Greetings International Student,

Congratulations on your admission to Bowie State University! We are delighted that you have selected BSU and we welcome you to our growing global community. If you have not seen it already, I encourage you to enjoy our [CAMPUS TOUR VIDEO](#).

Aligned with the university’s strategic goals, our international community is a robust and central part of our [RACE TO EXCELLENCE](#). We look forward to the contributions of new ideas, values, beliefs, customs, and experiences to enrich our campus. You will find your time here rewarding both personally and academically.

As the University adjusts to the challenges of starting the semester during the ongoing global health crisis, please keep informed by referring to the university’s [COVID UPDATES](#). The Office of International Education & Services (OIES) is here to support you. I look forward to meeting you at the beginning of the semester and wish you a successful and enjoyable learning experience in Maryland.

Kind regards,

[Office of International Education & Services Team](#)

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I. PRE-ARRIVAL
Here are the basic things you need to know about & do before you arrive in the USA & to Bowie, MD:

1. Confirm Your Acceptance (Undergrad)

To confirm your acceptance go to website: Next Steps for Admitted Students

2. I-20 Requirements

Submit the following documents to Office of International Education & Services via: internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu so that we may create a Form I-20 for you

✓ Bank statement with official bank stamp or seal and signature of bank official in English or with translation
✓ Affidavit of Support (A notarized letter from person financially supporting – not required if you have a Financial Guarantee)
✓ Passport Bio Page
✓ International Residential Address
✓ Only Transfer Students from SEVIS approved schools should also submit:
  • Transfer In Form
  • Copy of most recent F-1 Visa

2a. I-20 Electronic Delivery ONLY

Due to SEVP Policy Guidance all I-20s are issued electronically sent to you by email.

Electronically issued I-20s can be printed and used for embassy and consulate verification, and for entry into United United States.

Once SEVP Policy Guidance is updated and/or university COVID policies permit full office access, we will update you.
3. Apply For A F-1 U.S. Visa

1. Pay your I-901 fee for SEVIS (mandatory for new international students): [https://www.fmjfee.com/](https://www.fmjfee.com/)

2. Schedule a visa interview appointment

3. Attend your visa interview with all required documents:
   a. A passport valid at least 6 months
   b. Form I-20 (signed by Bowie State University)
   c. Bowie State Admission Letter
   d. Completed visa application form
   e. SEVIS I-901 Receipt
   f. Visa Application (MRV) Receipt
   g. DS-160 Confirmation Page copy
   h. Proof of financial support
   i. Other documents as may be requested by the U.S. Embassy where you apply

4. Test Your Username & Password

   For services such as [Bowie Email, PeopleSoft, and Blackboard](https://www.fmjfee.com/), take time to configure and get familiarized with these services.

   If you have any difficulty accessing these services, contact Bowie State University's [Student Help Desk](https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/) for assistance

   Phone: 301-860-4357
   Email: help@bowiestate.edu

5. Make Housing Arrangements

   Visit the Office of Residence Life web section to access the application and more detailed information:

   [https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/](https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/)
Ib. PRE-ARRIVAL
CONTINUED...
THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

5a. Undergrad Apply For On-campus Housing

The application for campus housing can be found on the website under Housing and Dining:
https://bowiestate.edu/campus-life/housing-and-dining/

5b. Graduate Students Look & Apply For Off-campus Housing

Graduate Students are encouraged to find accommodations close to campus. Assistance with finding off campus housing can be found at: https://bowiestate.och101.com/

- Housing can take at least a week to secure.
- You should plan housing options prior to arriving in the US.

6. Child Care & Schools

You can find more information about local schools and childcare at the link below:

DC Public Schools: https://enrolldcps.dc.gov/

Prince George County: https://www.pgcps.org/registration/

Howard County Public Schools: https://www.hcpss.org/enroll/

ON CAMPUS HOUSING IS DESIGNATED BY GENDER:

- Male:
  - Dwight Oliver Holmes Hall
  - Lucretia Kennard Hall
- Female:
  - Harriet Tubman Hall
  - Towers Hall
- Co-Ed:
  - Alex Haley Residential Complex

**All student must secure temporary lodging prior to travel if you plan to arrive prior to campus housing opening.**
Ic. Packing List

**CONFIRM WHAT YOU CAN CARRY ONBOARD WITH YOUR AIRLINE**

**BE AWARE OF LUGGAGE WEIGHT & SIZE REQUIREMENT TO AVOID FEES**

**Carry On Luggage:**
- Passport with valid visa
- Airplane tickets
- Immigration/Entry document
  - (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Cash Money
  - (a small amount of cash will be useful until you open a U.S bank account)
- Traveler’s checks/ATM card/CreditCard
- A photocopy of your passport
- Medicine & any prescriptions that are required daily
- Your laptop and/or phone
- Snack foods for the trip
  - (must be eaten before landing in US)

**Checked Luggage:**
- Summer & winter clothing
- Personal toiletries
- Alarm clock
- Medical supplies & prescriptions
- Extra pairs of prescription glasses or contact lenses
- A few personal items
  - (to remind you of family & friends for your new place)
- Traditional clothing representing your culture
- Small items from home (souvenirs) for new friends
- Backpack
- Proof of Medical history & immunizations
- Transcripts from previous schools
- Home County Driver's License
- Warm Jackets/Coat/Gloves/scarfs
- Emergency contact information
- Comfortable boots/shoes
II. ARRIVAL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Airport Emergencies

If you have any difficulty with Customs & Border Protection while entering the country contact the Office of International Education & Services (OIES) so we can assist.

CALL or TEXT:
301-789-4620

EMAIL:
Internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu

2. Transportation from the airport

For convenient service that can accommodate your luggage, we recommend:

- BWI Airport Taxis
- Uber--mobile app
- Lyft--mobile app
- Super Shuttle

3. Mandatory Check-in

Once registered, you MUST send the following documents to the Office of International Education & Services:

- Your signed I-20
- Passport you entered the US with
- F-1 visa
- I-94

If these documents are not presented to OIES by February 5, 2021, a Registration Hold will be placed on your account.

DUE TO COVID-19 Restrictions you can Check-in electronically
IIa. ARRIVAL
CONTINUED...THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

4. Get a Bulldog Card

Your Bulldog Card is your student identification card. It is proof that you are a student & used when registering for classes, filling out financial aid applications, and attending campus events. Fill your card with Bulldog Bucks and Flex dollars.

To obtain a Bulldog card, go to BULLDOG CARD SERVICES Link. You must be registered for classes BEFORE being issued a Bulldog Card.

5. Sign Up for BEES Mobile Alerts

The BSU Electronic Emergency System (BEES) allow you get important campus-wide information by text. You can sign up at: https://bowie.omnilert.net/subscriber.php

6. Obtaining a U.S. Phone Number

A phone number is required for immigration compliance. You can gain access to a phone number by buying a SIM card with a prepaid plan from certain cell phone providers.

7. Health Insurance

All UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENTS are NOT required to have health insurance to register for classes, but it is highly recommended. We recommend you explore buying a health insurance plan using HealthCare.gov or using the following companies specifically for international students: Compass Student Insurance and ISO Insurance.
III. ORIENTATION & WORKSHOPS

1. New Student Orientation (NSO)

Log in to your Bulldog Connection student portal to register for New Student Orientation (NSO) and Academic Advising. Your username and login instructions are included in the acceptance letter you received in the mail or as an email. For assistance with your Bulldog ID or Password please email our HELP DESK at HELPDESK@bowiestate.edu.

2. International Student Workshops

F-1 BASICS: HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR STATUS

Tuesday, January 19th 9 am – 11 am
Monday, January 25th 1 pm - 3 pm
Thursday, January 28th, 11 am – 1 pm
Wednesday, February 3rd, 9 am – 11 am

REGISTER FOR ONE HERE

① Learn about all the new policies and procedures of the Office of International Education & Services,
② Receive guidance and information you need to maintain your F-1 Status
③ Get advice on how best to navigate campus services to meet your needs
IV. Scheduling Classes

1. Online Registration

Bulldog Connection is the student portal for your registration needs. You will need your pre-assigned username and password for access on: https://bowiestate.edu/bulldog-connection/index.php

2. Paying Tuition & Fees

Payment can be made on Bulldog Connection:

PAYMENTS PLANS ARE AVAILABLE!
Fees and tuition can also be paid here:

DATES YOU NEED TO REMEMBER:
Last day to ADD/DROP courses: February 5th, 2021

Last Day to Drop a Course WITHOUT a Grade Of “W”: February 19, 2021

3. Government Sponsored Students

➢ You must have a valid financial guarantee to be registered for classes and registered in SEVIS. If you do not have a financial guarantee your classes will be dropped and your SEVIS record will be terminated.

➢ Letters concerning confirmation of tutoring, online classes, and enrollment, can be requested at the Office of International Education & Services. Send your request by email to: internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu

➢ Transcripts serve as proof of registration & graduation. The Office of Records & Registration provides transcripts to students for their respective government requests; you can request your transcript here:
https://bowiestate.edu/about/administration-and-governance/division-of-enrollment-management/registrars-office/transcript-services.php
V. Getting Around

1. Transportation & Parking

DOWNLOAD CAMPUS MAP HERE

**Metro & MARC**
You can easily get to campus from DC and Baltimore and other surrounding areas. All of the information you need can be found at: https://www.bowiestate.edu/campus-life/student-services/commuter-resources/

**PARKING**
If you want to drive to campus you can find the rules for and application for parking on the BSU website

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AREA & CAMPUS SHUTTLE SERVICE:
The Bulldog Shuttle service is based on the Academic Calendar. View the schedule & routes before planning your commute from College Park, MD or Residence Halls

2. Obtaining A Driver’s License

If you want to obtain a driver’s license, you must visit or email the Office of International Education & Services (OIES) to obtain a Social Security Exemption Letter

3. Driving in Maryland & Receiving a State ID

- Driving in Maryland and getting a State ID - COVID-19 Updates: Please see MVA services during COVID-19 closures her https://mva.maryland.gov/Pages/covid-19.aspx All expiring licenses can continue to be used until the end of the state of emergency, as noted in the link above.
- Before going to the MVA (Motor Vehicle Association), it is imperative to email Internationaloffice@bowiestate.edu to make sure that your SEVIS record has been registered if you are a new student.
VI. Administrative Offices & Advice

- Division of Academic Affairs - Henry Administration Building, X 3417
- International Education & Student Services - Thurgood Marshall Library, X 3519
- Division of Student Affairs - Student Center, X3812
- School of Graduate Studies - Center for Business and Grad Studies, X 3409
- Counseling Services - Martin Luther King Jr. Building X 4164
- Henry Wise Wellness Center - Christa McAuliffe Residence Hall, X 4170.
- Office of the Bursar - Henry Admin Building, X 3490
- University Registrar - Administration Building, X3730
- Career Development Center - Student Center, X 3831
- Writing Center - Martin Luther King Jr. Building, X 3490
- Bowie Student Center
- Public Safety and Parking
- Bowie State Clubs & Organizations

ADVICE FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

- Be prepared for cold weather! Bring a coat...
- Being under enrolled and not paying your tuition and fees WILL affect your immigration status
- Stay up to date with the International Office
- Use the Writing Center and SmartThink
- Money can be added to your Bulldog Card to purchase items in the bookstore, canteen & certain vending machines.
- Network, Network and Network, a lot!
- Know the Campus Map Link
- Parking Permit info link
- Get to know other international students.
- Get accustomed to Blackboard and Teams
- Get involved with campus organizations
**Spring 2021 Workshop Schedule:**

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<th>TITLE</th>
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| **Maintaining Your Status: F-1 BASICS**                               | Tues. Jan. 19th, 10am–12pm  
Mon. Jan. 25th, 1pm–3pm  
Thurs. Jan. 28th, 11am–1pm  
Thurs. Feb. 3rd, 9am–11pm | Learn about our office & your role in maintaining your F-1 Visa status and how to fix problems that arise along the way. New & continuing students encouraged to attend! |
| **CPT & On-campus Employment**                                       | Thurs. Feb. 11th, 11 am–1pm  
Tues. Feb. 15th, 1 pm–3 pm | Do you want to learn how to work on and off campus? Join us to learn how. Any All F-1 students can attend.                                           |
| **OPT BASICS**                                                       | Thurs. Feb. 18th, 11 am–1 pm  
Mon. Feb 23rd, 1 pm–3 pm | Receive and overview and support for applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) with USCIS. Reserved for Graduating Seniors                                                                  |
| **OPT STEM EXTENSION**                                               | Thurs. Mar. 16th, 9am–11 am | Learn how to extend your OPT for an additional 24 months. Reserved for Graduating STEM majors                                                                                                             |

**REGISTER HERE**

For questions - email: INTERNATIONALOFFICE@BOWIESTATE.EDU