

welcome home

— THE INTERNATIONAL'S 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 selected a university with a reputation for high-quality academic programs, rich cultural activities and astounding beauty. As one of the premier research universities in the nation, MSU provides opportunities for students to work alongside world-class faculty mentors. Our students learn in a collaborative and supportive environment that prepares them to graduate equipped 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 225 academic programs and enrolls more than 16,000 students. Our students represent more than 70 countries and every state in the USA. More than 500 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.

It is understandable for new students to have many questions prior to their arrival to campus. Therefore, we developed this booklet to provide important information designed to help prepare you for your journey. You will also find 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:

- Greeting you at the Bozeman airport
- Providing you with visa and immigration advice
- Helping you with cultural adjustment
- Sharing with you resources on 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. I. Miley Gonzalez  
 Vice Provost and Dean  
 International Programs



# Before You Arrive

KNOW  
THIS

## Preparation for Your Arrival

- 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 exactly the name on your passport.
  - Before you go to the Embassy or Consulate, you must pay the SEVIS fee. Print and save a copy of the receipt and take it to your interview appointment. For more information, please visit [www.fmjfee.com](http://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. 12)
  - 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 United States 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  
P.O. Box 172260  
400 Culbertson Hall  
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.

## 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 United States, 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 started my education at MSU because of a professor who visited Vietnam for research, and I've never regretted it. For numerous Vietnamese students, Montana is not a well-known state with a large Vietnamese community. However, people in Bozeman, especially MSU professors, staff, and students, are very helpful and I blended into a new environment without much difficulty. Montana has four beautiful seasons and a variety of fun outdoor activities, so I can always find precious time relaxing between my studies. I will never forget the remarkable moments as a student at MSU."*

– Tan Tran, Ph.D. Student, Statistics



Apply Now  
for Housing

MSU Residence Life  
[montana.edu/reslife](http://montana.edu/reslife)

Off-Campus  
Bozeman Daily Chronicle  
[bozemandailychronicle.com](http://bozemandailychronicle.com)





## Housing

### 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 download a housing application from the following website: [montana.edu/reslife](http://montana.edu/reslife). 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

- You should **apply as early as possible** as there is often a waiting list.
- 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.
- 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 website [montana.edu/fgh](http://montana.edu/fgh) or email [fgo@montana.edu](mailto:fgo@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 one resident, including utilities, will range from \$650 to \$1200.
- Students planning to live off-campus should check the classified section of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle at [bozemandailychronicle.com](http://bozemandailychronicle.com) for available housing or plan to arrive two weeks early in order to search for 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 Office of Residence Life offers temporary housing for approximately \$25/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](http://expedia.com/Hotels)
- [kayak.com/Bozeman-Hotels.16100.hotel.ksp](http://kayak.com/Bozeman-Hotels.16100.hotel.ksp)
- [airbnb.com/s/Bozeman--MT.html](http://airbnb.com/s/Bozeman--MT.html)



MSU's 11 residence halls give students the opportunity to stay in the center of campus life.



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 your Medical History Record, which includes Tuberculosis Screening 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 immunizations and complete and return the Medical History Record to MSU Student Health Services or your registration will be delayed.
- The Medical History Record should be sent by fax to +1-406-994-2504 or by email to [immune@montana.edu](mailto:immune@montana.edu) or you can bring it with you and turn it in. Before you send the Medical History Record with proof of immunizations, we recommend that you make a copy for your personal record and bring it with you.
- If you have any additional questions regarding the immunization requirements or the Medical History Record before you arrive at MSU, please feel free to contact Student Health Services at +1-406-994-2311 or [immune@montana.edu](mailto:immune@montana.edu).



### Health Insurance

- MSU Student Health Service provides general medical and dental services for all enrolled students. Costs are minimal because students pay a basic fee each semester as part of their tuition and fees. If a student needs emergency or specialized medical care at an off-campus clinic or the hospital, charges can be much more expensive.
- MSU requires all international students to either enroll in the MSU Health & Accident Insurance Plan or show proof of adequate private insurance coverage, which includes sickness and accident coverage for a minimum amount of \$100,000/year. Emergency medical evacuation and repatriation insurance is required for J-1 students. For more information, please visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/health.html>
- Dependents of F-1 students are required to obtain health insurance. Dependents of J-1 students are highly recommended to obtain health insurance as well.
- Most health insurance policies in the U.S. do not pay for 100% of medical expenses incurred by illness or accident.
- Medical examinations not covered by the university's student health coverage are eye examinations, eyeglasses, or dental work. It is advisable that you have this work done before leaving home, as these expenses can be expensive in the United States. In any situation where the cost of medical treatment is not covered by insurance, the student is responsible for payment.



## 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
- Health records
- Health and Immunization Records
- 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, doctor and school in home country
- Items from home representing your culture

**KNOW  
THIS**



IN AN **EMERGENCY**, DIAL

**911**



# Once You're Here

## 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, white water 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.



Walkable campus and hands on study



Homecoming Parade, Downtown Bozeman

**“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 Town in the World” – *National Geographic*
- “One of the Top Places to Live and Work as a Movie Maker” – *Movie Maker Magazine*
- “Top 7 Trail Town” – *Trail Runner Magazine*
- “Dreamtown” – *Bizjournals.com*
- “Top 12 College Football Neighborhoods” – *Stadium Journey*
- “Once of the top 5 College Town” – *Smart Asset*



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. 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 is responsible for the general well-being of international students at MSU, from admission to graduation and 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.
- The Office 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. The International Student and Scholar Advisors are here to help ease your transition and assist you on your journey at MSU.
- After you have checked in with the Office of International Programs, you will want to obtain your student ID card, also known as the CatCard.
- The Office of International Programs will also need your official transcripts if you have not already sent those documents.



### 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 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 campus website. MyInfo is a secure site where you can see your student account and unofficial transcript, register for classes and change 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 have 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.
- Tuition and fees cannot be paid in advance of registration for classes, since it is determined by how many credits you take.
- To pay for the tuition and fees, MSU accepts checks, credit cards (Visa/MasterCard/Discover) or cash.
- 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 throughout the semester. There is a \$30 administrative charge for the use of this tuition payment plan.

- MSU has partnered with Flywire, a company that processes tuition payments for international students. The system is user-friendly and it can save you hundreds of dollars on the foreign exchange compared to using your bank. We highly recommend using this system.

### Transportation

- Bozeman has its own airport, the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (airport code: BZN), located 11 miles (17 km) from campus.
- Six airlines with connections to major American cities serve Bozeman: Alaska/Horizon, Allegiant, American, Delta, Frontier and United. There are non-stop flights from several cities including Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City and Seattle.
- If you send the Office of International Programs your travel itinerary at least one week prior to your arrival, we can provide free transportation from the airport to campus. For more information, visit the website [montana.edu/international/iss/arrival.html](http://montana.edu/international/iss/arrival.html) and view the Airport Pick-up Request Form.
- You also have the option of using a taxi, Uber or Lyft to get to campus from the airport; this should cost 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.

### 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 or out-of-state checks. 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 your first paycheck will be on September 11 for fall arrival and February 11 for spring arrival. The first paycheck will be less than normal because it will include payment only for days worked in August or January, respectively.



North campus entrance



The convenient, safe and free Streamline Bus system.







**JANUARY**  
DAYTIME HIGH

**32°F / 0°C**

**JULY**  
DAYTIME HIGH

**82°F / 28°C**



**218CM**  
ANNUAL  
SNOWFALL



**300DAYS**  
OF SUN  
ANNUALLY



**42CM**  
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 32°F/0°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

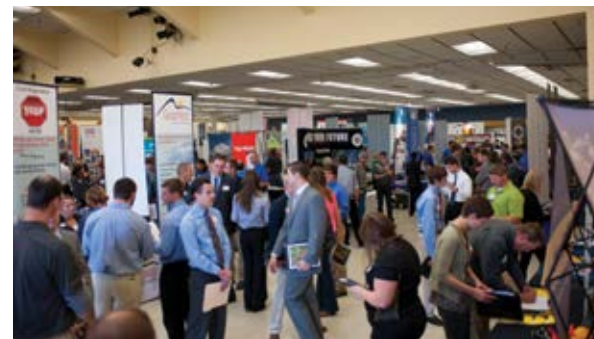
A typical Montanan might dress for a winter day in a long-sleeved shirt, covered by a sweater and a coat. You will definitely want a coat for the evenings. Close-toed shoes or boots, warm thick socks, a hat, gloves, and jeans or pants will provide plenty of warmth. Some people will wear thermal underwear below 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 other international associations, please visit our website [montana.edu/engagement/organizations](http://montana.edu/engagement/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 based on country, culture and language.
- We encourage you to reach out to the various clubs that interest you. Joining clubs is a great way to meet other students, learn more about your interests 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  
invite you to join our academic community.**



**MONTANA  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Office of International Programs**

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[montana.edu/international](http://montana.edu/international)