SPRING 2021

UMBC

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ARRIVAL GUIDE

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES

WELCOME TO UMBC & THE UNITED STATES!

Let's help you get settled

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES (IES)

International Student and Scholar Services

Services and Support

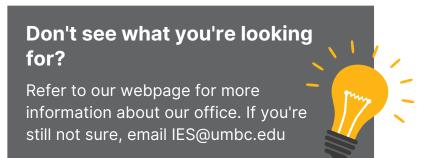
The IES team offers a variety of services and programs to support UMBC's international population. The list below provides an overview of just some our office's activities



- International student visa services, enrolment requirements & support
 The IES office can assist with matters related to visas, current status and understanding
 your documents. The team also helps international students maintain enrolment
 requirements and understand exceptions.
- Events and programming for international students

 Looking to meet with other international students at UMBC, both new and current? Be sure to attend our exciting student events to make friends and get a taste of life in the US! Also, connect with current students through the Global Ambassador program. IES events are added regularly and a great way to make friends!
- Work options and authorizations
 Review your current employment options and understand F1 student work regulations. Learn about on-campus, CPT and OPT options and authorizations.
- Workshops

The IES office hosts a number of workshops throughout the year on a wide range of topics from OPT workshops, adjusting to student life in the US, and immigration seminars to the International Student Career Conference.



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SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS & OFFICE HOURS

Walk-in appointments and emailing our office

Scheduling an appointment

Most questions can be answered over email or by scheduling a Walk-in appointment:

Walk-in appointments:

Walk-in appointments are 10 minutes long and can be scheduled here

Virtual walk-in hours:

Monday 10:00 am – 11:00 am EST Wednesday 10:00 am – 11:00 am EST Friday 10:00 am – 11:00 am EST

If you and our advisors determine your situation requires a longer appointment, this can be scheduled on a case by case basis by emailing ies@umbc.edu

What if I need to contact IES after hours?

If your situation is not an urgent matter, please email our office and the IES team will respond to you in a timely manner.

If you have a true emergency where you need to reach IES after hours, please contact campus police and they will be able to connect you with a member of our staff. Contact UMBC campus police at: +1-410-455-555

Contacting International Education Services

For the fastest response to your questions visit our website or email the IES office.

Website: <u>ies.umbc.edu</u> Email: ies@umbc.edu

UMBC Remote Operations

UMBC's physical campus is only open to those that are approved to be on campus. Our physical office is closed, but advisors are working remotely & ready to help!

No events, club meeting, social gatherings are taking place in-person for the Spring semester. There will be remote opportunities for these kinds of experiences.

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

Important information about staying safe

Should I quarantine when I enter Maryland?

Yes.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that anyone traveling to the U.S. quarantine for 7 to 10 days upon arrival and get tested for COVID-19 within 3 to 5 days of arrival in the U.S.

What if I quarantine in the US, but outside of Maryland?

If you choose to quarantine in a U.S. state other than Maryland, please be aware that the State of Maryland has specific guidelines for quarantining upon entering Maryland. Those guidelines can be found here.

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES

Protect yourself & others by taking the following precautions. For more info on best practices, click <u>here</u>

- If you are sick, stay home
- Wear a mask. The mask must cover your entire nose, mouth and chin
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.

 Dispose of the used tissue immediately
- Practice social distancing. Maintain at least 6-feet distance between yourself and anyone else that does not live in your home
- Don't share food, utensils, cups, and water bottles
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

Important information about staying safe

What if I get sick?

Call ahead to a healthcare professional, such as UHS, if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing. Follow the directions of your local health authority

University Health Service (UHS)

Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. weekdays.

University Health Services are currently providing remote services.

Phone: 410-455-2542

After hours support: 410-455-3230

Website: uhs.umbc.edu

If you are experiencing a COVID-19 health emergency

On campus: call UMBC Police at 410-455-

5555 or call 911

Off campus: call 911, or go to the nearest

hospital emergency room.

Tips:

- Call in advance to allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right facility.
- If you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread, and you begin to feel ill, tell your healthcare professional about your recent travel or contact.

How to get tested

- Free tests are available at the <u>Baltimore</u> <u>Convention Center</u> as well as <u>other sites</u> across Maryland.
- Baltimore County offers free ongoing COVID-19 testing. Access and make appointments <u>here</u>.
- You do **not** have to be a Baltimore County resident to access the free testing.
- UMBC is exploring the possibility of making COVID-19 tests available on campus to students. More information to come.

Additional information/ current Maryland policies

Public health guidelines are subject to change.

We encourage you to always refer to local and state health departments and the websites of the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health for up-to-date and accurate information.

Websites:

- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- Maryland Department of Health
- <u>UMBC Retriever Ready COVID 19</u>
- UMBC IES COVID-19 Information

Twitter:

- Baltimore Co. Health Dept: @BaltCoGov
- Baltimore City Health Dept: @BMore_Healthy
- Maryland State Gov: @StateMaryland
- Maryland Dept of Health: @MDHealthDept

ARRIVAL PREPARATION & PACKING INFORMATION

Prepare for a smooth trip to the US

Important carry-on items & documents

The items below should be brought with you in your carry-on (hand luggage). **Do NOT pack** these items in your checked luggage.

IMPORTANT ITEMS TO PACK IN YOUR CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

- VALID PASSPORT
- VALID F-1 VISA
- I-20
- I-901 SEVIS FEE RECEIPT
- UMBC LETTER CONFIRMING ENROLMENT IN HYBRID COURSE(S) (INCLUDED WITH YOUR I-20)
- ADMISSION LETTER
- IMMUNIZATION RECORDS
- ADDRESS OF RESIDENCE FOR PORT OF ENTRY FORM
- FINANCIAL SUPPORT DOCUMENTS
- COPIES OF DOCUMENTS & PASSPORT
- MONEY FOR INITIAL EXPENSES
- PHONE

Prepare for Winter weather

Remember when you first arrive, it will still be winter! Temperatures often drop below freezing, averaging -1 to 4 degrees Celsius in January.

Don't forget to **pack clothing to stay warm during your first few months**. This includes: warm coat, gloves, hats, scarves and socks

Additional packing information:

- Remember to pack a few items that remind you of home!
- Additional information about entering the United States can be found here
- Don't pack any prohibited items! View the list <u>here</u>

Don't arrive to the US too early

Students entering the US in F-1 status for the first time can only enter **up to 30 days before** the I-20 start date!



FIRST DAYS IN THE US: AIRPORT TRANSPORT & CONFIRMING ARRIVAL

Get ready for your first few weeks and avoid surprise expenses

Transportation from local airports

The following airports are the closest to UMBC:

BWI (Baltimore Washington International Airport)

Distance to UMBC: 7 miles

Uber/Lyft/Taxi:

• Average trip cost: \$30-40 USD

- Taxi pickup on lower arrivals level
- Uber/Lyft meeting point on upper departures level

Super Shuttle:

- Average trip price: \$55 USD
- Must book in advance online here

DCA (Washington Ronald Reagan National Airport)

Distance to UMBC: 40 miles

Uber/Lyft/Taxi average trip cost: \$100 USD

IAD (Washington Dulles International Airport)

Distance to UMBC: 55 miles

Uber/Lyft/Taxi average trip cost: \$140 USD

Confirm your US arrival

When you arrive in the US, remember to complete the New Student Arrival Documentation Check-in through the IES portal to confirm your arrival.

 Confirming your arrival is mandatory for all new students

How to complete New Student Arrival Documentation:

- Log on to the IES portal <u>here</u>
- Click "Search Forms"
- Choose "New Student Arrival Documentation Check-In"
- Choose your term (Spring 2021)
- Follow the directions in the application and upload the required documents

Ride Services & Tipping



If you use a ride service (taxi, shuttle, Uber or Lyft) - **Don't forget to tip your driver.**

- For app based service, tip can be added in the app after your ride.
- If you are paying by card, you can add a designated amount to your total
- A 20% minimum tip is recommended.

FIRST DAYS IN THE US: CELLPHONE SERVICE & BANK ACCOUNTS

Get ready for your first few weeks and avoid surprise expenses

Cellphone service

There are a number of options to obtain service and a local phone number.

Most students start out with a sim card option for the first few months. Once they learn how they use their service, they set up service with a contract (prepaid option).

 Many students also use wi-fi to access communication apps such as WhatsApp and WeChat when they arrive.

Cellphone Service Options

Number on arrival with CampusSims:

CampusSims allows you to have a US phone number and service immediately upon arrival. You pay ahead for a designated amount of credit. Order a SIM here

Contract/Prepaid plan:

Most service operates on contract plans. Contracts are usually 2 years in length for the cheapest option. With a contract, you pay a prepaid amount on a monthly basis

Pay-as-you-go (PAYG):

PAYG is similar to CampusSims. You purchase credit as needed with a local carrier

Local carriers

The following carriers have locations near UMBC campus. We suggest comparing plan options across carriers to determine the best plan for you, based on your personal usage. Local carriers near UMBC:

- T-Mobile Catonsville
- T-Mobile Landsdowne
- Verizon Wireless
- AT&T

For directions to local carrier retail locations, click here

Setting up a bank account

It's very important to setup a bank account in the US. When you open a bank account you will need to provide proof of identity. Call ahead to confirm what documents you need to provide. This usually includes:

- Passport
- I-20
- · Proof of address
- initial deposit

UMBC has a co-branded website with PNC Bank (click <u>here</u>) & a location on campus.

Other local banks include:

- Bank of America
- Maryland State Employees Credit Union (ATM on Campus)
- Wells Fargo

Click here for more information & directions

FIRST DAYS IN THE US: GROCERY STORES & FOOD DELIVERY

Get ready for your first few weeks and avoid surprise expenses

Groceries and Food Delivery Services

The Baltimore/DC region is culturally diverse with numerous food & grocery options. Many online grocery & food services offer a discount on your first order & contactless delivery to order safely during quarantine.

Grocery store chains near UMBC campus:

Many of these stores are very close to off-campus housing and accessible via UMBC transit

- Giant Food: 2 locations within 3 miles of campus
- Aldi

Weis

Safeway

International grocery stores near UMBC campus:

This is only a small selection of the international grocers in the area. Check out the IES website for more options.

- Patel Brothers (Indian)
- H-Mart (Korean)
- Orchard Market & Café (Persian)

- Great Wall Asian Supermarket
- Lotte Plaza (Asian)
- Heritage International Foods (African)

Local farmers markets

Want farm fresh produce or specialty items from local vendors? Visit one of the area's farmers markets. Some markets have limited hours or open certain months. Check website for hours

- Catonsville Sunday Farmer's Market
- World Famous Lexington Market
- Baltimore Farmer's Market & Bazaar
- Cross Street Market in Federal Hill

Online food ordering and delivery:

Want to order your groceries online or have a meal delivered? Use one of the websites/apps below. When using food delivery services, always make sure you tip the driver.

- Instacart
- Uber Eats
- · Door Dash

- Seamless
- Grubhub

Want more options & directions?

Check out the IES website <u>here</u> for links, directions and more grocery store options near campus & in the greater Baltimore area



ORIENTATIONS, HYBRID LEARNING & SETUP

Get ready for your first few weeks of study at UMBC!

New Student Orientations

As a new student, make sure you attend the following orientations. Click the links for more info

Undergraduate students:

- International Student Orientation Attendance is mandatory. Learn more here
- Freshman and Transfer Orientation Learn more and register here

Graduate students:

- International Student Orientation Attendance is mandatory. Learn more here
- Graduate School Orientation: Orientation is online. Access it here
- Program Orientation check with your program and UMBC email for details on orientation

Online learning setup checklist

Make sure your virtual learning semester is successful by using this checklist to set up your personal study area

- Create a dedicated space where you can study without distractions
- Make sure you have all the necessary equipment: Laptop, headphones, notebook, pens, supplies
- Ensure you have reliable internet access
- Check your UMBC email regularly
- Verify if your classes are synchronous or asynchronous

Internet access

Reliable internet access is essential for a successful virtual learning semester.

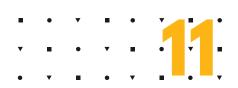
All assignments and exams for Spring 2021 will be submitted virtually. Students are expected to submit assignments on time.

Hybrid Course: On-campus approval?

Those approved to be on campus will be required to complete the following:

- · Daily symptom checks online
- Online Covid-19 safety training
- Complete a COVID test on or off campus at the beginning of the semester.

Visit this website for more info



VIRTUAL LEARNING: PLATFORMS, MYUMBC & EMAIL

Get ready for your first few weeks of study at UMBC

MyUMBC

MyUMBC is the campus web portal. Here you can access Blackboard, email, grades, billing and other services. You can also follow and connect with groups on campus.

MyUMBC is a very important and useful tool for students!

• Learn how to setup your account here

UMBC Email

UMBC email is hosted by Gmail. It is strongly recommended that students check their UMBC email account on a daily basis.

View the UMBC email FAQ page <u>here</u>

Blackboard

Blackboard is UMBC's course management system. You can view all of your courses, submit assignments, view presentations and recorded lectures, and check your grades.

- · Access Blackboard here
- Learn more about Blackboard here

Webex

Your online lectures and virtual meetings will be run using Webex. Each registered student will have a personal room to host meetings and can also join meetings via links provided

- · Get started with Webex here
- Webex FAQ's here

Software

UMBC offers students a selection of software and services available for access and download.

A full list of software available to students and how to download is found <u>here</u>

What if I have questions about UMBC's technology resources?

UMBC's Department of Information Technology has an extensive FAQ page in case you ever need help troubleshooting something yourself. Find it <u>here</u>

Still need help? Request a help ticket through the Request Tracker <u>here</u>

AREA TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND SCHEDULES

How to get around Catonsville, Baltimore and surrounding areas

UMBC Transit

Campus shuttle - free for students

UMBC Transit is the campus shuttle. The shuttles have a variety of routes that travel in the local area, BWI, and into Downtown Baltimore. Must show student ID to board

UMBC Transit will not be operating in Spring 2021

MTA (Maryland Transport Authority)

Baltimore Public Transportation

Use MTA public transport options to travel throughout Baltimore and surrounding areas. Options include bus, metro, and light rail.

Fare: \$1.90 per trip, All Access College Transit

Pass: \$52.90 per month Routes and more info <u>here</u>

Car rentals with ZipCar Rent a car and explore!

If you're age 18 or older with a valid driver's license (foreign license ok) check out ZipCar! ZipCar allows you to prepay to rent a car by the hour. Great if you want to run errands further from campus or for a day-trip.

Charm City Circulator Free transport in Baltimore city center

The Charm City Circulator is a **free** shuttle that travels to popular locations and stops in Baltimore city center.

Learn more here

Buses & trains - long distance

Want to travel further outside the city? Look into these bus, train and plane options Bus:

 There are a number of affordable long-haul bus companies. Some options are: Greyhound, BoltBus, Megabus, Peterpan

Train:

- MARC Maryland train system, travels from Baltimore to DC, and surrounding
- Amtrak US-wide train network

Plane:

- BWI is the nearest airport to UMBC campus
- Other airports: IAD (Dulles) & DCA (Reagan)

Ride-share

Popular ride-share options available:

- Uber
- Lyft

Don't forget to tip you driver (this is done in the app)

Limited services & public health guidelines

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many campus and public transportation options are running on limited schedules.

Be sure to check current schedules as you plan your journey.

- Use for necessary travel only
- Please adhere to the public health guidelines while on public transportation



HOUSING, BUDGETING AND OTHER EXPENSES

Explore housing options and plan your budget

On-Campus housing - Undergrads

Undergrads can choose to live on or off campus. Many new students prefer to live on campus in their first semesters. Admitted students will receive directions on applying for housing in the admissions package.

Apply before the deadline. On-campus housing always fills up quickly.

Learn more about UMBC Residential Life here

On-Campus housing - Graduate

Graduate students can choose to live oncampus in the Walker Avenue Apartments, and can apply for this kind of housing from Walker Avenue's <u>website</u> directly.

Off-Campus Student Services

The OCSS office offers a number of services and support to help students review leasing agreements, how to set up utilities & find housing and more.

Learn more about OCSS here

Renting off-campus

Many students & Graduate Students choose to live off-campus. Rent for off-campus student housing is typically paid on a monthly basis. Make sure you confirm any additional costs you will incur in addition to your rent. This can include: utilities, amenities fees, garbage. etc.

Other bills

In addition to rent & utilities, budget for these recurring expenses:

- internet
- phone bill
- streaming services (optional)
- groceries

Utilities in Winter

Bills for utilites, such as electricity, are higher during the winter months due to increased heater use. Be prepared for a potentially higher bill.

Sharing costs

Many students choose to split costs to save money or pay bills. The following apps are popular to pay others & transfer money

- Venmo
- Zelle

Limited on-campus jobs and budgeting

There are extremely few on-campus jobs with the physical campus mostly closed for COVID safety. **Do not anticipate finding an on-campus job in the COVID environment.** Budget accordingly for this



LOCAL STORES AND ACCESSING EVERYDAY NEEDS

Where to buy goods, clothing, and medicine

Everyday goods and furniture

There are a number of large retail stores where you can purchase household necessities, furniture and supplies. For larger and longer distance trips, a car is recommended.

Everyday goods and some furniture:

Target, Walmart, BigLots

Furniture & decor:

- IKEA, HomeGoods, Bed Bath & Beyond **Hardware**:
- Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Lowes

Electronics:

BestBuy

Pharmacies

Visit a pharmacy for health, medicine and wellness products. Pharmacies near UMBC campus include:

- CVS Pharmacy
- Rite-Aid Pharmacy
- Walgreens Pharmacy

Affordable winter clothing

Need extra winter clothing? You can often find warm winter coats and jackets at affordable prices at many stores. Some options: following places:

- · Outlet malls: Aurndel Mills
- Discount stores: TJMaxx, Marshalls, Ross
- Thrift stores: Goodwill, Finders Keepers

Retriever Essentials

Retriever Essentials is dedicated to ensuring all students have access to sufficient food & essential goods. Their mission is to eliminate food insecurity in the UMBC community. Retriever Essentials operates a food pantry located on campus as well as a designated collection point for pre-packaged food bags. More about Retriever Essentials here

Saving on purchases

Make sure you check for specials, including student discounts, when making purchases, online or in-person.

- Grocery stores usually update their store specials on a weekly basis
- You can also look at online coupon websites or the Sunday newspaper for coupons to save extra
- · Check out local student discounts here

Online Ordering & Pickup

During COVID-19, we recommend limiting your in-person shopping, and utilize delivery and curbside pickup options. Many local retailers offer these options.

If you choose to shop in-person, adhere to health and safety guidelines.

RELIABLE INFORMATION AND NEWS

Stay up to date with campus information and current events

Local television stations

Most major US cities have local television networks covering area and national news and weather. Local stations are affiliates of national networks. Baltimore area stations below:

- WBAL Channel 11
- WMAR Channel 2

- WBFF Channel 45
- WJZ Channel 13

Newspapers

The **Baltimore Sun** is the area's largest print and online newspaper. Print versions cost under a dollar (Sunday is higher). Unlimited access to the online version requires a subscription. There are also a number of smaller, local print and online newspapers in the area.

Public news radio

Public radio is an easy and convenient way to access both local and national news. Tune into Baltimore's local National Public Radio (NPR) station **WYPR 88.1 FM**

Social media

You can also access news and updates via social media (ie: Twitter). University, State and National departments and organizations have social media accounts which share information. Always make sure your news is from a verified and reliable source.

Weather information

Maryland has four distinct seasons and wide-ranging temperatures during the year. Ensure you are adequately prepared for any inclement weather. We suggest downloading a weather app for up-to-date information. Options include:

Accuweather

Dark Sky

Weather Underground

Weather Channel

UMBC Email

Check your UMBC email, at minimum, on a daily basis. Important course and university updates and information are often shared via email.

The IES office will email students directly with any important information and updates, including any changes to current immigration or employment regulations.

UMBC CONTACTS AND CONNECTIONS

Connect with faculty, staff and current students

Contacting UMBC departments, offices & student organizations: In the following pages you'll find contact details for a number of teams across campus. If you are looking to connect with another area and not sure how to contact them, please reach out to the IES team.



International Education Services (IES)

Support, programming and services for UMBC's international student & scholar community

• Website: ies.umbc.edu

• Email: ies@umbc.edu

University Health Service (UHS)

On-campus health clinic and doctor services

• Website: uhs.umbc.edu

• Phone:410-455-2542

• Email: uhs@umbc.edu

• Hours: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Student Business Services (SBS)

Office for collection of tuition and fees, issuing student bills and refunds

• Website: sbs.umbc.edu

• Phone:410-455-2288

 Request help: <u>here</u> (must be logged into myUMBC)

Initiatives for Identity, Inclusion & Belonging (i3b)

Supports diversity, social justice & equality initiatives in the UMBC community and beyond

• Website: i3b.umbc.edu

• Email: i3b@umbc.edu

Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI)

Comprehensive support, education & training related to Title XI & civil rights matters

• Website: <u>oei.umbc.edu</u>

• Phone: 410-455-2735

• Email: oei@umbc.edu

• After hours support line: 410-455-3230

UMBC Counseling Center

Free and confidential counseling services for registered UMBC students

Website: counseling.umbc.edu

• Phone: 410-455-2472

• After hours support line:410-455-3230

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UMBC CONTACTS AND CONNECTIONS

Connect with faculty, staff and current students

UMBC Police

- Emergency phone: 410 -455-5555 or 911
- Email: police@umbc.edu

- Off campus emergency: dial 911
- Website: police.umbc.edu

Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS)

- Website: ocss.umbc.edu
- Phone: 410-455-2770

- Email: ocss@umbc.edu
- Hours: 8:30am 5:00pm M-F

Residential Life (On- Campus Housing)

- Website: reslife.umbc.edu
- Phone: 410-455-2591

• Email: reslife@umbc.edu

Graduate Student Association & Graduate School Organizations

- Website: gsa.umbc.edu
- Phone: 410-455-2773

- Email: gsa@umbc.edu
- Hours: 9:00am 4:00pm M-Th

Student Organizations

Meet current students & get involved in the UMBC community!

- Website: <u>campuslife.umbc.edu</u>
- Phone: 410-455-3462

- Email: campuslife@umbc.edu
- List of Student Organizations <u>here</u>

Global Ambassadors

Meet fellow international students and create connections in the campus community

• Website: Link here

• Email: globalambassadors@umbc.edu

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Contacting your Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)

Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) contact details are on the Grad School's website.

- Go to the Programs & Degrees page here
- Click on your program name
- Scroll down to the bottom of your program page to "Contact Us" to find GPC details

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Academic advising & support

- Undergrad academic advising: contact the Office for Academic & Pre-Professional Advising.
- Learn more about their services here.