Countdown to Chicago!

PRE-ARRIVAL COMMUNICATION FOR NEW UIC INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Office of International Services, and many UIC offices, will be closed for winter break starting the afternoon of Friday, Dec. 21, 2018. OIS will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019.

THIS WEEK: WHAT TO PACK & FIRST FRIENDS

While you may not be packing your bags quite yet, it’s helpful to start thinking about what you will bring to Chicago and what you should leave at home. You’ll want to pack lightly – only bring luggage that you can carry on your own!

What should I bring?
For clothing, you’ll want to consider the weather upon your arrival in Chicago. Daily temps in January and February reach 30 - 40 °F (0 - 5 °C) but weather can change quickly and the wind chill factor can make it feel much colder. Plan to bring, or quickly purchase, a warm coat, hat, gloves, and scarf. Warm, waterproof boots are also essential to keep your feet warm and dry while you initially explore UIC and Chicago.

What should I NOT bring?
If you don’t already own a heavy winter coat, you can save luggage space by purchasing it upon arrival. Just don’t arrive without some type of coat! There are many department and designer discount stores along State Street and the Goodwill Store at 1201 West Washington Boulevard offers second hand clothing at low prices. You can also find many spices and international food items at local stores so only pack those tasty treats you are certain won’t be available away from home. Supplies for your new dorm room or apartment can also be purchased after your arrival at close-to-campus stores such as Target or during OIS’ Shopping Trip to Gurnee Mills!

What about medicine and prescriptions?
It’s a good idea to have full medical, dental, and eye check-ups before your departure so that you can get prescriptions updated and filled at home. Visits to the doctor can be expensive in the U.S. and may not be covered by insurance. However, bring your prescriptions with you so that you can obtain a refill in the U.S. and answer any questions at customs, if needed.

What should I pack in my carry-on bag?
You’ll want to keep certain items in-hand during your trip to the U.S. such as your immigration documents, travel confirmation numbers, proof of health insurance, contact information for UIC, emergency contact back home, and the location where you will stay upon arrival. You’ll also need to consider how you will pay for initial expenses. It’s unwise to carry large sums of cash (over $200 USD) when traveling so you may want to consider carrying travelers checks or a debit card. Connect with your bank before departure to confirm that your debit card will work in the U.S. to withdraw cash from an ATM.
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FIRST FRIENDS
Would you like to connect with a current international student at UIC? First Friends is a program where new UIC international students are paired with current UIC international students and encouraged to email/chat/message questions they may have about the various aspects of living in Chicago and studying at UIC. Sign up today!

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION
If you haven’t already, review the International Student Orientation schedule of events and confirm your participation by registering online.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
Send specific questions to our New International Student Team at newintl@uic.edu or give us a call at +1 (312) 996-3121. Or, if you’re already in Chicago, feel free to visit us during Open Advising.

Check out previous Countdown to Chicago pre-arrival communications along with additional arrival resources on the OIS website.