

Middlebury College

# International Student Pre-Arrival Guide

Information for New International Students  
(including Exchange Students and U.S. Students Living Abroad)  
entering Middlebury College during  
Academic Year 2025-2026





**This Pre-Arrival Guide provides information about:**

*Orientation and the International@Middlebury pathway, the I-20 Application Process (for students who need visa support), ISO Welcome, the Friends of International Students (FIS) Host Program, FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions, Travel to Middlebury College and Action Items.*

*This guide is current as of March 2025. As we confirm details about the opening of school, ISSS will update our website with information about our programs and offerings.*



# Upon Arrival – Opening of School Programs

International students, including exchange students and U.S. students living abroad, begin their Middlebury experience with a series of programs run by various offices at the College. Some of the programs are optional, and some are required. International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) highly recommends that international students attend all the available opening of school programs. For students arriving in F/J status, your participation is expected. In the past, students have shared with us that while they were hesitant to attend all programs at first, they were thankful to have done so because it allowed for a more gradual and thorough introduction to life in the U.S. and at the College. This section of the guide outlines the programs that we offer.

## Orientation and the International@Midd Pathway

Orientation for new students offers a tailored pathway for international students (International@Midd), and covers specific topics such as your U.S. visa status and responsibilities, student employment, cultural adjustment, U.S. taxes, and more. We also share information about academic and campus resources to help you make the most of your experience at Midd. Students engage with orientation leaders who are student volunteers who will guide small group discussions and are a valuable resource to you. Participants also enjoy organized and informal social activities.

We require all international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa to participate in the International@Midd pathway of Orientation and we welcome all other international students to join us as well, regardless of citizenship. To learn more about the Fall New Student Orientation, visit <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/student-life/new-student-guide/orientation/fall-new-student-orientation>.

## Students arriving in February

International students enrolling in February (also known as “Febs”) arrive on campus before the start of spring semester for Feb Orientation. Orientation leaders, student volunteers, lead small group discussions and provide support to students arriving to Midd. During Feb Orientation, ISSS offers important sessions aimed at addressing key topics that affect international students, such as maintaining status as a student visa holder, academic and campus resources, and student employment. For more information about Feb Orientation, visit <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/student-life/new-student-guide/orientation/feb-new-student-orientation>.

FEB 2024 Orientation Leaders with ISSS



# Applying for an I-20

To enter the United States in a status that allows for study, non-U.S. citizens and non-Legal Permanent Residents of the U.S. must obtain a Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant (F-1) Student Status) issued from the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). For Middlebury College to issue your Form I-20, you must complete the Academic Year I-20 Application webform available on the ISSS website. More information is available at our ISSS “Student Visa Information” website: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/students/student-visa-information>. In addition, ISSS will notify deposited international students in late Spring when the I-20 application period opens; application instructions will also be provided at that time.

*Please note: Citizens of Canada and Bermuda* need an I-20 and a valid passport; they do NOT need to apply for a visa at a U.S. Consulate. Instead, these citizens only need to present their valid I-20 and passport at the U.S. port of entry to enter the country in F-1 status.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen or non-U.S. Legal Permanent Resident and do not need an I-20 or F-1 visa, please notify ISSS. If possible, and if you have not done so already, please provide us with a copy of any pertinent visa status or immigration documents so that we can update your records.

If you are currently (or just finished) studying in the U.S. in F-1 status, please contact ISSS before submitting your I-20 application, as special procedures will apply for your circumstances (SEVIS transfer process).

**September Entrants:** As soon as ISSS opens the I-20 application period, we encourage you to submit your I-20 application ideally **no later than June 1**. We will notify deposited international students of the application period in late Spring. It is our goal to begin issuing I-20s for new students who have submitted their enrollment deposit within 3 weeks of their completed I-20 application submission.

**February Entrants:** As soon as ISSS opens the I-20 application period, we encourage you to submit your I-20 application ideally **no later than November 1**. By mid-November, if not sooner, we will begin issuing I-20s for new students who have submitted their enrollment deposit.

*Note: We know students are eager to obtain their SEVIS ID number to schedule a visa appointment. If you believe you have extenuating circumstances impacting the applicable timeline, please email ISSS ([iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu)).*

When ISSS provides the Middlebury College I-20 to you, we will also provide specific instructions about the next steps. This email will also include guidance about how to pay your I-901 SEVIS Fee (at least 3 days before your visa interview) and schedule a visa appointment at a U.S. embassy or consulate (ideally in your home country). U.S. embassies continue to have authority to waive in-person interviews for certain nonimmigrant visa categories, on a case-by-case basis for certain first-time and/or renewing applicants.

In the meantime, we recommend that you check the website of the U.S. Consulate nearest you to learn more about the visa application process, including the process for making an appointment or waived in-person interview. For visa application guidance and wait times for obtaining a nonimmigrant student visa in your country, please see: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>.

Please note: **You may enter the U.S. in that visa status no more than 30 days before your program start date. Plan your travel accordingly.**

Upon receiving your Form I-20 from Middlebury College, plan to apply for a visa as soon as possible. Applying for a visa can take one month or more, depending on the country. If the consular officer subjects you to administrative processing, expect to experience a long delay (usually  $\geq 30$  days or more). **If you are unable to obtain a visa in time to arrive in Middlebury by your intended start date, alert ISSS as soon as possible because you may need to request a deferral to a future academic term.**

# to MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE from the ISO

Dear Newly Admitted International Students,

On behalf of the International Students' Organization (ISO), we are thrilled to welcome you to our vibrant international community at Middlebury! Although Middlebury is a small liberal arts college residing in a tiny, picturesque town in Vermont, our school possesses an outstanding global outlook. As international students and students with international backgrounds, you play a critical role, bringing unique perspectives, cultural backgrounds and personal experiences from every corner across the globe.

As Middlebury's International Students' Organization, our goal is to empower members of the community in order to cultivate a strong, open-minded and multicultural environment. Whether this is through cultural events and performances that highlight diverse traditions, or monthly tea gatherings where we discuss key global issues, the ISO invites students to engage with the global perspectives and experiences that brighten our college community. We are also dedicated to making Middlebury your "home away from home" through outings to must-see Vermont destinations and international menus in the dining halls. In this way, Middlebury truly is a small town with a global community. The ISO is here to make your transition to Middlebury as smooth as possible, and to support you throughout your next four years.

We are sure you will have many great options as you receive acceptance letters from the United States and around the world. In terms of academic rigor and prestige, Middlebury is comparable to any other highly selective institution in the United States, and its study abroad programs across the globe are second to none. There are many opportunities for academic, personal and professional development here. Most importantly, we are a welcoming campus full of smiling faces, where intimate relationships among students, faculty and staff members make you feel comfortable. It is now your turn to embark on this important journey. The ISO wishes you the best as you choose where to spend your undergraduate years. Please feel free to reach out should you have any questions, or if you would like to introduce yourself. Also, be sure to check out our instagram @midd.iso!

We hope to hear from you soon and to see you on campus next year!

Warmly,

**Middlebury College**  
**International Students' Organization**

*small town, global community*

iso@middlebury.edu • go.middlebury.edu/iso • midd.iso



## ISO Events



The ISO Show is an annual talent event very popular with students and the local community (above photo).

There is always a reason for a food festival, and ISO ensures the representation is vast (below photo LEFT)!



Calligraphy and other activities are sponsored by ISO throughout the academic year (above photo RIGHT).

ISO field trips allow students to experience local traditions (below photo).



## *Friends of International Students (FIS) Host Program*

Friends of International Students (FIS) Host Program, established in 2001, matches Middlebury College international, exchange, and U.S./multinational students with a host from the local area. Hosts may be individuals, couples, or extended families. Often our hosts have some ties to the College as alumni, faculty, or staff. Our hope is that you will form a friendship with your host that will last beyond your first year here at Midd.

The FIS host program experience begins with host and student information sessions so that ISSS can share detailed information about the program. Then, each student and host submit an informal questionnaire and tells us more about themselves and their expectations of the program. ISSS considers the information on the questionnaires and then matches students with hosts that have similar interests and expectations of the program. Ultimately, the program is what students and hosts make of it together. Some students meet up weekly with their host for activities or meals, while others meet periodically throughout each term. While we encourage all international, exchange, and U.S./multinational students to participate, the program is optional, and students are able to participate at any point during their time at the College.

To learn more about the FIS program, please visit: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/students/friends-international-students-program> . If you have questions, contact [ISSS](#).



# FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

## ***How can I find out important dates and vacations in the College calendar?***

You may consult the College calendar at <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/academic-calendars#section-2025%E2%80%932026-academic-calendar-tentative> . This is a proposed calendar and is subject to change, based on any adjustments that need to be made.

## ***When will I get my I-20?***

As soon as ISSS opens the I-20 application period, we will strive to issue visa-related documents within 3 weeks of our submission priority date or receiving a complete I-20 Application, whichever date is later. We understand students are eager to receive their documents. Students who studied in the U.S. and need to transfer their SEVIS record, or who deferred their entry and will enroll in the upcoming academic year also need to apply for an updated or new I-20. ISSS will issue I-20s as quickly as we can.

## ***How do I apply for an F-1 (student) visa?***

First, you must obtain an I-20 from Middlebury College (The I-20 Application Instructions will become available as soon as we open the I-20 Application period). Then, you must schedule an interview with a U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for the visa. To find the nearest location, visit <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

U.S. embassies are authorized to continue to waive in-person visa interviews on a case-by-case basis for certain first-time and/or renewing applicants. As a result, you may receive guidance from the U.S. embassy that does not require you to attend an in-person interview. You are encouraged to monitor embassy and consulate websites for more detailed information about this development.

We recommend that you check the consulate website, in advance, to learn more about the visa application process, including the process for making an appointment or for a waived in-person interview. F-1 visa holders may only enter the U.S. up to 30 days before their program start date. More information is available from the U.S. Department of State at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html> and on the Study in the States website at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>.

## ***How long will it take to get my F-1 (student) visa?***

Students may have a difficult time obtaining a visa appointment because some U.S. consulates have not resumed their full operations. In some cases, they may accept “emergency appointments” or “expedited appointments,” and in some places, a student visa may be considered under either category, so it is worth exploring. Visa wait times vary by country. For an estimate of current visa wait times at the embassy or consulate nearest you, please refer to the U.S. Department of State’s website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>.

For more information on visas to the U.S., visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html>.

## ***What fees do I pay with my visa application?***

You are responsible for paying the visa application and reciprocity fees, which vary by country. To learn more, see fees: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html> Reciprocity fees: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>

Prior to the visa appointment, you must show evidence that the SEVIS I-901 Fee was paid. With your I-20, ISSS will send instructions for paying the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) fee. For more information regarding the SEVIS fee, please see <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/>. Please wait for guidance from ISSS before paying the fee.



***When can I enter the United States using my new F-1 (student) visa?***

You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the program start date noted on your I-20 (see page 1).

Students wishing to enter the U.S. prior to the 30-day grace period must enter in another visa status, usually in “visitor” status as a tourist. Yet, individuals in tourist status may not enroll in courses full time. Therefore, you would need to change from tourist to F-1 student visa status before the start of the term, which would likely require departing the U.S. and re-entering. **We discourage this option.**

Changing from tourist to student visa status within the U.S. is not always possible, and can be time-consuming, expensive, and risky. We strongly advise you to enter the U.S. in F-1 student status within the 30-day pre-arrival period allowed by your I-20 to avoid this situation. If you have questions, contact ISSS in advance of your travels.

***Does Middlebury provide transportation from the airport?***

The College offers transportation service from Burlington International Airport, Middlebury Amtrak station, and Middlebury Bus stops to Middlebury on your designated arrival day. You may move into your Middlebury College room on your arrival Day—**no earlier**. *If you wish to arrive to the U.S. prior to that day, you are responsible for your own transportation and lodging.*

***Can I arrive early to Middlebury College?***

As a student intending to be in F-1 and J-1 status, you are required to arrive on Move-in Day and will have access to your Middlebury College room on that day. **Students cannot access their rooms prior to this date.** If you wish to arrive to the U.S. early, you are responsible for your own travel arrangements, food, and lodging. If family members accompany you, they will need to find off-campus accommodation. (View local off-campus accommodations at <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/admissions/visit-us/in-person-visits#lodging-and-restaurants>).

***Do I need to stay in my room on my first night?***

We expect students to participate fully in Orientation. Students must stay in their on-campus rooms beginning on Move-In Day.

***Do I need to bring the full amount of my family contribution with me?***

We highly encourage you, if you can, to have funds available via a bank or in hand. When Student Financial Services (SFS) calculates your financial need and determines if you will receive assistance, they consider the estimated total costs of your first year at Middlebury. This includes costs that the College applies to your student account bill as well as anticipated personal expenses. The comprehensive fee (tuition, room and board) and the student activities fee will appear on your college bill. Other expenses (such as books, supplies, personal items, clothing, and travel) are items that you will need money for throughout the year. You will need to have funds available to pay for those expenses when you make those purchases. While the College bill will be due before each semester begins, the other expenses will arise upon arrival and throughout the academic year. Additional expenses may also include health insurance, taxes and tax liability and food/lodging/travel during college breaks.

***Can I pay my enrollment deposit online?***

Yes. To learn more about paying your deposit online, please visit the Admissions website for newly admitted students: [http://www.middlebury.edu/admissions/admitted\\_students](http://www.middlebury.edu/admissions/admitted_students) (click on “Next Steps”).

***Can I pay charges on my college bill (i.e., tuition) through an electronic transfer of funds?***

Yes. Please contact Student Financial Services (SFS) by email at [sfs@middlebury.edu](mailto:sfs@middlebury.edu) for instructions.

***Does my enrollment deposit count towards my family contribution and my College bill?***

Yes. The deposit you submit to reserve your place at Middlebury will be applied to your college bill. It is part of your family contribution. (When completing the I-20 Application, if needed, you may provide evidence that the deposit was paid as financial documentation of that portion of your family contribution.)

***How can I buy the Middlebury College Student Health Insurance plan?***

We expect students to have a U.S.-based health insurance policy. For information on purchasing the Student Health Insurance from Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk, see the Student Health Insurance website at [http://www.middlebury.edu/offices/administration/vpfin/finance-office/bsnsvcs/student\\_insurance](http://www.middlebury.edu/offices/administration/vpfin/finance-office/bsnsvcs/student_insurance). Insurance through Gallagher Student Health costs an estimated \$2,500 per year, which includes medical evacuation and repatriation. You can find detailed information on the policy and how to register on the website noted above.

**\*\* Note: Health insurance fees are not included in the estimated total costs for Middlebury College. \*\***

***Where can I open a bank account?***

You will be able to open an account within the first several days you are on campus. For more information about banking in the U.S., visit our website at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/living-us>.

***Do I need to purchase a computer?***

Many students choose to have their own computer for convenience. Yet, it is not necessary to have one when you begin your studies at Middlebury. There are many computers available for student use on campus. If you would like to purchase a computer, detailed information regarding computer needs and costs is available at [http://mediawiki.middlebury.edu/wiki/LIS/Computer\\_purchase\\_guidelines](http://mediawiki.middlebury.edu/wiki/LIS/Computer_purchase_guidelines).

Under Middlebury College's software licenses, students may install and use certain software products on their personally owned computers. To learn more, visit <http://www.middlebury.edu/offices/technology/help/technology> or the technology resource page for students at: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/information-technology-services/requests/technology-helpdesk/what-students-need-know>.

***How can I buy a cell/mobile phone?***

We provide a basic overview about cellular phone service and mobile telephones at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/living-us>.

***When can I start working on campus?***

The Human Resources Office (HR) will share information about obtaining on-campus employment. Postings for academic year job openings may be found online beginning the first day of classes, with additional opportunities listed, as they become available. **For new F-1 students:** May begin work after they secure a position and once they complete the on-boarding processes. **For new J-1 students:** Will need written authorization from ISSS before they can begin working on-campus. Working on campus can begin as early as the first week of classes. Visit the HR Student Employment website - <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/human-resources/student-employment>.

Students will need to obtain a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) if they intend to work. For more information about the SSN application process visit <http://www.middlebury.edu/international/iss/taxes-social-security>.

ISSS recommends that new students plan to work only 5–10 hours per week (or less, depending on course load). The pay rate for student positions is about \$12-\$13/hour, depending on the position and your experience.

Students may also pursue on-campus summer employment and housing during the summer break. Summer contracts are usually due in mid-April. You can familiarize yourself with the Student Employment Office by visiting: <http://www.middlebury.edu/offices/business/seo>.

International students with visas (F-1 and J-1) are **not allowed** to engage in **off-campus** employment without prior authorization. This also includes some internships and other activities sometimes referred to as volunteer. Engaging in these activities without prior authorization could result in the loss of your good standing in the U.S. and disrupt your ability to continue studying at Middlebury. During International Pre-orientation, ISSS will discuss employment regulations and maintaining your visa status, as well as some of the off-campus employment authorizations available to you.

If you are ever unsure about a situation, please ask! Contact us at [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu).

### **Can you explain more about taxes and tax liability?**

All international students in a non-resident alien tax status are required to file tax forms with the U.S. federal government by mid-April each year, regardless of whether they earned source income during the prior tax year (January 1-December 31). Filing taxes means submitting documents, via mail or electronically, to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), to report income, calculate tax liability, remit payments and/or request refunds. The IRS, a bureau of the U.S. Department of Treasury and federal tax collection agency, helps individuals understand their tax responsibilities while also enforcing the law (i.e. pay your taxes or face penalties).

You can expect to pay taxes on income earned in the U.S., including wages from employment and a portion of your grants/scholarships from Middlebury College if you receive financial aid above the direct educational costs (tuition). The amount of tax you owe will depend on the amount of funds you earn/receive and the tax treaty (if any) between your home country and the U.S. Taxes may represent an additional expense of \$500, on average, per year. It is your responsibility to file your income tax forms annually and pay your taxes (if applicable) on time.

The Middlebury College Tax Office communicates relevant tax information to our international students. The Tax Office (and in a very limited capacity, the ISSS team) offer tax filing support before taxes are due each year. We contract with Sprintax, a tax preparation company, to provide a software program and resources to assist international students and scholars with filing their tax returns. For questions about taxes, contact the Tax Manager at [middleburytaxoffice@middlebury.edu](mailto:middleburytaxoffice@middlebury.edu).

### ***Can I talk to someone at Middlebury College from my country?***

There are students from over 75 countries at Middlebury College, so even if there is not a student from your country, there will certainly be someone from your region of the world! If you would like to connect with a current Middlebury student from your area of the world, contact the International Students' Organization (ISO) at [iso@middlebury.edu](mailto:iso@middlebury.edu).

### ***Does Middlebury College have a host family program?***

Yes. The Friends of International Students (FIS) host program is a hospitality program where international students have an opportunity to become friends with a local family through our matching process. Information about the FIS program is included in this pre-arrival guide. ISSS staff as well as student participants in the FIS program encourage you to participate. (To learn more, go to <http://www.middlebury.edu/international/iss/fis>).

### ***What ISSS sponsored events are offered?***

Dates are determined by semester. After the term begins, ISSS hosts a variety of gatherings and workshops on topics that may be of interest to you. Many international students find these events help them continue making a successful transition to life at the College. These are also great opportunities to reunite with your international classmates and ISSS. Watch for these opportunities on our ISSS Announcements website at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/announcements>.

# Still have questions?

For more information and answers to other questions you may have, please visit our website at: <http://www.middlebury.edu/international/iss>. You may also email ISSS at [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu).

## Travel to Middlebury College

We will offer transportation on Move-In Day via a bus service from Burlington International Airport, Middlebury Amtrak station, and Middlebury Bus stops to Middlebury College.

**The transportation service will only be available at set times on the designated Move-In Day. More information will be sent about this service during the summer (and in December for February entrants).**

- The Burlington International Airport code is BTV.
- The Middlebury Amtrak station code is MBY. See location - <https://www.amtrak.com/stations/mby.html>
- If you are unsure about scheduling your arrival for Move-In Day, please contact us at [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu) **before** you book a flight (or book a changeable flight).

You will receive more information about requesting transportation to campus and confirming your travel itineraries via email from ISSS during the summer for September entrants (and in December for February entrants).

International students studying at Middlebury on an F-1 (student) or J-1 (exchange student) visa are eligible to enter the country up to 30 days before their program start date. If you choose to arrive in the U.S. earlier than on your designated move-in day, you will be responsible for your own food and lodging during that time.

Contact us at [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu), if you have any questions about your travel logistics.



## Action Items:

Learn more at:

<https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/students/iss-pre-orientation-middlebury-college>

<https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/students/student-visa-information>

### September Entrants:

- ✓ I-20 Application – Opening of I-20 Application period, ideally by June 1
  - ✓ Travel Plans – submit by mid-July (highly recommended)
  - ✓ International@Midd Pathway Acknowledgement by June 01
- ✓ Submit FIS host program questionnaire (optional/watch for invitation)

### February Entrants:

- ✓ I-20 Application – Opening of I-20 Application period, ideally by November 1
  - ✓ Travel Plans – submit by early January (highly recommended)
- ✓ FEB International@Midd Pathway Acknowledgement by November 01
- ✓ Submit FIS host program questionnaire (optional/watch for invitation)

## International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

Middlebury College-ISSS  
14 Old Chapel Rd (Service Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753 U.S.A.

Phone: 802.443.5858 | Email: [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu)  
Web: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services>  
Instagram: middiss







**Congratulations on your acceptance to Middlebury College!**



**We look forward to you joining us...**



**and your participation in International@Midd!**