



International Students



If you are one of the nearly one-quarter of international students in UNC Kenan-Flagler's MBA Program, this section is filled with information specific to your needs. We want to ensure that your transition is as smooth as possible so you can focus on getting the most out of your MBA experience.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

REASONS TO ARRIVE EARLY

If you have not attended postsecondary school in the United States or if English is not your mother tongue, you may especially benefit from arriving early in Chapel Hill. The below programs are of particular benefit to international students:

- Analytical Skills Workshop (ASW)
- U.S. Language and Culture

ANALYTICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP (ASW)

The Analytical Skills Workshop (ASW) may be your first experience in a U.S.-style classroom, where all students are expected to participate in the classroom discussion by making comments, asking questions and answering questions. In ASW, you get a risk-free trial run without permanent grades but with individual feedback. This summer opportunity to use English in a real U.S. business school class with a majority of U.S. peers may serve as relatively relaxed preparation for the more intense work that is to come.

While some business schools offer special programs for international students, we have concentrated on a program that puts you and U.S. students together in a classroom with a U.S. professor, through the ASW. This togetherness addresses the key concern of integrating the student body. We believe it helps all students to create as much interaction as possible between domestic and international students, beginning from day one. Moreover, a real classroom environment exposes nonnative English speakers to the speech not only of professors, who are experts at speaking, but also of U.S. students, whose varied regional accents, speech patterns and slang can present the greatest listening challenges.

An early arrival can also help you tend to the details of ordinary living: arranging for telephone and utility service, shopping for furniture and a car, getting your driver's license and finding housing, which can be a real problem later in the summer, particularly if you bring your spouse or your family. Taking care of these matters during ASW, with its slower pace, can make your semester and adjustment to U.S. culture less stressful and much more fun. Perhaps most importantly, if you arrive early, you can begin to form a network of colleagues and friends in the MBA class.

In addition, as ASW meets, the School provides an informal program of coaching and meetings designed to help you become more comfortable with the U.S. environment and with the linguistic and cultural demands of business school. This informal coaching program is optional and free, but years of experience cause us to encourage it strongly. Its goals are to support you as you develop a plan to address your own individual needs and to identify resources, both physical and human, that will allow you to achieve your goals.

U.S. LANGUAGE & CULTURE SESSIONS

UNC Kenan-Flagler runs several summer programs for international students (all on-campus activities are free and all are strongly recommended). These programs coordinate the efforts of MBA Global Programs, the MBA Management Communication Program and the MBA Career & Leadership office.

We look forward to meeting each of you. These sessions are casual, interactive and often fun. Our goals in these programs include:

- Helping international students adjust to life in Chapel Hill, at UNC and in the United States.
- Facilitating international students' success in UNC Kenan-Flagler classes, study groups, events and activities.
- Providing foundational information and strategies for successful internship and job searches.
- Identifying strategic opportunities for each student regarding his or her language, communication and acculturation challenges.

These summer sessions also tie directly to the MBA 885 (U.S. Leadership Issues and Business Culture) course which meets during the academic year and is a prerequisite for most international students interested in pursuing a summer internship.

Please watch for future mailings about these programs. For more information, please contact Tim Flood (PhD, Associate Professor of Management Communication) at tim_flood@unc.edu.

WELCOME SESSIONS

Two Welcome Sessions are offered during the summer; each session is presented in conjunction with an Immigration Orientation. Which session you attend will depend on when you arrive. If you are participating in ASW, your Welcome Session and Immigration Orientation will be just before ASW classes begin. If you do not participate in ASW, your Welcome Session and Immigration Orientation will be before MBA Orientation begins. During these sessions, you will check in with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), meet key faculty and staff, get information about purchasing health insurance, obtaining university identification cards, and other tasks you will need to accomplish shortly after your arrival.

The Welcome Sessions are coordinated by Patricia Collins in the MBA Global Programs office. She is the point of contact for international students for non-academic issues and can help you with questions you may have related to settling in, how to connect with other new students and other personal concerns. You can contact her at patricia_collins@unc.edu.

ADVICE & ASSISTANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

HELP WITH YOUR CAREER SEARCH

The mission of the MBA Career & Leadership office is to prepare students for their career search and provide meaningful opportunities to interact with employers. Since finding a U.S.-based internship or full-time position can be more challenging for international students, MBA Career & Leadership has an extensive program of events incorporated into an academic class, MBA 885. This class is taught by a communication professor in collaboration with C&L, addressing topics such as networking, resume writing, the U.S. job interview and visa issues. In addition, we continue to work with employers to promote our international student talent.

VISA INFORMATION

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is the main administrative office for all international students, research scholars, and visiting professors present at UNC-Chapel Hill. ISSS issues visa eligibility documents, assists with the maintenance of these documents, provides counseling related to immigration matters and adjustment to life in the United States, and serves as a liaison between foreign students and scholars and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In addition to administrative and counseling duties, ISSS provides programming designed to help foreign students and scholars maximize their experience at UNC, including the International Friendship Program and other cultural programs with an international emphasis.

The MBA program has a representative from ISSS to assist you with your immigration questions. The MBA International Student Advisor (ISA) is responsible for issuing your visa eligibility document (Form I-20 or DS-2019) and assisting you with issues regarding your student visa for the duration of your MBA program. Jessica Larsen serves as the MBA ISA. She holds office hours in the McColl Building on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Her contact information is as follows:

Jessica Larsen, MBA International Student Advisor (ISA)
(919) 962-0923

jessica_larsen@unc.edu

In order to obtain a visa eligibility document, international students are required by United States federal regulations to certify that they have sufficient funds to cover expenses at UNC-Chapel Hill for the entire length of their studies. All international students are required to complete and submit the Financial Certificate form, even if they are not requesting a visa eligibility document from UNC-Chapel Hill. The

Financial Certificate and appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted electronically by the student through his or her student portal in Connect Carolina after admission to the program. There is a frequently asked questions section to assist students with completing the Financial Certificate form located at www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/admissions/mba/international-applicants/faq.

Processing the visa eligibility document can take up to three weeks once the MBA ISA receives all documentation. Incorrect documentation or insufficient funds may delay the processing of visa eligibility documents, which are processed in the order in which completed Financial Certificates are received. Once the visa eligibility document is processed, the MBA ISA will send a letter to the student containing more details about the process for obtaining a student visa stamp and other important information regarding arrival in the United States, including payment of the SEVIS fee. The SEVIS fee is currently \$200.00 for F-1 students and \$180.00 for J-1 students.

The I-20 or DS-2019 is the document that students will need to take to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in order to apply for their U.S. visa. International students applying for the F-1 or J-1 visa will be required to have an in-person interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Check the website for U.S. embassies at <http://usembassy.state.gov> regarding current procedures, how to make an appointment and operating hours. Waiting time for an appointment interview may be several weeks and security clearance procedures for some applicants can take several additional weeks. All F-1 and J-1 visa applicants must overcome the assumption of immigrant intent to obtain the visa stamp. To do so, students must demonstrate strong ties to their home country (examples include family members, property, job prospects, etc. in the home country).

Please be advised that U.S. regulations require that all initial students enter the United States no more than 30 days prior to the course of study start date as shown on the I-20 or DS-2019 form. The start date on the I-20 or DS-2019 will correspond with the start date of classes for the particular session you plan to attend. Students should not enter the U.S. past the start date on the I-20 or DS-2019 unless they are traveling with a letter from the MBA Program explicitly stating that they have been given permission to join the program after the start of classes (which may be granted in limited cases for students attending ASW but is *rarely* granted for students joining the program in fall).

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CHECK-IN AND MBA IMMIGRATION ORIENTATION

Check-in is the process of presenting yourself and your immigration documents to the MBA ISA. All international students are required to check-in with the MBA ISA prior to the start of classes. This includes international students that have not requested immigration documents from UNC-Chapel Hill.

You will have the opportunity to check-in during the Welcome Session corresponding to the start of your program. You must bring your passport and your I-20 or DS-2019 (or other relevant immigration documents) to these sessions. Failure to check-in may result in the termination of your immigration status or a hold on your ability to register for classes.

After check-in is completed, the arrival and enrollment of each student in F-1 or J-1 status will be reported to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a process known as SEVIS registration (for F-1 students) or SEVIS validation (for J-1 students).

All F-1 and J-1 visa holders are also required to attend the Immigration Orientation included at their Welcome Session. At this session, you will be given information on how to maintain your immigration status within the United States.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH CARE

Information regarding immunizations and health insurance can be found in the “Budget & Finances” section.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is a U.S. government institution that maintains a benefits program for disabled and retired people. The money for this program is obtained through withholdings from employees’ pay and from employers’ contributions. The SSA issues a Social Security number to virtually every U.S. citizen and though this number is not technically a national identification number, it is used as such by many governmental and private entities. Social Security numbers are also issued to permanent residents and certain non-immigrants authorized to work in the U.S.

In general, students in F-1 or J-1 status will not be able to obtain a Social Security number without an offer of employment, so they may not apply until they secure an on-campus job or a summer internship (MBA international students are not eligible to engage in internships prior to the summer after completing the first year of the program). Once you have secured a job, contact the MBA International Student Advisor for more information prior to beginning work.

Not having a Social Security number can make certain tasks difficult (but usually not impossible) for international students in the U.S. It will be extremely difficult to get any sort of loan or credit (excluding the MBA Loan). Most loan/credit agencies use the Social Security number as an identification number to establish your credit risk. This means buying a car will be difficult unless you pay the full amount at the time of purchase. You may also be asked to pay higher deposits on items such as mobile telephones and utilities.

NORTH CAROLINA DRIVER’S LICENSE

International students with a valid immigration status are eligible to apply for a North Carolina Driver’s License (NCDL). In order for international students and scholars to apply for the NCDL, they must first be registered (F-1 students) or validated (J-1 students) in SEVIS. This can take up to 30 days after classes begin. To avoid problems with the application, students are advised to wait at least ten business days after the start of classes to apply for the NCDL at a local Division of Motor Vehicles office. The license will only be issued for the duration of your immigration documents. Therefore, the license may expire prior to the completion of your stay, and would need to be renewed if your status is extended. More information is available at:

www.ncdot.org/dmv.

International students are permitted to drive on their home country’s driver’s license for a temporary period in North Carolina. Please be advised that each state has different laws governing driver’s license. We recommend that you drive on your home country’s driver’s license for no more than 30 days from your entry to the United States. International driver’s licenses are not honored by the state of North Carolina.

CAR INSURANCE

If you decide to get a car while enrolled in the MBA Program (see the “Housing & Relocation” section), you will also need to have car insurance. Many U.S. insurance companies will consider you an “inexperienced” driver since you are getting a U.S. driver’s license for the first time and will charge you a higher rate. You may be able to convince them that you have been driving for many years in your home country in order to get a reduced rate, but there are no guarantees. It is extremely helpful if you can get a letter in English from your home insurance company explaining how long you have been driving and if you have had any accidents. The more information they have, the better your chances of getting a lower rate.

BANKING INFORMATION

You should plan on opening a checking account at a local bank. You will need to present your passport and give your local address to do this. You do NOT need a Social Security number in order to open a banking account.

Money can easily be transferred to U.S. bank accounts from another country, but it takes a few days and you will be charged a transfer fee for each transaction.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

There are a variety of Fellowship opportunities available to international students, including fellowships directly from UNC Kenan-Flagler and from leading international scholarship organizations of which it is a member. For more information on these Fellowships, please contact the MBA Program directly.

A very attractive offering for international students is the MBA Loan program. For details of this program, please reference the “Budget & Finances” section of this guide.