

# Fighting Illini Handbook

# 2021

Your personal guide to getting started at  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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# Introduction

Dear incoming Illini,

Warmest welcomes and congratulations on being admitted to UIUC, and taking that first step into the next phase of your life!

For most of you, this would be the first time you are studying overseas, away from your family and the familiarity of home. It may seem terrifying to be in an unknown foreign place “on your own” but fear not, we hope to be your home away from home - forging closer ties with you and helping you adapt to the new environment. We are sure that in time to come, you will grow to love the U of I as much as we do, and take pride in being part of the Fighting Illini!

To ease your transition into the new culture and community, SSA has compiled general information and useful tips about the university and life in Urbana Champaign (aka “Chambana”) in this little booklet. We also hope that this booklet will facilitate your whole process of settling down in a foreign land – from the preparation back home all the way to the first few weeks of school. Feel free to approach any of the friendly and helpful seniors if you have any further questions or doubts.

We are glad that you have chosen to join our university and we want to help you get adapted and immersed in the Chambana community. Get ready for a wonderful college experience filled with countless memories that you will treasure for years to come!

Once again, welcome to UIUC! :)

Your friendly seniors,  
Singapore Students Association  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

# Pre-Departure

## College Related Matters

1. Ensure that the “certified true copies” of your academic transcripts have been mailed to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as soon as possible. Your JC/High School may have already done it on your behalf. The deadline is July 1, 2021<sup>1</sup>.
2. Claim your NetID and set the online passwords. Your NetID is a username assigned to you that is unique across all University of Illinois campuses. It serves as your login to many university computing and networking services, and also determines your University email address, which is <netid>@illinois.edu. You will receive instructions for claiming your NetID and setting your passwords.
  - NetID: <https://netidclaim.illinois.edu>
3. Check your school email at <https://outlook.office.com/> to see if the school has sent you any important information (sign in with <netID>@illinois.edu and password).
4. Apply for housing online at <http://www.housing.illinois.edu/apply-now>  
You will need your NetID to apply for housing.
  - a. If you are a graduate student and/or above 21 years of age at the time of registration, you may skip this step. However, freshmen are recommended to live in university housing.
5. Sign up for [Summer Registration](#). This is the period you talk to an advisor online and register for your classes for Fall 2020.
6. Ensure you get [these documents](#) at least 2 weeks before departure.
7. Prepare your bank transfer setup so that you can quickly transfer money to your US bank account once set up. All options take a couple of days to process, so carry some USD on hand and activate your existing debit/credit cards for overseas use.
  - a. Bank wiring is simplest, but also most expensive (~\$50)
  - b. [TransferWise](#) is a reputed borderless transfer service (~\$5)
  - c. Online stock brokers ([IBKR](#), [TD Ameritrade](#), etc) also provide borderless bank transfer services. Deposit your SGD into your platform of choice, convert it to USD, and withdraw the cash into your US bank account. **Note:** you will need about 1-4 weeks to set up a brokerage account. Cheapest option (~\$0-5).

Note: UIUC Fall 2020 first day of classes is 23 Aug, 2021

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.admissions.illinois.edu/FAQ/admitted-freshman>

# US Student Visa

Check the [UIUC SSA website](#) for more information. Under the "resources" tab, the document titled "[visa and immunization information](#)" contains the steps and details of the application process. Try to get this done at least 2 months before your departure (so June 2021) in case of complications! Remember that you must arrive on campus by the "no-later-than" report or start date indicated on the I-20 (full time students) or DS-2019 (exchangees).

The I-20 and DS-2019 are official U.S. Government forms, issued by the school, which a prospective nonimmigrant student must have in order to get a visa. These forms act as proof-of-acceptance and contain the information necessary to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee, apply for a visa or change visa status, and be admitted into the United States. [More information here.](#)

# Medical Check-Up

1. See a doctor to fill in the McKinley Health Center Immunization and Medical History Forms, as well as the TB screening form. This can be done at most clinics. Also, please bring along your health booklet and any other medical records (especially for vaccinations).

Instructions: <http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu/General/admission.htm>

2. Some vaccinations are optional. You can check with your doctor or visit the Traveler's Clinic at TTSF for advice on vaccinations i.e. seasonal flu. Chicken pox vaccination is advisable if you have not contracted it before.

# Transport to UIUC

Buses from Chicago O'Hare Airport (ORD) (~\$30):

- [Peoria Charter serves](#) many different locations including Bloomington Airport as well as Chicago O'Hare. [Recommended for good price and trusted service!](#) Costs \$35 per person.

- Greyhound has daily service between downtown Chicago and Champaign. While prices may be cheaper, we recommend going with Peoria Charter the first time as their drop off points are much closer to University housing and service in general is better.
- EAC Shuttle provides service between Chicago (O'Hare) and Champaign-Urbana. Again, Peoria is recommended.

Departures from O'Hare are from the International terminal (Terminal 5) or the shuttle center. Check to ensure you are waiting at the correct location. It may take a while for you to pass through the US immigrations (1-3 hours total) so take that into consideration when you book the bus. Also, some companies require you to book tickets using American debit/credit cards so contact any SSA member if you have any difficulties in doing so.

- Amtrak Train from downtown Chicago Union Station to downtown Champaign (<http://www.amtrak.com>)
  - Not advisable as it is highly inconvenient, especially as you are arriving into the U.S. for the very first time with sizable luggage.
  - It is comfortable though, the seats are bigger than a typical bus seat.
  - To take the Amtrak:
    - Take Chicago metro to Union Station as Amtrak station is in downtown Chicago (45-60min)
    - Buy tickets and take Amtrak. Tickets are about 15-30 USD. Amtrak journey is 2-2.5h.
    - Upon arrival at Champaign, take a public bus to get to the campus (5 East (Green) or 1 South (Yellow)). Check out the schedule and route-maps: <http://www.cumtd.com/routeschedules/>

**From Willard Airport (CMI), the airport that serves UIUC:**

- Walk North to the Walmart and take 1 North Yellow. Google Maps says it'll take about 1.5 hours.
- Use the Uber/Lyft app to call for a ride down to campus.
- Contact the seniors to ask for help (contact List at the end of this booklet)

# Important Documents

Please pack these important documents in your hand-carry bag. Do bring along copies of all these documents and keep them separate from your originals. You may notice a big overlap with the documents you need to bring to your visa interview, so keep them safe after the interview for convenience.

1. I-20
2. Passport + US Visa (printed in passport)
3. Offer of Admission
4. Physical copy of bus ticket (ensure bar-code clearly visible, *Suburban Express* tends to be picky about such things)
5. Medical check-up form
6. Personal medical records
7. Proof of financial support (2 copies at least - you never know how many you need). You can get these from the bank or from your scholarship provider.
8. **(Unique to Fall 2021)** A printout of your registered classes for Fall 2021 with their locations. You may be asked for this at customs.
  - a. Can be obtained from Self-service -> Registration & Records -> Enhanced Registration -> Class Schedule -> Fall 2021
9. Fighting Illini Student Handbook 2021 :)

# COVID Pre-departure Test & Vaccine

As of May 29th, you are required to have a **negative** PCR (Polymerase chain reaction) COVID test result no earlier than 1-3 days before your date of departure to the US, *regardless* of vaccination status. There are many places to obtain a PCR test. One such place is the [Doctor Anywhere clinic](#). This will run you about SGD\$160.

It is in your best interest to be fully vaccinated by the time you depart for the US. You reduce the risk of contracting COVID during travel, and you can exempt yourself from the University's testing and quarantine requirements. Information on Singapore vaccine roll-out will be [updated here](#).

Here are some steps we recommend you take ASAP:

1. Submit your [early vaccination appeal form](#).
  - a. In this form, upload your Fall 21 class schedule showing in-person lessons (refer to [important documents](#)), your housing contract, and your I-20. These will serve as your supporting documents.
2. [Pre-register for the standard roll-out](#) as soon as possible. Even if the roll-out happens too late for you to get both doses, having at least one provides decent immunity for when travelling. Upon arrival, you can get your 2nd dose without issue.
3. Refer to [this guide](#) on what to do depending on which stage of vaccination you will be at when you arrive.

# **Miscellaneous**

- The University will sign you up for health insurance if you do not have one. Please kindly inform them if you do not wish to take up their health insurance. Getting health insurance is a UIUC requirement. See <http://si.illinois.edu/> for more details.
  - *You can choose not to take up the insurance plan offered by the university. You will need to fill up a waiver form, which can be found in the link above.*
- **Extend Your Passport.** For the NSmen, do visit [www.ns.sq](http://www.ns.sq) to apply for your Exit Permit. There is no need to apply for deferment/disruption unless you have an upcoming mobilization or ICT. Disruption will be granted upon approval of your application for exit permit. However, to be sure, please enquire with CMPB. Recommended to do so *before* applying for a US visa.
- **Textbooks For Classes.** Once you've confirmed your schedule, **check with seniors what books you will need.** Sometimes, books may not be used in the course often despite being listed on the course syllabus. You can also choose to purchase your required books in Singapore, as books in Singapore (e.g. from the NUS Co-op) can be much cheaper. You can also check out <http://www.illinibookexchange.com/>, which is a website where you can get used textbooks from other students. Otherwise, there are also bookstores on campus, namely the Illini Union Bookstore.

# **Summer Registration**

Summer Registration is a mandatory program for all incoming students. As an international student, you are given the option of meeting an academic advisor and registering for classes online in June/July. You can meet an advisor on campus in August later if you want to.

Remember to complete your college homework and any required placement tests (such as AP credits or A levels) 2 weeks before your registration date.

Placement tests are relatively easy so you don't need to be mugging terribly hard for this. Try to get it done ASAP.

## **Online registration:**

- a) In an email sent out by the academic advising office, there is a link to a page where you can sign up for a registration date. We advise you to choose the earliest day so as to get all your classes before they fill up. A date in early June would be ideal. Check your admitted checklist for instructions.<sup>2</sup> If you can't find the link, it is available on this page:  
<https://admissions.illinois.edu/Apply/Admitted/summer-registration>
- b) Your academic advisor will contact you directly via the email address that you listed on your admissions application with further instructions for your advising appointment. You can expect this email one to two weeks before your registration date. Make sure you check this email account regularly and look for emails that may have been sent to your spam folder. All communications will come from an official university email account (@illinois.edu).
- c) This email will include details on when your specific advising time will be and how you will "meet" with your advisor. Some departments will advise you through a web-based meeting software program called Elluminate. Other departments will advise you through online chat, email or other forms of online communication.
- d) If you do not meet your advisor, you will not be able to register for classes.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://admissions.illinois.edu/Apply/Admitted/checklist-fall>

## **August registration:**

- e) Typically takes place during the week before the start of the fall semester
- f) You will receive a notification of where and when to meet your advisor, so be there as stated.
- g) The on-campus August registration session allows you to meet the academic face to face and have your questions answered. The academic advisor will also guide you through the registration process
- h) **However, this leaves you at high risk of not getting desired classes, getting classes with terrible timings, or having a limited choice of classes.**

Talk to the academic advisor assigned to you during the summer registration (REQUIRED to remove registration holds), and especially to your seniors, then register for classes. However, DO NOT trust everything that the advisor says, some of them may not be aware of your A-level credits and try to make you sign up for classes that you already have credit hours for. Do talk to your seniors, they will be able to help you better with regards to courses you will need to take. A list of seniors who have offered to be contacted is attached at the end of the handbook.

- For a step-by-step guide on how to register for classes, go to <http://registrar.illinois.edu/registration-procedures> or just ask any senior
- Take note of any passwords that may be assigned to you during the summer registration, these will be used for online registration.
- Class schedules: <https://courses.illinois.edu/>

## **Proficiency Tests**

Not to be confused with placement tests (see above), these tests are basically “jump start” tests. You get credit hours for the course if you pass the test but no grade recorded on your transcript. It basically doesn't count towards your GPA but helps you to graduate faster.

Check

<https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/placement-proficiency/proficiency-testing/subjects-with-proficiency-exams> for more information on deadlines to register as well as whether the department offers proficiency tests for the course you're enrolled in. There are also various other proficiency tests offered by the respective departments, such as Mathematics and Physics. Course notes can be found online but you are **strongly encouraged to contact the seniors** (page 30) for more details.

# Credits

Taking the A-Levels and the IB Programme for some subjects allows you to claim credits for some required courses for your major in UIUC. Do factor these credits into your course planning so that you can figure out your plan for the years ahead without spending unnecessary time on courses which you did not need to take in the first place.

## A-Levels

Below is a table listing out the classes you get credits for if you took the subjects at the A-Levels. Do note that this is not an exhaustive list. [That can be found here instead](#). Check with your advisor to see if any other subjects qualify for credits.

A-Level Subject	Credits Obtained For
H2 Biology	IB 150, MCB 150
H2 Mathematics	MATH 220
H2 Physics	PHYS 211, PHYS 212
H2 Chemistry	CHEM 202, CHEM 203, CHEM 204, CHEM 205
H2 Economics	ECON 102, ECON 103

## IB Programme

Below is a table listing out the classes you get credits for if you took the subjects through the IB Programme. Do note that this is not an exhaustive list. [That can be found here instead](#). Check with your advisor to see if any other subjects qualify for credits.

IB Subject	Credits Obtained For
HL Mathematics	MATH 220, STAT 100
HL Physics	PHYS 101, 102
HL Chemistry	CHEM 102, 103, 104, 105
SL Business Management	BADM 1XX, HUM 1XX

Beyond A-Levels or the IB Programme, taking the SAT General Test also allows you to clear the credits for **RHET 105** provided you get a score of **at least 710** in the **Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) section** of the test.

# Post-Arrival

## Customs and Immigration

At the US customs (your first port-of-call in the US), make sure that the CBP officer has stamped clearly as well as signed in the space on the stamp. This will help avoid future immigration/work permit problems. Your arrival information will be recorded on a form called I-94, which is now recorded *electronically*. You can retrieve it from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> under the "Get Most Recent I-94" tab.

*Note: Confused about first name and last name when you are filling in the immigration forms? Look at the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) of your passport (located at the bottom of your Passport's bio page, containing a bunch of << arrows. Picture below). The part of your name that appears first on the top row (after SGP) is your last name. Following this will be a "<<", and then your full first name, with each word separated by single "<"s. Some examples:*

Consider "Daniel Quek Yiliang"	
MRZ	...SGPQUEK<< DANIEL < YILIA NG <<...
Last Name	Quek
First Name	Daniel Yiliang
US Format	Daniel Yiliang Quek
Consider "Lim Yang Kiat, Dennis"	
MRZ	...SGPLIM<< DENNIS < YANG < KIAT <<...
Last Name	Lim
First Name	Dennis Yang Kiat
US Format	Dennis Yang Kiat Lim

*It is important to be consistent.*

New visas issued now only include first and last name, so you don't have to worry about middle name if you're asked for it on any form - just leave it blank.



## Machine Readable Zone (MRZ)

The MRZ Area of a passport, highlighted in the blue box.

You may need to declare the foodstuffs that you may have. Admissible food i.e condiments, honey, coffee, dried fruits, Milo, food mixes etc.

1. You need to declare the amount of cash you are bringing in if you are bringing in more than 10,000 USD. If you are bringing in a bank draft, do not sign bank draft.
2. Obtain a map of the University if you lost the one at the end of this handbook, this is very important in helping you navigate your way around the school.
  - Hard copies can be obtained from front desk of Illini Union (building I3 on the map)
  - Soft copies/Virtual map can be found at <http://illinois.edu/map/view> then click on "Printable Map(.PDF)". It is the first link on the right in orange.
  - Google Maps

# **Early Arrival & Moving In**

Move-in days for University Housing:

- Monday, August 16, 2021 starting at 9am for new residents of Living-Learning Communities who have registered for LLC orientation. You will not be charged early move-in rates for this.
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021 starting at 9am for the rest of the freshmen and transfer students.
- Returning students move in on Saturday, August 21, 2021.

If you're arriving prior to your designated move-in day, you may move-in as early as Sunday, August 16, 2021 at 12 noon. There are additional fees for moving in early. There is no need to call the university dorm to inform them about moving in early. The fees for moving in early are as shown below.

Check <https://housing.illinois.edu/Tools/move-in/early-arrival> for more details.

Move-In Date	Cost/Night	Notes
Sunday August 15, 2020	\$40.00	No meals on Sunday
Monday August 16, 2020	\$60.00	Includes 3 meals
Tuesday August 17, 2020	\$60.00	Includes 3 meals
<b>TOTAL</b> <i>If staying all days (Aug 16 to 19)</i>	\$160.00	Total 6 meals

You can refer to our reviews of Residence Halls under the 'Resources' tab on the UIUCSSA website (<http://www.uiucssa.com/resources/>).

**(Specific to Fall 21)** You [may be required to quarantine](#) for 7 days if you are not fully vaccinated. For those living in University Housing, you may be asked to move to a separate quarantine unit to serve your quarantine. Keep a lookout for mass mails regarding this. If unsure, contact University Housing.

If you are arriving even earlier than the earliest move-in for dorms, there are hotels/motels/inns to stay in first:

CHAMPAIGN	URBANA
TownePlace Suites	Hampton Inn
Baymont Inn	TraveLodge
Hawthorn Suites	
Hilton Garden Inn	
Homewood Suites	
i-Hotel	
La Quinta Inn	

Bookings can be made by calling directly or via the following websites:

- [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)
- [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)
- [www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)
- [www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com)
- [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)
- [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com)

You may also consider [Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.com), or ask around if anyone is willing to host you!

# **COVID Policies**

You may refer to [this guide on](#) what to do depending on your vaccine status.

## **Testing & Building access**

Once you are on campus, you are required to test for COVID at least every 4 days if you are not fully vaccinated\*. This is critical for your building access privileges. If you do not test for more than 4 days in a row, you will lose building access, which means you will not be allowed to attend in-person classes/lectures. Professors will not excuse your absence because of this. Furthermore, if you consistently fail to keep up with your testing schedule, you risk facing disciplinary action in the form of a 2 year probation. Not worth it!

Download the [Safer Illinois App](#) once you arrive. This will give you access to your test results, testing locations, and building access status. You will need to show the front page of this app to get access into buildings.

\*If you are fully vaccinated, upload your vaccination records to [MyMcKinley](#) to be exempt from testing (subject to change). If not done, you MUST continue to test as usual.

## **Isolation and Quarantine**

If you happen to test positive, you will receive a call by [Champaign-Urbana Public Health District](#) (CUPHD) using phone number 217-531-XXXX. You will be put into isolation. For those living in university housing, you will be moved to an isolation unit for a minimum of 10 days. Be sure to pack what you need. You will be called by CUPHD once your isolation ends. You may also receive calls from the University (phone number 312-777-1999) for purposes of contact tracing. Be sure to respond and answer truthfully.

If you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, you may be placed in quarantine for 7 days. CUPHD or University housing will contact you. If you do not receive the call, you do not need to quarantine.

## **Getting Vaccinated**

Vaccines are readily available in Champaign. If you need to get vaccinated, look out for mass mails [regarding vaccine availability in McKinley](#). If McKinley is not offering or doesn't have the vaccine you need, you may check [CUPHD's website](#) for other clinics. If you are looking to get your 2nd dose, be sure to call to check for the correct vaccine.

# College Admin Matters

1. **Complete the virtual check-in** (<https://sunapsis.illinois.edu/>) before heading down to the International Students and Scholars Services to register your student records. Check out the link below for more information:
  - <http://issss.illinois.edu/students/incoming/checkin/>
2. **Apply for the all-important I-card.** It allows you to **take buses for free**, since the school fees that you pay have already included the cost of the bus services. To apply for the I-card, go to the ID Center, which is located on the 1st floor of Illini Union bookstore (Corner of Wright and Daniel Streets). The opening hours are 9am – 5pm, Mon – Fri. You will have your photograph taken and card printed on the spot. Do note the formatting of your name i.e. first/last name. Be consistent when filling out forms to avoid complications on registration day. Temporary booths for I-Card processing may also be at the Illini Union during the international student check-in period. Most importantly, you **MUST** present your admission letter and passport to obtain your I-Card.
3. **Go for Tuberculosis Screening and Immunizations**, or else you would be prevented from registering for classes in the future. To do so, Report to the McKinley Health Center (building M5 on the map), Immunization and Travel Clinic. Hours of screening are 8am to 4.30pm on weekdays excluding Thursdays. Temporary locations and special hours may also be set up during the check-in period. TB screening is \$30 (charged to student account), and immunizations can be covered by the student insurance. Remember to bring along your medical check-up forms, personal medical records and important identification documents.
4. **Update your address.** This is required by federal law and must be done within 10 days of moving-in. This is done via U-I Integrate. Instructions are on the [ISSS website](#). You may do this step the moment your room assignment is confirmed.
5. Contact any SSA member (call, message or e-mail) if you need any additional help upon arrival in UIUC. The contact list is at the end of this booklet.

# **International Student Orientation**

You may choose to participate in International Student Orientation to make new friends, tour the campus, and complete College Admin matters listed above. However, we would recommend that you try to complete College Admin matters before the orientation to avoid the crowds. From our perspective, the best part of International Student Orientation are the campus tours, where your group leader will show you around the key buildings so that you do not get lost. (The campus is very big).

Link to International Student Orientation Info Page:

[https://issss.illinois.edu/students/incoming/orientation/ug\\_orientation.html](https://issss.illinois.edu/students/incoming/orientation/ug_orientation.html)

You should also have received an email from ISSS about International Student Orientation. Note that this is subject to change, depending on the COVID situation.

# Banking

Open a bank account as soon as possible to avoid long queues. Go to their websites and check them out or ask seniors for advice.

- PNC, Illini Union Bookstore (next to the ID Center)
  - Recommended for your first bank account, due to convenience and abundance of ATMs.
- Busey Bank, 614 South Sixth Street, Champaign
- Chase Bank, 201 West University Avenue, Champaign
  - Recommended for nationwide ATM/branch availability
- University of Illinois Credit Union, Illini Union

For credit cards as well. Note that you will need a Social Security Number (SSN) first, which comes when you get a job.

*Advice: apply for credit card (only if you have an SSN!) and build up credit history, as it will definitely come in useful in buying cars/applying for phone lines/many other things*

**Do note that banks usually require a US phone number in order to open an account.**

Banks sometimes offer freebies to entice you to open an account, but do read carefully to see if you need to maintain a minimum balance, pay a fee for international transfer of money, pay a fee for using ATMs overseas etc. Also think about where their ATMs are. Ask your seniors!

There are two types of accounts.

- Savings Account = higher interest. Money cannot be withdrawn out from this account. Money can only be transferred out of this account into checking account.
- Checking Account = lower or no interest. Checks and usage of debit card draws money from this account.

If you withdraw too much money from the checking account, the bank will automatically deduct your expenditure from your savings account. But at an extra cost! This is called an overdraft.

Some of us place all our finances in the checking account to avoid the hassle of managing two accounts. We just live with the lower interest rates (calculate how many tens of dollars you will “lose”). This is totally up to the individual’s preference.

# Telecommunications

In the U.S., there are two kinds of mobile networks: GSM and CDMA. Phones in Singapore are designed to run on the GSM network. As such, do not purchase a plan from Verizon or Sprint and use it with your phone from Singapore.

There is usually a telco fair during International Student Orientation at the Illini Union.

Major GSM companies are [AT&T](#) (att.com) and [T-Mobile](#) (t-mobile.com). AT&T generally has better coverage than T-Mobile, but it's also more expensive. Both offer family plans, where 2-5+ people sign on together and share a collective amount of data.

T-mobile offers an [international call plan, Stateside International Talk](#), that's \$15/month. It allows one to call international land-lines and mobile phones.

[Mint Mobile](#) is a popular GSM alternative to the major telcos. Plans range from \$15 to \$30 per month. We recommend going for the cheapest plan as we find the 4GB of monthly data is sufficient within school premises. Calls to Singapore are 1 cent per minute.

There are deals — such as H2O and Ultra Mobile — that offer pre-paid plans by the month. There is a ~\$20 plan where you get 1GB of data + free calls and messages to Singapore!

There is also [Google Fi](#), \$20/month, which includes: unlimited domestic talk and text, unlimited international texts, Wi-Fi tethering to use your phone as a hotspot, and access to cellular coverage in 170+ countries and destinations. Data use is prorated, at \$10 per GB of data (local & international). Since we are mostly on campus, you could easily limit your usage to only 1GB and only pay \$30 a month. Network is reliable and typically runs on T-mobile or Sprint. Officially supports Nexus and Pixel phones but can be made to work on other phones.

A 200.00 USD CASH deposit is needed for students without a SSN for AT&T. 100.00 USD CASH deposit per person for T-mobile. They will return it to you one year later with interest.

Prepaid is cheaper than family plan, can be suspended during absence up to a year. Check T-mobile or Virgin. No deposit required.

# Getting Around

1. Vehicles in the United States are left-handed drives, and are driven on the right.
2. Buses should stop at every stop where there are people. Flagging a bus is usually unnecessary and you may risk looking 'sua-ku'.
  - Use Google maps to check on the bus timing and route to your destination
  - Bring along your i-Card and show it to the bus driver to get free rides on any MTD bus service you take. The 1 Yellow, 10 Gold<sup>3</sup>, 12 Teal, 13 Silver and 22 Illini are the main buses you will be taking around campus. You don't have to show your I-Card for only these 4 services at bus stops within campus.  
You generally have to show your i-Card when you board a bus beyond the borders of campus.
  - You can take a copy of the MTD Bus Guide the first time you board a bus, and keep this guide with you. There is a stack of them near the front door (they're free!)
    - The bus guide has a map that shows all the bus routes and important locations around UIUC, such as Walmart, Marketplace Mall etc.
    - It also shows the timings of when the buses arrive at various places. The buses are fairly punctual.
    - Alternatively, search for bus routes and times on [www.cumtd.com](http://www.cumtd.com)
- Bus stops are marked by a sign that says "MTD BOARD HERE". These are not necessarily sheltered, and are usually just signage on lampposts.
  - NOTE: When you are out of campus (i.e. taking the bus to Walmart/Marketplace Mall, you may not always find these signs).



<sup>3</sup> 10 Gold only runs during the daytime.

- o The buses often stop along any intersection whenever the bell cord is pulled. If you want to find out where to wait for the bus, best thing to do is to ask a local or refer to the app.
- To “press the bell” in the bus, you have to tug at the yellow cord above the windows (pictured below), or press the red button on the vertical pole. Most, but not all junctions are bus stops.
- To get out of the back door, push against any of the vertical bars in the middle of the doors when the green light above it lights up. If it fails to open, holler politely to the bus driver that you need to alight. Alternatively, you can alight from the front door.
- There are plenty of free apps for both iOS and Android that allows you to check the timings for the buses and plan routes. Just search “CUMTD” on your app store and you will find many.



We recommend the apps ‘CU Buses’ or ‘Illini Bus’<sup>4</sup> for iOS, and ‘Transit’ or ‘CU Bus Guide’ for Android.



- In general, bus numbers, along with their routes and schedules, differ slightly between day and evening services. Example, 1N/S operates in the day and 100N/S operates at night. 22N/S operates in the day while 220N/S operates at night.

Note: There are different operating schedules during weekdays and weekends, day times and night times, semester and breaks.

#### **Directions to Meijers, Target, Walmart or Marketplace Mall:**

Meijers, Target (Prospect Ave), Walmart and Marketplace Mall are the larger shopping places. Meijers is good for groceries, Target and Walmart are hypermarkets with everything from clothes to household appliances. Marketplace Mall is what we usually think of as a “shopping mall”. To get there:

1. Public Transport (45min one-way)

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<sup>4</sup> <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/illini-bus/id537752264?mt=8>

- a. During the daytime on weekdays, go to the bus stop opposite Illini Union and take bus 2N Red. You can also take bus 1N Yellow from Transit Plaza (bus stop next to the bookstore)
  - b. In the evenings and on weekends, you can take the 100N Yellow or 2C/U Red.
  - c. To get back, just take 2S Red and/or 100S Yellow respectively.
2. ZipCar (15min one-way)
  - a. Zipcar is a pay-per-hour car rental service, ideal for quick trips. Cars are located on/around campus and it is more convenient than traditional car rental. Rental rates start at \$8.50/hr.
  - b. You can sign up for membership at [zipcar.com](http://zipcar.com) (be sure to indicate that you are a student at UIUC). They accept Singapore driving license. Annual membership fee is \$25. Do note that it takes some time for the application to process. You should also consider mailing it to a US address (Refer to contact list if you need assistance)
  - c. It is not recommended to rent a Zipcar if you intend to use it for more than 3 hours at a time.

**Directions to Far East, County Market, Target (Campustown) and Walgreens:**

These are on-campus supermarkets. Far East Grocery Store is an Asian grocery store and County Market is a supermarket selling all sorts of fresh and processed foods. To get to both, you can take the 12W Teal to 'Stoughton and Fourth' and walk.

The Target on campustown (Green St) is a smaller version of the one in Prospect Avenue, but does offer a decent selection. Take any bus that goes to the Illini Union bus stop and walk west on Green street, crossing Wright street.

Walgreens is more like a convenience store, selling beauty products, stationery and food. It's located right on Green Street.

Items sold here cost slightly more than their equivalent counterparts at Walmart or Target. If you can afford the time to go Walmart or Target, you would be able to save some money.

# **Printing & Photocopying Services**

- Housing Printers
  - University Housing Residents - USD0.07/page for Grey Scale, USD0.30/page for Color.
  - Others - USD 0.10/page for Greyscale, USD0.40/page for Color.
- Library Printers - USD0.10 cents/page for Grey Scale, USD0.40 cents/page for Color.
- Engineering Workstations (EWS) Printers - Purchase 50-paper blocks for USD4.00. EWS purchased pages can only be used at the College of Engineering labs. Each color page costs 4x the price of a black and white page (USD0.32). EWS printing charges printing per paper, not per page like other locations. Hence, a double sided printing will only be charged once in EWS, while it will be charged double for library printers or housing printers.
- Architecture & Art Library, Funk ACES Library (2nd floor), Music & Performing Arts Library (1st floor), Student Life & Culture Archives have free black and white photocopy machines.
- If you need to print or photocopy documents, head to the FedEx Office on Green Street. They provide very good quality paper, which might be useful for printing resumes and the like.

# **Mailing Services**

- The Post Office is located on the ground floor of Altgeld Hall (building A16 on the map). Enter Altgeld Hall through the west entrance, on the side facing Wright Street. It is particularly easy to get lost in this building.
- Just bring your mail or parcel to the post office and tell them where you want to send it to. The kind people there will advise you on what to do. They encounter many oblivious and lost (aka blur) students like us.

- For those in University Housing, your dorm's package pickup station also works as a courier service collection point (at least for USPS, UPS, and FedEx). Very useful if you want to return any online purchases.

## **Free Health Packs**

- You may pick up the following items at McKinley, Union basement Oasis health center, or the vending machine at the SDRP package pick-up station twice a semester:
  - Cold Care Products (decongestant, cough syrup, ibuprofen, lozenges)
  - Wound Care Package (bandages, gauze, etc.)
  - Protection (condoms)
- Bring along your i-card.

## **Off-Campus Housing**

You should decide and look for a place to stay in the next academic year by **October**. One option that most Singaporeans opt for is to find each other and live in apartments. There are also those who continue staying in dorms as well. There are many Property Management Agencies on campus to look for when you are finding apartments. You can ask any SSA members for help! (Contact List at the back of this booklet)

## **Dining on Campus**

Here's a non-exhaustive list of nice, common eateries. Feel free to approach the seniors and ask about other nice eateries. Chambana has quite a number of nice specialty restaurants. Meals can cost from 5 to 12 USD, with an average of 8 USD.

Honestly, this list is just a good-to-know list.

**Illini Union Basement:** (<https://union.illinois.edu/eat/illini-union-dining>)

This is a typical food court. It is convenient with only-average fast food, but it's cheap.

**West University Ave (3 minutes walk North of Green Street):**

- Dairy Queen

- Taco Bell
- Hot Wok Express
- Niro's Gyros
- Perkins Restaurant and Bakery
- Golden Wok (Singaporean-ish food)

**Goodwin and Oregon:**

- Food carts: Pandamonium Donuts, Cracked (Breakfast Eggs, Sandwiches)
- Espresso Royale (coffee chain, similar to Starbucks, opens till 12mn)
- Manolo's Pizza
- The Bread Company
- 710 (Korean Mart)

**Neil and Kirby (~10mins walk from Ikenberry Common dorms):**

- McDonald's
- Jarlings (Ice Cream Parlor)

**Green Street:**

- Cravings Restaurant (South-East Asian Cuisine, nice Malaysian uncle)
- A-Ri-Rang (Korean)
- C-U LaLa Noodles
- Cocomero Frozen Yogurt (Pay by weight)
- Subway
- Murphy's Irish Pub (Check out some of their daily (food) promotions)
- Joe's (Half-price burgers on Saturdays)
- Cracked (Tater tots, like the previous, just not a food cart)
- Evo Café (Good Chinese/Mala Food)
- Woori Jib (Korean, closed on Sundays)
- Cold Stone Creamery
- Potbelly's (nice sandwiches!)
- Mandarin Wok (Chinese and Dim Sum Lunch)
- Noodles & Co.
- Chopstix (Chinese food, mostly, for take-out)
- Chipotle (Mexican Fast Food)
- Lai-Lai Wok (Chinese, good)
- Burrito King (cheap Mexican)
- Sakanaya (Japanese, slightly more expensive)
- Dunkin Donuts (*99c (before tax) any size iced coffee/tea 3-6pm daily*)
- Pho Cafe (Thai/Vietnamese Kitchen)
- Latea (Bubble Tea)

- Kung Fu Tea (Bubble Tea)

**South Gregory Street (South of ISR, East of Krannert Center for the Performing Arts) aka Nevada (to us Singaporeans):**

- Basil Thai
- Mary-Anne's 24h Diner (awesome milkshakes, all-day breakfast)
- J.Gumbo
- Caffe-Bene
- Bab Plus (Korean food)
- Subway
- Rosati's Pizza
- Premium BBQ Chicken
- Ko-Fusion

**Downtown Urbana and Champaign:**

- Silver Creek (American food, Urbana)
- Courier Cafe (American food, nice burgers, Urbana)
- Sitara (Indian food, Urbana)
- Black Dog (Ribs, Locations in Urbana and Champaign)
- Dancing Dog (Vegan, Urbana)
- Radio Maria (Spanish/Mediterranean, Champaign)
- Jupiter's (American food, half price pizza on Tuesdays, Champaign)

## **Emergency Situations**

**Missing Luggage**

- Important: Keep the check-in luggage identification tag with you. It should be a small printed adhesive paper with a barcode, given to you when you check your bags in.
- Report to the airline counter with the identification number/tag and your luggage will be tracked accordingly

**Missed Flights**

- Talk to the airline about rescheduling your flight (they will almost always do this for you. Just think of a good reason.)
- Inform the party who will be picking you up and taking you to UIUC (be it seniors, OISA, etc.)

**Missed Amtrak**

- Call the company involved (Amtrak: 1800-872-7245) and explain to them the situation. In most situations, you will be placed in the next train.

### **Here by Yourself and Lost**

- Make your way to the Illini Union (ask around for directions, everybody knows where the Union is) and ask the front counter for help.
- Alternatively, contact a fellow Singaporean (contact list at the back of this booklet).

### **Late at Night, Not at Home and Scared of the Dark/Ghosts**

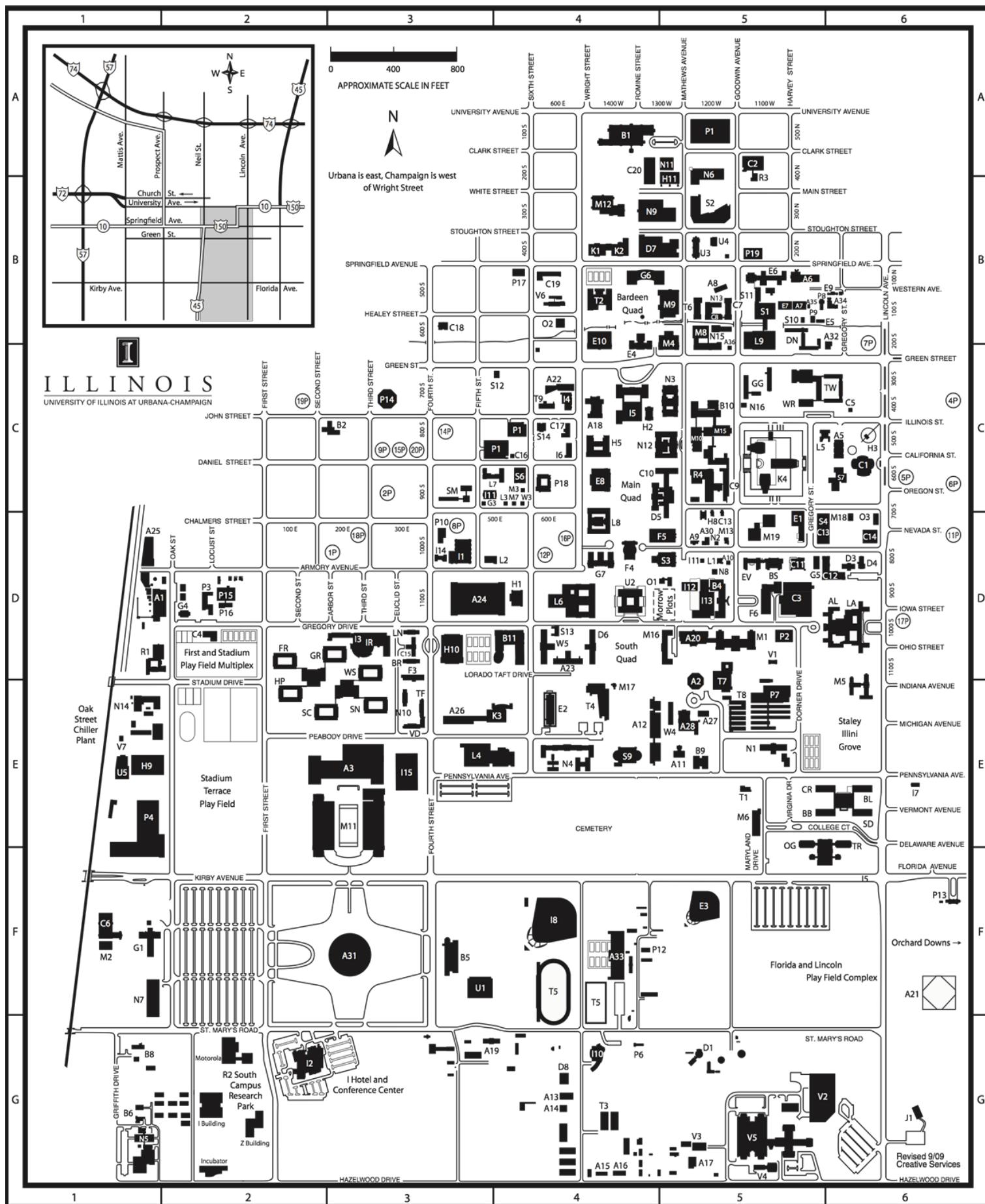
- Call SafeRides, a night ride service serving students and staff of the school. It is a free service and is in operation from 5.30pm to 6.30am 24/7. A van will pick you up and take you to the destination when you call 217-265-7433.
- There's also SafeWalks. Sometimes SafeRides closes during breaks, but SafeWalks should still be running.
- Alternatively, and the best solution for just about anything, contact a senior for help (contact list at the back of this booklet)!

# Packing List

Things to Consider Bringing	
Formal Wear (Suit with Court/Dress Shoes)	For career fairs and formal occasions. The first career fair is in September and is worth checking out.
Stationery	Assignments are usually done in pencil. It is difficult to find <b>Pilot &amp; Pentel mechanical pencils</b> here. Variety of brands may differ from Singapore, and your favourite brands might be more expensive.
Personal Medication	Consider bringing medication like Po Chai pills, charcoal pills, Panadol, etc. Reach out to us if you'd like to know the equivalent medication here.
Stapler	Staplers sold here are either tiny or huge, not the common finger-length ones found in Singapore. Note that staple sizes might differ slightly.
US Electric Plug Adaptors	<p>Plugs here have two flat vertical pins and use 110-120 Volts, 60Hz AC.          Make sure your devices accepts the above power rating (most do), or bring a transformer.          It is recommended to get an international adaptor with multiple plugs (so that you can use it in other countries as well).</p> 
Extension Power Strips	Useful if you have a few appliances with the 3-pin plug.
Jacket/Hoodie/ Cardigan	It starts to get chilly and windy at night in August. Imagine being in an air-conditioned room with the fan on.
Set of Old Clothes	Bring along a set of long sleeve shirt and pants you don't mind getting dirty. Paintball and hiking events are sometimes organized.
Ethernet Cable	Most Halls have Wi-Fi, but signal can sometimes be weak. Do consider/checking if your hall needs one. Note that hall ethernet in older dorms (South Ike, PAR, LAR, FAR) is restricted to 100Mbps download.
Winter Wear (Down Jacket, Boots, etc.)	Bring those you have from Singapore. Strongly not recommended to buy in Singapore beforehand.

Things Advised NOT to Bring	
A4 Paper/Files/ Hole Punchers	<p>US uses 'Letter'-sized paper. The dimensions vary slightly from A4.</p> <p>US also uses triple-ring files, so hole punchers are useless unless you bring your own files.</p>
Bed Linen/Pillow	<p>Not advisable to buy beforehand in Singapore since bed sizes might differ. Consider bringing a loose sheet instead.</p> <p>You may consider Walmart (opens 24/7). However, till stocks last, especially on the first day.</p> <p>NOTE: Bed size in Halls is "Twin XL"</p> <p>Alternatively, you can consider asking seniors. Your seniors have a few spare sets that they are willing to give out.</p>
Winter Wear	<p>Try to purchase these in US due to the following reasons::</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Waste of luggage space.</li> <li>2. Might not be warm enough for the cold weather in Illinois.</li> <li>3. Cheaper in the US. There are premium outlets here, and SSA intends to go to one as part of our annual Chicago Trip at the start of the academic year.</li> </ol>

# Campus Map





# Contact List

Here's the contact list for some of our members and their majors. Feel free to reach out to any one of us, at any time.

The fastest way to reach us would be by Facebook messenger or Telegram!

If you have questions that we can't answer, we'll be happy to convey your question to another SSA member who may be able to!

Name	Major
Ravyu Sivakumaran	Computer Science
Faith Tan	Computer Science
Megan Poh	Psychology
Advay Sudarshan	Mechanical Engineering
Yong Zhi Tan	Computer Engineering
Barnett Lee	Computer Engineering
Leck Kirk Shen	Aerospace Engineering
Lydia Ng	Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB)
Aryan Panigrahi	Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering (NPRE)
ZY Mor	Political Science