

welcome home

— THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO —

**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

— BOZEMAN · MONTANA —



**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Mountains & Minds



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It is my pleasure to welcome you to Montana State University.

You have selected a university with a reputation for high-quality academic programs, rich cultural activities and astounding natural beauty. As one of the premier research universities in the United States, Montana State University (MSU) provides opportunities for students to work alongside world-class faculty mentors. Our students learn in a collaborative and supportive environment that prepares them for rewarding careers and further education. Here you will be among a community of scholars committed to addressing the world's greatest challenges through excellence in education, research, creativity and civic engagement.

As the largest university in the state of Montana, MSU offers more than 250 academic programs and enrolls more than 16,000 students. Our students represent more than 65 countries and every state in the U.S. More than 300 international students enroll each year at MSU to pursue academic degrees, conduct scientific research, participate in cultural activities or enhance their English language proficiency. Like you, these highly qualified students represent the best and brightest minds from around the world.

We expect you to have many questions prior to your arrival in Bozeman, and have created this booklet to help you prepare for your journey. We have also included information about life in Bozeman, a beautiful, safe and friendly city that frequently tops national listings of the best college communities in the United States. If you still have questions after reading this booklet, please know that the dedicated staff members in the Office of International Programs (OIP) are available to assist you now and in the future.

OIP staff will provide you with a wide variety of services, including:

- Providing you with visa and immigration advice
- Helping you with cultural adjustment
- Sharing resources with you to support your academic success and cultural adjustment
- Developing opportunities for you to get to know the people and places that make our state so special

I look forward to meeting you in Bozeman and welcoming you to the Bobcat family.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kristof Zaba

Dean for Global Engagement and International Programs

Before You Arrive

Preparation for Your Arrival



Apply Now for Housing

University Housing
montana.edu/housing

Off-Campus Housing
Marketplace
offcampushousing.montana.edu/listing

- 1 Once you have received your letter of admission with your I-20 or DS-2019 immigration form, you will need to obtain your visa at the American Embassy or Consulate. Make sure the name on the I-20 or DS-2019 matches the name on your passport exactly.
 - Before you go to the Embassy or Consulate, you must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. Print and save a copy of the receipt and take it to your interview appointment. For more information, please visit www.fmjfee.com.
- 2 You must provide proof of financial support for your studies and living costs at both the visa interview and the Port of Entry in the U.S. Make arrangements with your financial sponsor to ensure that funds can be transferred as needed (see p. 11).
 - You should plan for enough money to cover various first semester expenses such as tuition, fees, books and housing.
- 3 When you receive your visa, you can make arrangements for your international travel (see p. 11).
 - You can arrive in the U.S. up to 30 days before the date shown on your I-20 or DS-2019 form; however, you should not arrive later than the required International Student Orientation (see p. 10).
- 4 Apply for University Housing **as early as possible** (see p. 4).
- 5 Place tags or labels on all of your suitcases and carry on luggage with your name, phone number, and email address. You should also write down Montana State University Office of International Programs phone number (+1-406-994-4031) and address:

Office of International Programs
183 Strand Union Building
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59717
USA

 - Include a second copy of this information inside your suitcase in case the tag is lost or destroyed. If this happens, file a claim immediately at the airport. It is advisable to have enough clothing and personal items packed in your carry-on to last for the first few days.



KNOW THIS

Travel Documents

- Your Passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the expected date of entry to the U.S.
- You must carry your original I-20 or DS-2019 issued by MSU with you.
- While traveling, carry all of your important documents, money or bank drafts with you. Guard them carefully; do not place them in your checked baggage. You can bring cash, money orders, or traveler's checks with you when you enter the United States, but bringing more than \$10,000 or its equivalent in other currencies requires formal declaration upon passing through Customs.
- When you arrive in the U.S., your I-20 or DS-2019 will be reviewed at the Port of Entry by a Customs Officer. Make sure you have it easily accessible.



I chose MSU-Bozeman because of the city vibe and the program itself, specifically the innovative ways of teaching that include more “learning by doing” rather than being purely lecture based.

I have met so many incredible people studying different subjects from all different backgrounds and from all over the world. The professors were extremely passionate about what they do and wanted me to become better; the staff and students really cared about me, and I was respected and appreciated for my opinions.

If I hadn't chosen MSU-Bozeman, I think this would have been very difficult – and Bozeman itself is such a great city!”

– Gallage Ariyaratne, Sri Lanka Bachelor of Science in Chemistry (Biochemistry option)



Housing



MSU's 12 residence halls give students the opportunity to stay in the center of campus life.



Residence Halls

- MSU requires all freshmen and undergraduates who have earned less than 30 academic credits to live on-campus in the university's Residence Halls (dormitories). Students who live on-campus must buy a meal plan, with meals provided in either of the two dining rooms. All undergraduates are encouraged to spend at least their first semester living on-campus, and are guaranteed a room.
- You should **apply for housing as early as possible**. A \$300 deposit will be required with your application, and this fee will be applied to your housing bill. You can complete a housing application from the 'My Housing Portal' link on the montana.edu/housing website. Refunds on the deposit are only given in the case of a visa denial.
- Once you have signed a housing contract for a semester, you are required to pay the housing bill for the entire semester even if you wish to move off-campus before the semester ends.
- For students who live on-campus, accommodation is available when Residence Halls close for vacation periods. Meals are not provided in the Residence Halls during vacation periods or summer sessions and must be purchased separately.
- MSU offers both single and double rooms. Each room has closets, single beds, dressers, study desks, chairs and curtains. Two flat sheets and one pillow case are provided, but you will need to supply your own pillow, blankets, bedspreads and towels. There are many stores in Bozeman that provide these items at reasonable prices, so you do not need to bring them with you from home.

Family & Graduate Housing

- Affordable on-campus housing is available to families, married couples, students who have earned at least 72 undergraduate credits, graduate students and single parents with dependent children.
- You should **apply as early as possible** as there is often a waiting list.
- One, two and three bedroom units are available. Some are furnished, and most of them include utilities and laundry facilities.
- For more information, please visit the montana.edu/housing/apartments website or email housing@montana.edu.

Off-Campus Housing Options

- Apartments, condominiums and houses are available for rent in the area surrounding MSU and in greater Bozeman.
- Monthly rent for a room in a shared house or apartment, including utilities, will range from \$800 to \$1500.
- Students planning to live off-campus should check the off-campus housing marketplace at offcampushousing.montana.edu/listing for available housing. You should secure temporary housing, such as a hotel room, until you find an apartment.

Temporary Housing

If you will be living in the Residence Halls and arrive before they officially open, the University Student Housing offers temporary housing for approximately \$35/night. If you prefer to live off-campus, you will need to stay in a hotel until you secure housing.

Please view the links below to see affordable options for temporary housing:

- expedia.com/Hotels
- kayak.com/Bozeman-Hotels.16100.hotel.ksp
- airbnb.com/bozeman-mt/stays



MSU's Rendezvous Dining Pavilion won grand prize from the National Association of College and University Food Services in 2019 (bottom right).

Health Requirements & Insurance



Health Requirements

- State law requires proof of immunization against certain diseases for all students. You will need to turn in a tuberculosis screening form and immunization forms. Immunizations must be verified on a validated record or medical history record by a physician or health agency and professionally translated into English. The exact dates the immunizations were given must be shown.
- You must obtain your immunization records and submit them to MSU University Health Partners by fax (+1-406-994-2504), email (immune@montana.edu) or hand-deliver them upon your arrival in Bozeman. Failure to submit your tuberculosis screening form and immunization records to University Health Partners in a timely manner will prevent you from registering for desired courses.
- If you have any additional questions regarding the tuberculosis screening or immunization requirements before you arrive at MSU, please feel free to contact MSU University Health Partners at +1-406-994-2311 or immune@montana.edu.



Health Insurance

- MSU requires **all international students** to either enroll in the Montana University System Student Insurance Plan or show proof of adequate private insurance coverage, to include sickness and accident coverage of \$100,000/year, at a minimum. Dependents of F-1 and J-1 visa holders are required to obtain health insurance, and J-1 visa holders are also required to have emergency medical evacuation and repatriation insurance.
- MSU University Health Partners provide low cost general medical and dental services for all enrolled students. If a student needs emergency or specialized medical care at an off-campus clinic or hospital, charges are likely to be much more expensive.
- Medical examinations that are not covered by the university's student insurance plan include eye examinations, eyeglasses and dental work. It is advisable that you have this work done before leaving home, as these can be particularly costly in the U.S. Most health insurance policies in the U.S. do not pay for 100% of the medical expenses incurred by illness or injury. In any situation where the cost of medical treatment is not covered by insurance, the student is responsible for payment of those costs.

**KNOW
THIS**



**IN AN
EMERGENCY,
DIAL**

911



Checklist of Essentials

- Passport valid for at least six months beyond the expected date of entry to the U.S.
- Student visa
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Official Transcript (If you have not already sent it)
- Cash for travel
- Immunization records and tuberculosis screening form
- Health insurance records (if applicable)
- Special medication and accompanying prescriptions (if applicable)
- Useful phone numbers, including the Office of International Programs: +1-406-994-4031



Suggested Items to Bring Along

- Bilingual dictionary (if applicable)
- Toiletries
- Photos of family and friends
- Contact information for family members, doctor and school in home country
- Items from home representing your culture

Once You're Here



Walkable campus
and hands-on study

Bozeman

Bozeman is a lively, youthful city in the scenic Rocky Mountains that attracts a wide variety of people for many reasons. With mountains, clean air and starry skies, our traditional American college town is a safe and beautiful place with an easy-going style unique to the American West. Artists, writers and musicians frequently come here to find inspiration. Bozeman is also home to many high-tech companies that work with lasers, fiber optics, software and biotechnology.

Visitors like to experience world-famous Yellowstone National Park, which is only a short drive away, as well as traditional cowboy rodeos, Native American cultural exhibits, and world-class lecturers and performers. Local people enjoy many outdoor activities such as hiking, backpacking, skiing, golfing, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, fly fishing, biking and soaking in the many natural hot springs. Bozeman ranks 6th on the National Center for Arts Research's Arts Vibrancy Index for Small Towns due to its four museums, numerous art galleries, a symphony, a ballet, an opera company and several community theatres. The historic downtown district also has shopping and restaurants for every taste.

“Here at MSU, we love Bozeman, and we aren't alone in thinking it is a great place:

- “Top 10 Places to Live” – *Men's Journal*
- “One of the Top 10 College Towns” – *Forbes Magazine*
- “Top 15 College Towns to Live in Forever” – College Ranker
- “Top 5 Ski Towns in the World” and “Top 10 Ski Towns in the World” – *National Geographic*
- “One of the Top Places to Live and Work as a Movie Maker” – *Movie Maker Magazine*
- “Top 7 Trail Towns” – *Trail Runner Magazine*
- “Dreamtown” – Bizjournals.com
- “Top 12 College Football Neighborhoods” – Stadium Journey
- “One of the top 5 College Towns” – Smart Asset



Homecoming Parade,
Downtown Bozeman



With something for everyone, Bozeman is a truly ideal place to live, work and study.

Once You're on Campus



Check-In with Office of International Programs

- After you arrive, you **must** check in with the Office of International Programs (OIP). Please come with your passport and I-20 or DS-2019. Also bring your immunization history and medical records in English, even if they were sent previously. If you have health insurance from home, please bring proof of that insurance.
- The Office of International Programs will also need your official transcripts if you have not already sent those documents.
- OIP is responsible for the general well-being of international students at MSU, from admission to graduation and throughout post-graduation training opportunities. The International Student and Scholar Services team has advisors that provide support services and consultations for all aspects of life at MSU.
- After you have checked in with OIP, you will want to obtain your student ID card, also known as the CatCard, from the lower level of Miller Dining Hall. There is a \$20 fee for the CatCard, that will be charged to your first semester's student bill.
- OIP assists in the reception and orientation of international students, integration into the university and community, interpretation of immigration regulations and laws, and other individual problems that may arise.



MSU New Student Orientation

- All international students are required to attend the MSU New Student Orientation. During the orientation you will be introduced to academic life, learn how to register for classes, and meet with your department head and academic advisor. This is also the perfect time to learn about campus life, meet your fellow classmates from around the world, and discover all the resources available to you on-campus. The required orientation will help you transition to your new home at MSU.



Registration

- At the end of orientation, you will be able to choose and register for your classes.
- To register, you will need to connect to "MyInfo" on the MSU website. MyInfo is a secure site where you can see your student account and unofficial transcript, register for classes and update your contact information.



Academic Books

- The courses that you choose with the help of your academic advisor will determine which books you need. All of your books can be purchased at the MSU Bookstore on campus.

Fee Payment

- Approximately one week after registration, you will be required to pay your tuition and fees for the semester, as well as campus housing and meal fees (if applicable). The exact amount will appear on one bill payable to MSU.
- To pay for the tuition and fees, MSU accepts money orders, credit cards (Visa/MasterCard/Discover), cash or payment via the foreign exchange through the PayMyTuition link in MyInfo. Tuition and fees cannot be paid prior to registration for classes given that the amount due will vary depending on the number of credits you enroll in.
- At the time of payment, you may elect to pay by the Deferred Payment Plan which divides the total amount of your bill into four monthly payments, to be paid throughout the semester. There is a \$30 administrative charge for the use of this tuition payment plan.



Transportation

- Bozeman has its own airport, the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (airport code: BZN), located 11 miles (17 km) from the MSU campus.
- Eight airlines with connections to major American cities serve Bozeman: Alaska/Horizon, Allegiant, American, Delta, jetBlue, Southwest, Sun Country and United. There are non-stop flights from several cities including Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Newark, New York/JFK, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington DC/IAD.
- Upon arrival in Bozeman, you will need to arrange transportation from the airport via a taxi, Uber or Lyft. The cost to get from the airport to the MSU campus is approximately \$35.
- There is no train service to/from Bozeman, but there is a Greyhound bus service located in the neighboring town of Belgrade. There are several companies from which you can rent cars in Bozeman and Belgrade, including Budget, Enterprise, Hertz and National/Alamo.
- For transportation around Bozeman, you can use the free Streamline Bus service that will take you from the university to downtown, major shopping centers, the hospital and many other locations.



North campus entrance



The convenient, safe and free Streamline Bus system.

Finance

- Your I-20 or DS-2019 will list the amount of money required for your studies at MSU. The amount listed is for two academic semesters and does not include the summer.
- Tuition and fee estimates are based on nine credits at the graduate level and 12 credits at the undergraduate level. Please note that tuition and fees are subject to modification by action of the State Board of Regents at any time.
- Plan to have funds available to cover your first semester expenses with you, since the first semester's tuition needs to be paid when you arrive. This amount should be equal to half of the annual amount indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- You can pay by wire transfer or credit card. Please note that local banks often require a waiting period of up to two weeks to honor international bank drafts. The university accepts the following cards: Visa, MasterCard and Discover.
- During your travels, we recommend that you carry enough cash to cover your travel expenses. The remainder can be brought by credit card or wire transfer.
- If you have an assistantship, please be aware that payroll is run bi-weekly; your first paycheck will likely be less than normal, depending on your start date and how it corresponds with the payroll cycle.





JANUARY
DAYTIME HIGH

34°F / 1°C

JULY
DAYTIME HIGH

83°F / 28°C



208CM
ANNUAL
SNOWFALL



300DAYS
OF SUN
ANNUALLY



43CM
ANNUAL
RAINFALL



88%HIGH
24%LOW
HUMIDITY



Climate

The mountains of the Western Rockies are very scenic and the area around Bozeman has a full calendar of seasons. The summer temperatures tend to be mild, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't get hot at times. While the average daytime temperatures in the summer months range from 70-85°F/21-29°C, there can be plenty of days well above 90°F/32°C. Summer heat waves come, but do not last long. Bozeman's high elevation causes temperatures to cool off considerably after the sun sets, and in August there will be nights with temperatures at 50-60°F/10-15°C. Both spring and fall are cooler and see more rain than the summer, but the high plains are not as rainy as other parts of the country. Winter arrives early, but can vary from very mild weather with low humidity, to thick snowstorms that blanket the area in snow. January tends to be the coldest month, with daytime temperatures averaging 34°F/1°C.

Clothing

The key to is to bring clothing that can be layered. Layering clothing allows you to stay comfortable as the temperature changes.

Winter

A typical Montanan might dress for a winter day in a long-sleeved shirt, covered by a sweater and a coat. You will definitely want a coat for the evenings. Closed-toe shoes or boots, warm thick socks, a hat, gloves, and jeans or pants will provide plenty of warmth. Some people will wear thermal underwear under their clothing to keep them warm. Layering clothing in this way allows you to stay comfortable as the temperature changes. If it is difficult for you to find warm clothing at home, there is no need to worry. Affordable clothing can be found at a variety of stores upon your arrival.

Summer

A typical Montanan might dress for a July day in a short-sleeved t-shirt or a long-sleeved shirt and shorts or jeans. You may also want a light coat for the evenings. A rain jacket or an umbrella is also a very good idea, as afternoon rain can be common in the summer. Open-toed shoes are acceptable to wear.



International Association Engagement

- For a list of international associations, please visit the website: montanastate.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations to see the many opportunities available. You can find more details on all of the interest-based organizations on campus, as well as various clubs centered around particular countries, cultures and languages.
- We encourage you to reach out to the various clubs that interest you. Joining clubs is a great way to meet other students, expand your interest and knowledge base, and make the most of your time at MSU.



Learn about community businesses, organizations and resources as well as MSU student clubs at Catapalooza. Meet with recruiters at the bi-annual Career Fair.

**Exploring is central to what we do
at Montana State University**

There's something about our environment that inspires big ideas and bold adventures. Strong academics, real-world research and creative projects, and the energy of an active Rocky Mountain community define MSU and those who study and live here.

**Bozeman is an exciting place
to begin the next stage of your life**

A vibrant college town surrounded by high peaks, Bozeman attracts scientists, writers, outdoor enthusiasts, filmmakers—people who invent, create and discover in a place unlike anywhere else.

**We're glad you're interested in MSU, and we
welcome you to our academic community.**



**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Office of International Programs

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globalstudy@montana.edu

montana.edu/international