understand the material, you should seek assistance immediately. The following are suggestions for obtaining academic help:

1. Consult with your instructor who may be able to suggest ways to improve your performance
2. If you are having difficulty with your writing, go to the *Writing Center, COE Library, 3rd Floor, (307) 766-5250 for assistance;*
3. ISS will announce other current academic resources on campus during your orientation session when you first arrive! Be sure to peruse the folder you were given; and
4. Consult with your academic advisor; and
5. Consult with International Students and Scholars.

Academic Dishonesty

Many students in the U.S. get in trouble for "cheating" or "plagiarism." Cheating means getting or giving unlawful help on an assignment, quiz, or examination to get a better grade. You may see sharing answers in this way as a means of assisting your friends. No U.S. teacher will see it this way. It is considered cheating. If this happens a faculty member will usually give the individual a "0" or "F" on the exam or assignment.

Plagiarism means copying from a book or other publication of another person without giving the appropriate credit. Four ways of plagiarizing are:

1. Word-for-word continuous copying without quotation marks or mention of the author's name;
2. Copying an occasional key word or phrase without quotation marks or mention of the author's name;
3. Paraphrasing without mention of the author's name; and
4. Taking the author's idea without acknowledging the source.

If there is anything about cheating or plagiarism that you don't understand, ask one of your faculty members or check with the *Dean of Students Office, Knight Hall, Room 128, (307) 766-3296.*

Copyright Restrictions

Reproduction of copyrighted material, without prior permission of the copyright owner, is prohibited under U.S. copyright laws. Copying, including photocopying, without obtaining permission may appear to be an easy and convenient solution to the immediate problem, but it can frequently violate the rights of the author or publisher of the copyrighted work. If convicted, civil and criminal penalties may be imposed for copyright infringement. This could include fines up to \$100,000. ***Do not buy textbooks with the idea of photocopying them and then returning them to the bookstore for a refund. If caught, legal action will be taken against you.*** If you have any questions about this, please contact the *University Bookstore in the Wyoming Union.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING IS BUILT UPON A STRONG FOUNDATION OF INTEGRITY, RESPECT, AND TRUST. ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE HONEST AND THE RIGHT TO EXPECT HONESTY FROM OTHERS. ANY FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IS UNACCEPTABLE TO OUR COMMUNITY AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PLEASE REFER TO UNIREG 30.

APPENDIX: LIST OF RESOURCES A-Z

During your stay at UW, you may need information about a variety of subjects or topics. While International Students and Scholars (ISS) can be contacted for advice, guidance and information on many questions, you are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices listed below for specific questions.

Academic Problems

- Your academic adviser
- [Your professor](#) (if the problem is related to a particular course)
- [Advising, Career, Exploratory Studies Center](#), Knight Hall, Room 222, (307) 766-2398

Academic Records

- Your academic department
- [Office of the Registrar](#), Knight Hall, Room 167,(307) 766-5272, registrar@uwyo.edu,
- [Admissions Office](#), Knight Hall, Room 146, (307) 766-5160, admissions@uwyo.edu,
- [Graduate School](#)

Bus/Shuttle/Parking Service

- [Transit Parking Services](#), (307) 766-9800 or tps@uwyo.edu

Campus Activities

- [Wyoming Union Information Desk](#), (307) 766-3160 or wyouunion@uwyo.edu
- [Branding Iron](#) student newspaper
- [Laramie Boomerang](#)
- [Campus Activities Center](#), Wyoming Union Basement, (307) 766-6344 or cac@uwyo.edu

Employment

- [UW Human Resources](#), 139 WYO Hall, (307) 766-2215
- Contact [International Students and Scholars](#) at (307) 766-5193 or uwglobal@uwyo.edu

English Language Assistance

- Contact the [University of Wyoming English Language Center](#) (307) 766-3630 or elc@uwyo.edu

Financial Assistance

- [Student Financial Aid Office](#), Knight Hall, Room 174, 766-2116 or finaid@uwyo.edu
- [Your Academic Department](#)

Health Insurance

- [Student Health Insurance](#), Knight Hall room 248, (307) 766-3025 or stuins@uwyo.edu
- [Risk Management](#), Knight Hall, Room 247, (307) 766-5767 or risk@uwyo.edu

Health/Medical Care

- [Student Health Service](#), Cheney International Center/Student Health Building, (307) 766-2130 or shser@uwyo.edu
- [Stitches Acute Care Center](#), 3810 Grand Ave, Laramie, WY (307) 721-1794, or info@stitchescare.com
- [Grand Avenue Urgent Care](#), 3236 E Grand Ave, Laramie, WY (307) 760-8602, or info@grandaveurgentcare.com
- [Iverson Memorial Hospital](#), 255 N. 30th, (307) 742-2141 (ER Extension 2222)

Local Schools

- [Albany County School District](#) #1, 1948 Grand Avenue (307) 721-4400

On-Campus Housing

- [Residence Life & Dining Services](#), Washakie Center lower level, (307) 766-3175, or reslife@uwyo.edu
- [UW Apartment Office](#), 2512 Willet Drive, (307) 766-3176

Off-Campus Housing

- Laramie Daily Boomerang <http://www.laramieboomerang.com/>
- UW Classifieds <http://www.uwyo.edu/publicrelations/communications/uw-classifieds.html>

Legal Services

- Student Attorney, Knight Hall, Room 128, 766-6347 <http://www.uwyo.edu/studentatty/>

Personal Problems

- [Dean of Students Office](#), Knight Hall, Room 128, (307) 766-3296 or dos@uwyo.edu
- [University Counseling Center](#), Knight Hall, Room 341, (307) 766-2187 *(after hours: (307) 766-8989, emergency on-call)
- [International Students and Scholars](#), basement of Cheney International Center Suite 5, (307) 766-5193 or uwglobal@uwyo.edu
- [Student Health Service](#), Health/Nursing Building, (307) 766-2130 or shser@uwyo.edu

Recreation

- [Intramural Sports](#), (307) 766-4175 or imsports@uwyo.edu
- [Campus Recreation](#), (307) 766-3370 or rec@uwyo.edu
- [Facility reservations](#), (307) 766-3428
- [Athletic Ticket Office](#), (307) 766-7220 or tickets@uwyo.edu
- [Upcoming athletic events](#), (307) 766-4850

Tax Information

- Tax Office, Knight Hall room 250, (307) 766-2821 or tax@uwyo.edu
- [Payroll Office](#) Old Main, room 160, (307) 766-3558
- Internal Revenue Service, 5353 Yellowstone Avenue, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 24-Hour Help, 1-800-829-4477
Federal tax forms only, 1-800-829-3676, Tax Questions, 1-800-829-1040 <http://www.irs.gov/>