International Student Guide
Northwestern State University
Dear International Student,

May I be among the first to officially welcome you to Northwestern State University! We are glad to have you study at NSU and hope you will have a memorable experience. This guide provides important information to concerning your stay in the United States of America, academics at NSU, and practical advice for living in the Natchitoches community. Read through it. Refer to it as necessary during your stay. Especially read the section on your visa status as it shares with you the guidelines mandated by the US government for your studies. If you have any questions or need assistance, contact either myself or another foreign student advisor in the Office of Admissions and we will do our best to assist you or direct you to the appropriate resource.

Welcome to NSU!

Andrea Maley,
Director of Admissions & Foreign Student Advisor
Table of Contents

Getting Started
  Housing
  Utilities
  Meal Plan
  Transportation
  Communications
    Telephone: Local, Long-Distance, and International
    Postal Services
    Email
    Internet Instructions: Dial-Up, Wireless
  U.S. Monetary System: Coins, Paper Currency
  Banking
  Exchanging Money
  Speed Demon Card
  Attending Fee Payment
  Purchasing Textbooks
  First Day of Classes

University Traditions
  History
  Fight Song
  Mascot
  Colors
  Rivalry
  Legend
  The City of Natchitoches

Campus Information
  Campus Map
  Campus Safety

Campus Services
  Computer Labs/Student Technology
  Career & Counseling Services
  Disability Services
  Eugene P. Watson Library
  Health Services
  Intercollegiate Athletics: NSU Compliance Office

Recreational & Wellness Facilities
  WRAC
  Natatorium
  Robert W. Wilson Recreation Complex

Student Activities
  Student Activities & Organizations
Table of Contents

International Student Responsibilities and Regulations
   On Campus Employment
   Off Campus Employment
   Practical Training: Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT)
   Financial Aid
   ISEP Participants
Cultural Transitions
   Culture Shock: Emotional Roller Coaster Diagram
   Tips for Coping with Culture Shock
   Practical Steps
Academic Matters
   Characteristics of the U.S. Academic Environment
   Academic Dictionary
   Academic Advising
      Student Responsibility
      Advisor Responsibility
      Limitations on Advisor Responsibility
      Dos & Don’ts of Academic Advising
   Grading Scale & GPA
   Fee Payment
   Standards of Academic Conduct
      Exams and Cheating
      Plagiarism
   University Academic Calendar
Miscellaneous Cultural Information
   U.S. Holidays and Customs
   Natchitoches Festivals
   Temperature
   Time Zones
   Weights and Measures
   Website Index (include all websites listed in handbook)

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
## HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS

You have several options for housing arrangements at Northwestern. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of Living Arrangements</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Campus</td>
<td>Married Student Housing</td>
<td>On Campus Apartments</td>
<td>Residential Life Student Union, Room 100 (318) 357-6307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Campus</td>
<td>University Columns</td>
<td>Apartments with a full kitchen</td>
<td>University Place Clubhouse Leasing Manager for University Place 160 Tarleton Drive (318) 214-5400 <a href="mailto:nsalening@campushousing.com">nsalening@campushousing.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>Local Apartments or Rental Homes</td>
<td>Require an off campus exemption waiver if you are under 21 years of age.</td>
<td>Look in the Natchitoches Times, Nakatosh Chief, and ask around the community for local property owners. Typically, a 6-month or year lease is required. Utilities are not usually included in rental price. Transportation to and from the university also needs to be considered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All first-time freshmen under the age of twenty-one (21) are required to live on-campus unless the Student has been approved for a housing exemption.
Utilities

Utilities include gas, water, electricity, sewage, telephone and trash/garbage disposal services. If you live in the residence halls, these costs are included with your housing charge. Utility costs are not typically included in off-campus rental prices. Ask the apartment/house owner what utilities need to be “turned on” or activated prior to moving in.

If renting an apartment or house within Natchitoches city limits, you will contact the city of Natchitoches at Natchitoches City Hall located at the corner of Second Street and Rue St. Denis (downtown, just past Lazyone’s) to activate your electricity, sewage, water, and trash/garbage disposal services. Their phone number is (318) 357-3844. A deposit is required.

Some off campus apartments use natural gas appliances and hot water heaters. If the apartment/house uses these appliances, you would contact ATMOS Gas Company at 1-888-286-6700.

If living in the residence halls, local phone calls are included in your housing fee. If living in University Place, both local and domestic long distance phone calls are included in your monthly rent. Residents of University Columns will need to contact the leasing office for more information on activating their phone services.

University Meal Plan

Food. It is how we relax, relate, and reconnect – with ourselves and others. All students residing on campus in the residence halls, University Columns, or University Place are required to purchase a meal plan unless otherwise exempt. Commuter plans are also available to those not living on campus. Meal plan participation requirements and policies are available at the Student Union in the Speed Demon Office. For more information on meal plans, contact Sodexho at (318) 357-4386.

Transportation

Neither Northwestern State University nor the City of Natchitoches has an established public transportation system at the time this handbook was printed. Remember this as you decide where to live while you are at NSU. We recommend reaching out and making friendships with other NSU students, faculty, and staff members to increase commuting options. You will find most people on campus friendly and interested about your culture. These friends may be willing to bring you with them shopping or on special errands if you ask politely.

Communications

Local Calls

Phone numbers in the USA are 10-digits long and are typically notated as: (123) 456-7890. (123) is called the area code and 456-7890 is typically referred to as the phone number.

If you are on campus and desire to call someone on campus, you only need to dial the last four digits of the phone number. For example, the number to the Office of Admissions is (318) 357-4078. If you are on campus and desire to call us, you would pick up the telephone and punch in the numbers 4078. If you encounter an emergency on campus and need immediate assistance, contact Campus Police at 357-5431. For medical emergencies, dial 911.

If you are on campus and desire to call someone off campus but within the Natchitoches community, you must dial 9 before entering the person’s phone number. Pressing 9 allows you to call off-campus.
Long Distance

If you are on campus and desire to call someone off campus but not within the local Natchitoches community, this is referred to as “long distance.” As mentioned previously, long distance phone calls are only included in rent for University Place. If you are not a resident at University Place, you will need to acquire a long distance (or international) phone card. Phone cards can be found in the campus bookstore, local drugstores, grocery stores, and shopping centers such as Wal-Mart, Walgreens, Brookshire’s, or Rite-Aid. To place a long distance call using a calling card, follow the instructions for making calls off campus, and then follow the instructions on the back of the calling card.

Postal Services

NSU students have access to a small post office box located in the NSU Post Office (the round building between Kyser Hall and the Student Union). Box rent is $18.00 per student per semester (Fall & Spring) and $10.00 per student for the summer session.

Due dates for payment of the postal service charge are posted in the Post Office Lobby each semester. Box Rent Due notices are not placed in the individual boxes on a regular basis.

If your box rent is not paid by the due date, mail will be removed from the box and held for 10 days. Other mail that comes in during the 10 day period will not be placed in the box. If the mail is not called for at the Post Office Window during the 10 days, or the postal service charge paid, on the 11th day, all first class mail will be returned to sender.

During the 10 day holding period, a reasonable attempt will be made by the Post Office Personnel to contact the subscriber.

Forwarding Addresses: The University Post Office must have your forwarding address when your current address changes if you desire to continue to receive mail. If you are moving, leaving school and not returning, or going home between semesters, you should fill out a Forward Address Card at the service window of the University Post Office. The three minutes required to complete the card could save you much more time and trouble later!

If you have questions about the campus postal service, please contact the University Post Office in person or by phone at 357-5696.

Student Email Account

myMail Account Setup and Instructions for Use

Student Accounts are automatically created at approximately 5:00AM the morning after registering. Following creation, student accounts must be activated by the following procedures, as indicated at the link http://my.nsula.edu/help_desk/myMail.pdf.

Step One: Type http://my.nsula.edu in the field next to Address: in your web browser.

Then, click on Create Account under myAccount.

Step Two: Type in your Campus-wide ID or Social Security Number in the field below StudentID: and six-digit Date of Birth in the field under Birthdate (MMDDYY): Click Submit.

NOTE: Your StudentID and Birthdate will appear as asterisks for security reasons.

Step Three: Completely read the Usage Agreement and then click I Accept at the bottom.
**Step Four:** Your new username and email address will appear on this page.

**NOTE:** Your email address will be `username@student.nsula.edu`.

You have successfully created a myNSU account. Record your username and email address.

**Step Five:** Return to the website `http://my.nsula.edu`

Then, click on `myMail` under `Important Links`.

**Log In:** Type in your username in the space under `User ID` and your password in the space under `Password`. Then, click on `Log In`.

**Toolbar:** Once the login is complete, you can use the `Toolbar` links along the top to access the different features of your myMail account.

**Account Options:** Click the pull-down menu link, `Account Options`, at the top right to edit your myMail options.
   1. Preferences
   2. My Signature
   3. Address Book
   4. My Folders
   5. Help Topics

**Check Mail:** Click the second link on the toolbar, `View mail`, or click on the `Inbox` under the `Folder` menu.

**Write Mail:** Click `Compose` on the toolbar. Fill in the `To` and `Subject` lines. Then, type your message in the space provided below that. You can check the spelling of your email, attach a file to it, or access the Address Book on this screen, also.

(Instructions taken from 2007 Freshman Connection: New Student Orientation Guide, p. 18)

**How to Access Internet**

INSERT Dial up access procedures (Print out from the Office of Student Technology)

**Wireless Internet Access (Include Wireless instructions from the Office of Student Technology)**

On campus, wireless access is available in all buildings except from the WRAC to Prather Coliseum. This includes the athletic field house.

**U.S. Monetary System**

The U.S. money system consists of both coins and paper currency, as do all systems. The commonly used coins and paper bills and their equivalent to the U.S. dollar ($), the basic unit, are listed below.

**Coins**

There are four commonly used coins. The (c) marker refers to 1/100 of a dollar and is called a “cent.”

- 1 (one-cent or penny) = .01 dollar (copper in color)
- 5 (five-cents or nickel) = .05 dollar (silver in color)
- 10 (ten-cents or dime) = .10 dollar (silver in color)
- 25 (twenty-five cents or quarter) = .25 dollar (silver in color)
The U.S. Mint has begun issuing a new series of quarters—The 50 State Quarters. The fronts are all the same but the backs have different engravings honoring one of the fifty states. New states are introduced each year. The set will be completely issued by 2008.

Less commonly used, however, still in circulation are:

- 50 (fifty-cents or half-dollar = 0.5 dollar (silver in color)
- $1.00 (one-hundred cents or dollar coin = 1.0 dollar (gold or silver in color)

There are three different styles of one-dollar coins currently in circulation. The silver-colored Susan B. Anthony dollar is being phased out of circulation. It’s similarity to the quarter, in size and color, made it confusing for people. The new “Golden dollar” that is being phased in is gold in color with either the native-American woman, Sacagawea, or the portrait of a former U.S. President on the front. All three coins are legal for use but $1.00 coins are not commonly found in circulation.

(taken from University of Michigan’s International Student Handbook)

**Paper Currency**

Unlike paper currency in most other countries, the paper currency in the U.S. is all the same size and the same color. The paper currency (called “bills” or “bucks”) is commonly circulated in 6 denominations: $1.00 $5.00 $10.00 $20.00 $50.00 $100.00. The $2.00 bill was introduced a few years ago and a few of these may still be in circulation, however, they will not be commonly found, as printing was stopped shortly after the introduction of the bill. Bills in higher denominations are also available, however, since large sums of cash are not carried by many (for safety reasons), most stores and shops will not change a bill larger than a $50. The denomination of each bill is clearly marked on the front and back of all four corners. Each bill bears the picture of a famous American figure. Please note: All U.S. bills are green in color and the same size. Be careful that you don’t confuse one for another. Larger denominations will soon include some color, besides green, to deter counterfeiting but they will remain mostly green in color.

(taken from University of Michigan’s International Student Handbook)

**Banking**

Natchitoches has six commercial banks (Bank of Montgomery, City Bank & Trust, Exchange Bank & Trust, Peoples State Bank, Sabine State Bank, and State Farm Bank), one federal savings bank (First Federal), and one savings and loan association (Louisiana Capital Federal Credit Union). Northwestern State University has an agreement with Peoples State Bank which allows students to connect their NSU Speed Demon card with a Purple Power Checking Account. Contact either the NSU One Card Office at (318) 357-5131 or Peoples State Bank at (318) 352-9089 for more information.

**Exchanging Money**

If you plan on having any currency exchanged within the U.S., you should be aware that banks will usually only change paper currency from another country to U.S. dollars and vice-versa (they will usually not exchange coinage). Visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for updated currency exchange rates. A list of Natchitoches banks and their approximate distances from campus can be found by going online to [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) and searching for banks.

**Speed Demon Card (Your Identification Card)**

The Speed Demon Card is your multi-purpose photo identification card.

Your Speed Demon Card is an access key and must be presented to enter numerous campus facilities, attend special events, obtain services, and utilize the library. Your card and related accounts are non-transferable. Your Speed Demon Card can be used with three separate accounts if you choose to activate them. The accounts currently linked to the Speed Demon Card are:
1. Meal Plan & Declining Dollars Account
2. Demon Dollars, and
3. Off Campus Banking Account

These accounts are not co-mingled and represent three distinct accounts with the University or its affiliates (like the local off-campus bank).
The Speed Demon Card can currently be used for access into the Residence Halls, the Dining Halls (with a valid meal plan), doing laundry, for photocopying using Speed Demon Dollars in the library as well as making other purchases in various locations on campus.
The NSU Speed Demon Office produces your NSU identification card and provides services concerning your card. Getting your identification card is easy. You can either pick it up at Fee Payment during the first week of classes or go to the Speed Demon Office. Bring a government issued photo ID (such as your passport) with you.
The NSU Speed Demon Office is located in the Student Union, room 152. Contact this office at (318) 357-5131 or online at: www.nsula.edu/onecard if you have any questions regarding your Speed Demon Card.

Attending Fee Payment
Fee payment is held at the beginning of each semester in Prather Coliseum. It is traditionally during the first week of classes. Fee payment provides you with the opportunity to verify and pay your account balance, visit financial aid representatives (grants, loans, scholarships and bookstore vouchers), receive your NSU ID (Speed Demon Card), purchase a parking permit from Campus Police, and visit health services representatives (to answer any student insurance, health services fee, or immunization questions). In fall semesters you have the opportunity to take a photograph for the NSU yearbook. It is mandatory for you to attend fee payment. The schedule for fee payment is located in the NSU Schedule of Classes (available online at www.nsula.edu/registrar). You can also ask your Foreign Student Advisor for more information on fee payment dates and times.

Purchasing Textbooks
There are two options for purchasing textbooks in Natchitoches. The first option is the University Bookstore. The University Bookstore is located on the first floor of the Student Union. The second option for purchasing textbooks in Natchitoches is Campus Corner. Campus Corner is located across the street from Watson Library on University Parkway.
Many students purchase textbooks from these locations. Be sure to bring your class syllabus with you to either bookstore to make certain you are purchasing the correct textbook for class. Other popular options among students for purchasing textbooks include websites such as Amazon (www.amazon.com/Textbooks) and Half.com (www.half.com).
Most students who purchase textbooks from these websites to save money; however, a potential drawback might occur if you order the incorrect textbook or if the textbook is delayed/lost in shipping. Purchasing from the University Bookstore, Campus Corner, Amazon, and Half.com include a sales tax in addition to the purchase price. Sales tax for the City of Natchitoches is approximately 8% of the purchase price. If ordering from a website or an out-of-town bookstore, you will typically be charged an additional cost for shipping. This price varies depending on the company ordered from. Most instructors require students to have their textbooks by the second or third class meeting. Purchasing a used textbook from a classmate is another option. Some students sell old textbooks from previous semesters. Check flyers on campus for such listings. Popular places for these flyers include the bulletin boards in Kyser Hall, Watson Library, and your academic department.

First Day of Classes
Print out your schedule to take with you on the first day of classes. Your schedule includes the class name, time, building, room number, and instructor’s name. Look for the volunteers on campus wearing “Demons on Tour” t-shirts. These “tour guides” are available to help you find your building and classrooms. Allow 10-15 minutes to find your classes and a parking space (if commuting from off campus).
University Traditions

History
Northwestern State University of Louisiana stands on ground that has been dedicated to learning for well over a hundred years. Prior to the Civil War a portion of the present campus was the property of the Bullard family of Natchitoches. As early as 1856 the Bullard mansion was in use as a convent by the Religious Society of the Sacred Heart. The following year a school building was erected at the convent and in 1884 the town and parish of Natchitoches purchased the property. Three of the four great white columns that once supported the east gable of the mansion still stand on “The Hill” and often serve as the unofficial symbols of the university.

The campus, developed upon rolling hills and high river bottomland, is acknowledged to be one of the most spacious and attractive in the South. The natural beauty of the site drew people to it even in prehistoric times. Long the home of a major Indian tribe for which it was named, the French fortified Natchitoches in 1714 as an outpost of their New World Empire facing Spanish Texas to the west. The city today takes pride in its standing as the oldest permanent settlement in the entire Louisiana Purchase Territory. Although the fires of the Civil War scarred the Cane River Country, Natchitoches escaped relatively unharmed, and many traces of its colonial and antebellum heritage remain.

In 1884 the state Legislature by Act 51 created the Louisiana State Normal School for the preparation of teachers. Shortly after, a member of the Legislature, Leopold Caspari, offered the convent site as a campus for the school with the anticipated approval of the citizens of Natchitoches. The offer was accepted and from 1885 to 1918 the Normal School offered two years of study for the training of teachers. Baccalaureate programs were inaugurated, and the State Constitution, adopted in 1921, changed the name of the school to Louisiana State Normal College.

The resources and curricula of “Normal” grew steadily to meet the increasingly diverse requirements of Louisiana’s expanding population. In 1944 the institution’s excellent service in its broader role was accorded formal recognition by Act 326 of the Legislature, which changed its name to Northwestern State College of Louisiana. Northwestern maintained and strengthened its long tradition of leadership in public service and academic endeavor and became, in 1954, the first college under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana State Board of Education to offer the Master's degree. The Specialist in Education degree was first offered in 1966 and the Doctor of Philosophy in Education degrees were authorized in 1967.

On June 18, 1970, Governor John J. McKeithen signed the legislative act, which brought the old campus its greatest distinction by changing its title to Northwestern State University of Louisiana. In 1980 the old campus quadrangle where the columns stand was entered into the National Register of Historic Places under the title: “Normal Hill Historic District.”

Although, primarily a regional institution, Northwestern also offers an opportunity for education at other satellite locations specifically, distance learning is available in Leesville, Shreveport, and Alexandria. In addition to academics, these centers are also developing student life programs.

The Nursing Education Center, located in Shreveport, provides the educational environment for nursing majors enrolled in clinical courses, as well as, general education courses. The Center houses departments administering masters, baccalaureate and associate degree programs. The campus includes state-of-the-art academic facilities, office space for faculty and staff, a bookstore, and facilities for activities and organizations.

Demon Fight Song (NSU’s Fight Song)

This song is traditionally by students and alumni at university sporting events. The words are:

“Go ye Demons, take the field, Northwestern Demons never yield. So, fight Demons win tonight, victory is on our side! Go! Fight! Win! Purple and white shall ever reign, filling the air with battle strains. So, Demons forever stand and fight for dear old Demonland.”
Mascot

"Vic" the Demon

On November 8, 1922, by proclamation of President V.L. Roy and Coach H. Lee Prather, all athletic teams became known as the Demons. The name was decided upon by a contest open to all students with a grand prize of $10. A committee was appointed by the President to narrow down the names submitted by the student body. The final selection was decided by a vote of the students. The two most popular choices were Braves and Demons. Among other names submitted by the students were Sharks, Daredevils, Musketeers, Pelicans, Prather's Ground Hogs, Bloodhounds, Cyclops, and Serpents. The official winners were Aileen Ritter and Truett Scarborough.

On September 22, 1984, The Demon received his official name by means of another contest. Sponsored by the Athletic Department, the contest was open to faculty, staff, and students. The objective: to find a name for the Demon. Over 300 entries were submitted to the committee. The grand prize was an all expense paid weekend at the Louisiana State Fair Classic. Ray Carney, an alum of the University, was the official winner with "Vic", which is short for "Victory".

Colors

Purple & White

Northwestern’s official colors are purple and white. In the 1890s the colors were decided upon by two (2) campus organizations, Seekers After Knowledge Literary Society (S.A.K.S.) and the Eclectic Literary Society (E.L.S.). S.A.K.S. colors were purple and gold and E.L.S. colors were blue and white. The two organizations combined their colors and decided on purple and white as the Northwestern State University official school colors.

Rivalry

Chief Caddo

In March of 1962, the Lumberjacks of Stephen F. Austin College of Nacogdoches, Texas presented Northwestern State University with a black gum tree trunk from the SFA campus from which a statue was to be carved. The black gum tree weighed over a ton and was thirty inches in diameter. An Indian statue, Chief Caddo, was chosen because of the historic founding of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and Nacogdoches, Texas, by Indian tribes. Natchitoches means “chinquapin eaters” and Nacogdoches means “persimmon eaters”. It was carved by Harold Greene in Logansport, Louisiana, and required over 200 hours of labor. The name “Chief Caddo” was selected in honor of the ancient federation of Caddo Indian tribes, which once inhabited the northern Louisiana area. The final painting of the statue was done at Northwestern. The finished product stands 8 feet tall and weighs about 400 pounds. The first football game for Chief Caddo was September 15, 1962. Northwestern won 23-6. Tradition has it that the winner of the annual NSU and SFA football game keeps Chief Caddo on their respective campus.

Legend

The Legend of Isabella

Isabella was a young French maiden, renowned for her beauty, who once lived in the original Bullard mansion after the Bullards were gone. The young lady had many suitors but preferred the company of a young man from the East, sent to Louisiana on business. They fell in love and were to be married. Shortly before the wedding date arrived the young man was killed in a duel. Legend has it that the duel concerned a dispute over another woman. Isabella, overcome by grief, became a nun and the French maiden’s beauty was wasted away through constant mourning of her intended. Everyone believed she had gone mad from grief and mourning. One stormy night she ended her mourning by plunging a dagger into her heart. Soon after, she was found dead in her room, with a bloody handprint on the wall. Her spirit roamed Bullard mansion until it was torn down in 1932. This was evidenced by the eyewitness accounts of girls who lived in East. From East Hall, Isabella’s spirit moved to the Music Hall and resided there until 1946, when the building was torn down. Just before the Music Hall was dismantled, a group of young men, dressed in sheets, coaxed Isabella from the doomed building.
From there, Isabella wandered aimlessly around campus from building to building (including East Varnado) for almost three years, until, becoming weary, she chose Caldwell hall as her new residence. Speculation has it that Caldwell was chosen because of its close proximity to the original Bullard dwelling. According to newspaper articles, the official date of the move was January 15, 1949. Reportedly a letter from the ghost was found on the steps of Caldwell, along with a few drops of blood. Isabella’s present residence is the Old Women’s Gym located on College Avenue beside Varnado Hall. When Caldwell hall burned in October 1982, a group of 750 students gathered and performed a ceremony on Halloween night that aided Isabella in her transition to her present location.

**The City of Natchitoches**

Natchitoches is the oldest permanent settlement of the Louisiana Purchase. For information on festivals, local attractions, traditions, dining and shopping options, and maps; visit [www.natchitoches.net](http://www.natchitoches.net), the official online city guide for Natchitoches, Louisiana.

**Campus Maps**

Please request a copy of the Northwestern State University Campus Map from the Office of Admissions (209 Roy Hall) or University Recruiting (South Hall). International students desiring a personalized tour of the NSU campus should contact the Recruiter for International Students at 357-4611 to set up an appointment. Typical office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 4:30pm.

**Campus Safety**

The Natchitoches and Northwestern communities are anticipating your arrival on campus, and we want to ensure that you have a positive and safe experience. Safety on campus is only possible through the combined efforts of students, faculty and personnel, and campus safety officers. Take the following steps to ensure your personal safety on the NSU campus:

- Firearms are not permitted on campus. Students who wish to bring authorized firearms on campus must leave them at the University Police Station. For more information contact the Chief of University Police at (318) 357-5431.
- Record the serial numbers of your valuables, such as computers and other electronic equipment. The University Police Station has engraving equipment available to students for this purpose.
- Never prop residence hall doors open - either to your personal room or to residence hall exits.
- Always lock your residence hall door, even if you are just going down the hall.
- Buy a chain and lock for securing your bicycle to an outdoor rack. Bicycles are not allowed inside the residence halls or academic facilities.
- Safeguard your credit cards, checkbook, and telephone cards.
- Locate the emergency call boxes around campus.
- If you have an automobile, register it with the University Police Station and park only in designated areas on campus.
- Use only well-lighted streets and walkways.
- If you are traveling from building to building, or from a building to a parking lot after dark, request an escort from the University Police Station (318) 357-5431.
## Computer Labs

Various computer labs are located across campus. The location, hours, software, and requirements to access each lab are listed in the following table:

| Name                        | Location                  | Hours                                      | Options                                               | Restrictions               |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------|                                                      |                          |
| Boozman Lab                 | Boozman Hall 3rd Floor    | Sunday-Thursday: 4:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.  | Microsoft Office 2003, Laser Printing, Internet   | myNSU account required    |
| Counseling & Career Services Lab | Student Union Room 305   | Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.       | Microsoft Office 2003, SGI Pins (career program), Internet | myNSU account required    |
| Health & Human Performance (HHP) Lab | HHP Building Room 129A | Sunday: 2:00 a.m. - 11:59 p.m. Monday-Thurday: 6:00 a.m. - 11:59 p.m. Friday: 6:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed Saturday | Microsoft Office 2003, Laser Printing, Internet, Scanner | myNSU account required |
| Kyser Lab                   | Kyser Hall Room 243A      | Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed Weekends | Microsoft Office 2003, Laser Printing, Internet, Scanner | myNSU account required |
| Student Union Lab           | Student Union Room 235    | Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  Closed Weekends | Microsoft Office XP, Laser Printing, Internet, Scanner | myNSU account required |
| Varnado Lab                 | Varnado Hall 1st Floor    | Sunday - Thursday: 4:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m. Closed Friday/Saturday | Microsoft Office XP, Laser Printing, Internet, Scanner | myNSU account required |
| Watson Library Lab          | Watson Library Room 113   | Sunday: 2:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Microsoft Office 2003, Laser Printing, Color Laser Printing, Internet, Scanner, Color Copying, Laminating, Binding, Faxing | myNSU account required |

These hours are for Spring/Fall Semesters. Residence Halls are not opened during the summer semester.

Northwestern is constantly updating technology options for students. For a current list of open computer labs and lab hours, visit NSU’s Student Technology Website at: [www.nsu.edu/student_labs/](http://www.nsu.edu/student_labs/).

In addition to computer lab access, all current NSU students have access to copying, faxing, laminating, binding, and color printing services in the Watson Library Computer Lab as part of their Technology Fees.

Currently enrolled students may also check out laptops, digital cameras, palm pilots, video projectors, and other electronic equipment from the Office of Student Technology, located in the Watson Library Computer Lab.
Counseling and Career Services

Students are faced with many challenges while pursuing degrees at NSU. This is especially true for international students who face both traditional challenges which accompany college and unique challenges which accompany immersion in a new country. Some of these challenges can be addressed alone or with the support of family and friends. NSU students may receive through Counseling Services:

- An opportunity for self exploration and personal growth
- Free and confidential services
- Information on experiencing cultural transitions
- Individual, couples, group, or crisis counseling services as needed
- Competent care provided by licensed professional counselors and supervised counseling interns
- Referrals for psychiatric evaluation and treatment

Career Services supports students with specific educational opportunities directed to their career aspirations. Their goal is to provide you with a solid foundation for your chosen career path and any career options that may follow.

Career services assist students in addressing their career concerns and alternatives and include:

- career counseling
- on-campus interviews
- numerous workshops
- extensive resume and interview preparation
- help in choosing a major
- post-graduate plans, etc.

Additional services related to job search, salary and job offers, dining etiquette, etc. are offered as well. For more information on either Counseling or Career Services at (318) 357-5621 or online at: www.nsula.edu/ccs.

The mission of Counseling and Career Services is to serve as an agent of change for student's personal and professional growth by aiding students in developing, evaluating and effectively implementing a life plan. To this end, Counseling and Career Services provides free and confidential services in the areas of personal counseling, part-time employment and full-time employment to NSU students. These services are delivered by a variety of programs including career planning and placement, counseling, and job location and development all located in Room 305, Friedman Student Union Building. Additionally, Counseling and Career Services serves as a practicum and internship training site for Student Personnel Services and Psychology graduate programs.

Disability Services

Disability Services works directly with all faculty and staff, providing in-service training in understanding of disabilities and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Disability Services coordinate reasonable accommodations necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. Some reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to: extending time limits on examinations, allowing lectures to be tape-recorded when the disability impairs a student's ability to take notes, and providing scribes for students with motor impairments. Provisions are also made for registration assistance, interpreters, and many other accommodations. For more information, call Disability Services at (318) 357-6950 or TTD (318) 357-4393.
Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library

Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library is a three-story building located across from Campus Corner on University Parkway. Library resources comprise some 330,000 books and bound periodicals, more than 1,475 serial titles, a large U.S. government documents collection of over 470,000 items, about 150,000 microforms, and over 7,000 audio visual items. The collection is particularly strong in the subject areas of education, business, and nursing. The library includes a Reference Room, a Student-Faculty Reading Room, electronic databases, a Media Center, Interlibrary Loan Office, Computer Lab, Resource Center, and comfortable reading areas for students and faculty.

Current NSU students have access to online databases at www.nsula.edu/watson_library using their myNSU account. Most materials located via the NSU databases can be acquired for students through the Interlibrary Loan office if a copy is unavailable at Watson Library. Current students can check out materials from the library using their NSU ID. Students can check out DVDs, CDs, and VCR tapes from the Media Center (we recommend watching Steel Magnolias as it was filmed in Natchitoches). The Resource Center located in the Watson Library Computer Lab provides the following services for students and is funded by Student Technology fees: binding, copying (black & white, color), faxing, and laminating. You have already paid to use these services, so be sure to take advantage of them each semester. The Student-Faculty Reading Room has vending machines, tables, a conference area, and comfortable reading areas for study groups. Watson Library also has private individual study carrels for graduate students. The Cammie G. Henry Research Center houses a significant collection of Louisiana books, archival materials, and rare books. Branch libraries are maintained at the Nursing Education Center in Shreveport and at the Northwestern-Fl. Polk facility near Leesville.

The NSU Libraries are a member of the Louisiana Academic Library Information Network Consortium (LALINC) and have online access to the catalogs of other university libraries throughout the State on LOUIS (Louisiana Online University Information System).

Health Services

Northwestern State University offers a student health clinic on the Natchitoches campus. Students are assessed $25.00 USD per semester for Health Services. Through this fee, students are provided the following services:

- Physical assessments and treatment of:
  - Acute illnesses
  - Flu symptoms, sore throat, common colds
  - Cuts, injuries, rashes, headaches
  - Stomach disorders
  - And many others
- Referrals to University contracted physician for $10.00 USD per visit
- Health education, literature, and videos
- Professional assistance and guidance with related class work
- Allergy injections as prescribed by personal physician
- Student Health Insurance management, guidance, and assistance
- Sexually transmitted disease information, prevention, and referrals
- Resource for sources of health care in the Natchitoches area

Intercollegiate Athletics

Northwestern State University sponsors intercollegiate programs at the Division I level for both men and women. In order to participate in the varsity athletic programs and receive athletically related aid, a student must conform to the applicable rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Southland Conference (SLC). In addition, the student-athlete must demonstrate good academic standing by being enrolled in 12 or more hours, and demonstrate satisfactory progress by fulfilling the requirements of NCAA By-law Article 14, as stated in the NCAA manual. All international student athletes must contact the NSU Compliance Office at (318) 357-4152 upon arrival at Northwestern.
Northwestern sponsors the following sports:
Men: cross country, indoor and outdoor track, football, baseball, basketball.
Women: cross country, indoor and outdoor track, volleyball, softball, basketball, tennis, soccer.

**Recreational and Wellness Facilities**

**WRAC (Wellness Recreation Activity Center)**

Northwestern offers a wide variety of recreational facilities for college students. NSU Recreational Sports is a great way to be involved, meet people, stay in shape, have fun, and keep your competitive spirit alive. The new $8.3 million state of the art NSU Wellness Recreation Activity Center, completed in Summer 2005, is right in the heart of campus. This facility is open for more than 90 hours per week. The WRAC is home to over 10,000 square feet of strength, fitness, and cardio equipment; group exercise room, spin cycle room, game room, men’s and women’s locker/shower/steam rooms, 3 racquetball/walleyball courts, fully equipped service center, 2 large gymniasums housing 4 basketball/volleyball/badminton courts, fitness assessment lab, massage therapy room, indoor rubberized walking/jogging track, cafe' area, and administrative staff offices. The administrative staff includes the Associate director of Wellness, Intramural and Recreational Sports; Intramural Coordinator, Wellness Coordinator, and WRAC Facility Coordinator.
The wellness program offers a variety of group exercise classes, speakers and seminars. There is a state of the art fitness assessment lab with personal training available as well as a comprehensive intramural program with over 30 sports and activities during the year.

**Natatorium**

Indoor swimming is available at the NSU Nesom Natatorium where open swim, swimming classes, and water aerobics are offered throughout the year.

**REC Complex (Robert W. Wilson Recreation Complex)**

The Northwestern State University owned Robert W. Wilson Recreation Complex is located on Highway One ByPass across from NSU. The complex is a unique facility in that Northwestern is the only university in Louisiana with a "student country club". All Natchitoches campus students taking five hours or more are entitled to use the complex simply by presenting their current NSU identification card and, if playing golf, paying a small green fee. Non-university individuals may use the complex by paying a daily fee or purchasing a membership. NSU operate a beautiful eighteen hole golf course, Northwestern Hills golf Course. The course is laid out over rolling hills with many water hazards to make the course a challenging experience. The complex also offers four tennis courts for recreational play. The courts are free and open to everyone year round. During the months of May to September an Olympic sized swimming pool is open to students, faculty and staff, as well as the general public. In the center of the complex is a pro-shop that is stocked with a large assortment of golf paraphernalia including golf balls, gloves, shirts, hats, and towels. The NSU recreational complex pavilion offers the perfect setting for meetings and parties and can accommodate up to 125 people. Current students and organizations can reserve this facility.

**Contact the Director of the Rec Complex at (318) 357-3207 for more information.**

**Student Activities and Organizations**

There is much more to college life than classes, homework, and exams. The Student Activities Department at Northwestern State University aims to enhance your collegiate experience by offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These activities are not separate and apart from the academic life; they serve to increase the total experience. Student organizations, activities, traditions, athletic events, and much more help you discover hidden talents while gaining marketable skills.
Activities at NSU are selected to suit the needs and interests of the students. Events involving the entire student body include concerts, dances, movies, ball games, exhibits, and forums featuring national figures in both formal and informal discussion. These and many other activities are planned and presented by the students themselves, serving on committees and with organizations.

Approximately 90 recognized student organizations are available to students. Offering something for everyone, these organizations give students ample opportunity to become involved in planning activities, making new friends, developing leadership qualities, and receiving recognition for a job well done. Recognized student organizations are classified as governmental, academic, professional, service, religious, social sororities/fraternities and special interest groups. There are numerous opportunities for you to get involved. Questions about organizations may be referred to the Director of Student Activities and Organizations at (318) 357-6511 or online at: http://www.nsla.edu/studentactivities/.

**Contact the Director of Student Activities for information on NSU’s **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION** **where you can meet other international students attending Northwestern as well as students interested in international studies.

**INTERNATIONAL (F-1) STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**PLEASE NOTE: MANY U.S. Immigration regulations are changing. The information in this handbook was current as we went to press, but information may have changed since then.**

**ALWAYS** check with a Foreign Student Advisor before traveling out of the U.S., transferring to another school, considering employment, dropping a class or completing your studies.

The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) under the Department of Homeland Security has specific regulations regarding F-1 students. All F-1 student data is maintained in the SEVIS system. This system is designed to track the enrollment status, local address, etc. of each F-1 student each semester of attendance.

To be in compliance with BCIS regulations, your Foreign Student Advisors in the Office of Admissions have established forms and procedures to handle your requests and needs. The appropriate forms will need to be completed before any action can be taken upon your request. Services provided international students include:

- Request for Program Extension
- Request for Practical Training after Completion of Studies
- Request for Curricular Training During Studies
- Request for Work Authorization Based Upon Economic Hardship
- Request to Drop Below Full-Time Status

The Director of Admissions is your primary Foreign Student Advisor. The Admissions Record Analysts are your secondary Foreign Student Advisors. These individuals are located in the Office of Admissions, Roy Hall, Room 209, to assist you with inquiries and requests and advise you on immigration regulations and procedures. Their office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00AM until 4:30PM.
All international students (F-1 Visas) need to see a Foreign Student Advisor (FSA):

1. **Within two weeks after the semester’s registration ends** each semester for which you are enrolled.
2. **When dropping a class.** This includes dropping below full-time status.
3. **If changing your major.** A corrected SEVIS I-20 will be issued to you. Changing majors may make a difference in your expected graduation date.
4. **To notify and record your local address and telephone number** while in attendance during the fall and spring semesters. Complete the address form and include your dorm assignment, NSU Box and/or street address. This must be updated each semester unless your information does not change.
5. **If changing your address.** You will need to complete an Address Change Form.
6. **At minimum, five (5) days before intending to leave the United States.** Your I-20 must be properly signed for you to be allowed to re-enter the U.S.
7. **If you do not plan to return to the U.S. or NSU.** Notify a FSA prior to departure.
8. **If resigning from the university during the semester.**

Additionally, all international students (F-1 Visas) need to **abide** by the following criteria each semester of enrollment at NSU:

1. **You must be enrolled in a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters.** A full course of study is **twelve (12) hours** for undergraduate students and **nine (9) hours** for graduate students. No more than one (1) internet or distance learning course can be counted toward full-time status. A student may take as many internet or distance learning courses as desired in addition to the full-time course requirements. Special exams do not apply towards full-time status.
2. **Academic requirements may be less than immigration requirements.** If your Academic Advisor recommends that you register for less than full-time, you should see a Foreign Student Advisor.
3. **You must maintain a valid passport** for at least six (6) months into the future.
4. **DO NOT accept off-campus employment unless you have been granted and received EAD (Employment Authorization Document) from Immigration.** You must request permission to work off-campus from immigration. Applications can be obtained from a Foreign Student Advisor. If you are caught working off-campus illegally, you are subject to deportation proceedings.

**On Campus Employment**

You may work on campus provided (1) you are maintaining lawful F-1 status; (2) you work no more than a total of twenty (20) hours per week; and (3) you have a letter requesting you as a student employee from the department you desire to work in. You may be employed on campus full-time during holidays and vacation periods, including summer vacations, provided you are eligible and intend to register for the next school term. See a Foreign Student Advisor for more information.

**Off Campus Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship**

You are eligible for off-campus work permission based upon severe economic hardship if you:

- Are in lawful F-1 status
- Are in “good academic standing”,
- Have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year (9 months), and
- Can demonstrate that the employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control and that employment on-campus is unavailable or otherwise insufficient to meet your needs.
You _MAY NOT BEGIN EMPLOYMENT UNTIL the date listed on your EAD (Employment Authorization Document)_ received from Immigration. See a Foreign Student Advisor if you have questions regarding off campus employment based on severe economic hardship.

**Practical Training**

Practical Training is employment directly related to one’s field of study that serves as training for the profession the student will enter. The Immigration and Naturalization Service allows students to engage in _Curricular Practical Training_ and _Optional Practical Training_ (during and/or after a course of study).

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

INS defines “Curricular Practical Training” as employment which is an integral or important part of your curriculum, including: alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is designed to provide international students with an opportunity to gain actual employment experience in their chosen field of study. The purpose of OPT is to complement academic studies. The employment must be directly related to the student’s major field of study and it must be appropriate for the student’s level of educational experience. The work may occur anywhere in the United States.

See your Foreign Student Advisor for more information on either CPT or OPT.

**Financial Aid**

In addition to on campus employment, scholarships and out-of-state tuition waivers may be available through the NSU Alumni Foundation (located next to Varnado Hall) and the NSU Scholarship Office (located in the basement of Roy Hall).

International students are not eligible to receive federal financial aid (any aid requiring a FAFSA form). Please see the Office of Financial Aid website for more information at: [www.nsula.edu/financialaid/](http://www.nsula.edu/financialaid/).

**ISEP Participants**

International students attending Northwestern State University as a participant in the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) may have additional requirements and are not governed by F-1 Visa regulations. If you have any questions, contact the ISEP Coordinator for additional information.

**Cultural Transitions**

_CULTURE_ can be defined as the ways in which people relate themselves to their physical and social environment, and how they express these relationships.
So much of what causes conflict or confusion is the part of the culture we cannot see or touch.

Consider the following illustration and notice the differences between the aspects of culture above and below the "waterline." The "tip of the iceberg" is the behavior or "external culture" that can be easily observed. The waterline marks the transition into beliefs. The bottom portion of the iceberg represents the values and thought patterns that make up the "internal culture." Internal culture is often subconscious and more difficult to observe. Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts arise mostly out of culturally shaped perceptions and interpretations of each other's norms, values, and beliefs (those elements below the waterline).

Entering another culture is like two icebergs colliding – the real clash occurs beneath the water where values and thought patterns conflict. (MSU International Student Handbook & PeaceCorps Training Manual)

CULTURE SHOCK can be defined as a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences (Peter Adler). It can also be defined as the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar (R. Michael Paige).

Experts in the field of intercultural communication feel the name "culture shock" is misleading because it makes us think of one single moment of shock rather than the more accurate idea that culture shock evolves over a longer period of time and involves mixed emotions. While at Northwestern, you may experience specific instances when behaviors, thought patterns, or processes shock you; however, you may experience a more subtle reaction as a result of accumulating many experiences at NSU. This accumulation of experiences forms our opinions. For this reason, many experts in this field prefer the term "culture fatigue."

The phrase "culture shock" was coined by Cora DuBois in 1951. Kalvero Obert, the first to systematically define and study culture shock, described culture shock as being cut off from your own cultural cues.

"These signs and cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life – when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people; when and how to give tips; how to make purchases; when to accept a date and when to refuse invitations; when to take statements seriously and when not."

(MSU International Student Handbook)
Cultural Adjustment Cycle (Cross-Cultural Transitions: An Emotional Roller Coaster)

The Process of Adjustment

How most students experience the early days of life in a foreign country

- Leaving Home
  - Far away
  - Happy and sad

- Arriving in Nakhonratchasima
  - Confused
  - Tired
  - Basically happy

- Culture Shock
  - Lonely
  - Missing family
  - New
  - Food
  - Study
  - Experiences

- Feelings of Unhappiness
  - Did I make the right choice to come to NSU?
  - Will I achieve my goals?

- Adjusting
  - Confidence
  - Studies OK
  - New friends and activities

- Re-adjusting
  - Successfully re-establishing lifestyle

How most students experience life returning to their home country

- Leaving Nakhonratchasima
  - Farewells
  - Happy and sad

- Arrival in Home Country
  - Setting to know family & friends again
  - Starting work
  - High expectations

- Reverse Culture Shock
  - Disappointed if expectations are not met
  - Negative feelings about home
  - Comparing Nakhonratchasima with home environment

Adapted from works by Margaret Rusch (1988) and S.H. Hainesmith (1975). Graphics courtesy of Australian International Development Assistance Bureau

TIPS FOR COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

- Maintain your perspective.
- Take some practical steps (see Hess' eight (8) hints).
- Be patient with yourself and other people.
- Take care of yourself.
- Realize you may be treated as a stereotype.
- Talk with experienced international visitors from your country and other countries.
- Learn the local criteria for success.
- Realize how the status of your role here compares to the status to which you are accustomed.
- Avoid being excessively influenced by dramatic events.
- Do what you think is appropriate and explain if necessary.
- Learn from the experience.
- Visit Counseling and Career Services.
PRACTICAL STEPS TO WORK THROUGH CULTURE SHOCK:

In *The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning*, J. Daniel Hess suggests the following for people experiencing the loneliness or distress of culture shock:

1. **Find people to interact with.** Ask them questions. As you take an interest, your feelings will have a focal point outside yourself.
2. **Surround yourself with familiar things** - a favorite jacket, a photo, a CD. Make your environment pleasant and reinforcing.
3. **Slow down.** Simplify your daily tasks. Relax. Let your emotions catch up with the newness all around you.
4. **Develop patterns.** Follow the same routine each day so that you get a sense of returning to the familiar.
5. **Give expression to your feelings.** Cry, laugh, sing, dance, pray. Draw a picture.
6. **Revise your goals to accommodate detours instead of scolding yourself for failures.**
7. **Keep working on language skills.** Practice the American idiom, “If at first you do not succeed, try, try again.”
8. **Make a few small decisions and carry them out.** Your resolve in small things will increase your confidence. Be assured that, however stressful, culture shock passes if you are willing to let the process of cross-cultural adaptation take its course.

(University of Minnesota International Scholar Handbook, p. 34)

As a NSU student, licensed professional counselors are available to assist you with the various challenges which accompany immersion in a new environment. For more information, contact Counseling & Career Services at (318) 357-5621 or online at:

www.nsum.edu/css.

**Academic Matters**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U.S. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

You may find the academic environment at Northwestern to be different from what you are accustomed to in your home country. Individualism, achievement, importance of time, work ethic and pragmatism shape the U.S. academic environment in the following ways:

1. **Active classroom participation is expected.**
2. **Time pressure is high** - often there are many small assignments due each week and time management is an important skill to develop.
3. **Critical thinking must be developed.**
4. **Independent thinking is highly valued.**
5. **Presenting ideas concisely in class is expected.**
6. **Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.**
7. **Competition is a common mindset.**
8. **Achievement and hard work are highly valued; the finished product is most important.**
9. **Students must be responsible for themselves.**
10. **Equality** - all students should be treated equally.
11. **Informality is normal.**
12. **Direct and straightforward communication is expected.**
13. **Friendship is usually based on doing things in common - sports, studying, etc.**
14. **Combining theory and practice - the practical application of ideas - is emphasized.**
15. **Problem-solving orientation** - “If it is broken, we ought to be able to fix it!”
16. **The scientific method and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.**

Developed by Dr. R. M. Paige and S.L. Smith, University of Minnesota, October 1988; revised by R. Stuck, 1993.
Academic Terms

Academic (Scholastic) load — the totals of semester hours of course work for which a student is registered in a semester or summer session.

Academic Catalog Year — catalogs are in effect beginning with the fall semester and remain in effect for the following spring and summer semesters.

Admission — written permission, granted by the University Registrar, to register for course work at NSU.

Auditor — one who pays fees and registers for a class or classes as an observer only and receives no credit for it.

Cancellation — a process where all courses are removed from a student's academic record.

Concentration — an alternative track of courses within a Major or Option, account for at least 30 percent of the Major requirements.

Corequisite — concurrent requirement; usually a course or some other condition that must be taken or met at the same time as another course.

Curriculum — an officially approved combination of courses, satisfactory completion of which may lead to a degree or other goal.

Degree — the title of the award conferred on students upon completion of a unified program of study (e.g., Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts).

Degree Designation — for example, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts.

Degree Program — grouping of campus-approved courses and requirements (e.g., minimum GPA required, comprehensive examinations, English and Math proficiency) which, when satisfactorily completed by a student will entitle him or her to a degree.

Elective — a course required in a curriculum without specific identification; the student "elects" the course to be taken. The area in which the elective must be chosen is sometimes specified.

Good Standing — the status of a student who is eligible to continue in or return to the University.

Graduate Student — a student who has received a baccalaureate degree and has been officially admitted to Graduate Studies.

Major — that part of a Degree Program which consists of a specified group of courses in a particular discipline(s) or field(s). The name of the Major is usually consistent with the Degree Subject Area. A Major usually consists of 25 percent or more of total hours required in an undergraduate curriculum.

Minor — that part of a Degree Program which consists of a specified group of courses in a particular discipline(s) or field(s), consisting usually of 15 percent or more of total hours required in an undergraduate curriculum.

Overall Cumulative Grade Point Average — obtained by dividing (the total number of quality points) / (the total number of quality hours).

Prerequisite — a requirement that must be satisfied, often registration in another course, before a student can take a course.

Quality Hours — the credit hour value of the course.

Quality Point — a numerical value assigned to each of the letter grades A through F. The grade of A is valued at four quality points for each semester hour of credit in the course. B is three points per hour, C is two, and D is one. A grade of F has a quality point value of zero. These values are used in calculating a student's "grade point average" and academic standing.

Registrar — the University official responsible for compiling and keeping secure the official records of each student's scholastic achievement.

Resignation — a student's voluntary termination of enrollment in all classes which is carried out in accordance with University procedures.

Semester Average — a student's grade-point average based on the total number of quality points earned divided by total number of quality hours in a given semester.

Semester hour — the numerical value of a course usually based on the number of hours spent in the class per week in a regular session. A credit or semester hour generally represents one hour of class work a week.

Transfer student — one who has attended another college or university prior to entering NSU.
Academic Advising

At NSU, we place great importance on academic advising. We view it as an integral part of your college experience and strive to provide you with an environment that fosters your intellectual growth and development. Both you and your advisor have certain responsibilities in the advising relationship.

Student Responsibilities in the Advising Relationship
Students are expected to be proactive in regards to their educational plans. The advisee has primary responsibility for:

- Making decisions about his/her educational goals, including selection of courses, major, and career.
- Scheduling all advising sessions early in the advising period and arriving promptly, prepared to make full use of the advising session.
- Preparing a list of questions before each meeting.
- Having a tentative, WRITTEN schedule prepared if registering for courses.
- Consulting with an advisor on changes in the approved schedule or academic plan. An advisor should be consulted before changing majors, transferring, or withdrawing from college.
- Discussing academic difficulties with an advisor and taking action to correct the difficulties.
- Reviewing the General Catalog, Schedule of Classes, etc. To keep current on academic policies, procedures, and requirements. The student should be aware that knowledge of and adherence to regulations of the University, both academic and otherwise, is ultimately the responsibility of the student.

Remember, ask questions!!! If you do not understand a policy or procedure, ask questions until you do understand.

Advisor Responsibilities in the Advising Relationship
Academic advisors assists students in pursuing her/his educational goals and facilitating access to the full range of learning opportunities and services available at NSU. The advisor has the primary responsibility for:

- Explaining University academic requirements and assisting the student in planning a program that satisfies these requirements.
- Advising each advisee (student) in the development of her/his educational goals and long-term academic plans.
- Developing course schedules that consider the student’s academic background, course pre-requisites, and educational goals.
- Identifying appropriate resource personnel to assist students with resolving individual problems.
- Reviewing with each advisee, at least once per semester, the record of her/his academic progress. An advisor should maintain accurate records for each advisee.

Limitations on Academic Advisor Responsibilities
The academic advisor serves as a facilitator and role model. However, there are limitations to an advisor’s responsibilities. An academic advisor:

CANNOT
- Make decisions for an advisee
- Change college policy or academic requirements
- Alter the native abilities of a student
- Serve as a personal counselor

CAN
- Be a sympathetic listener and offer alternatives to consider
- Inform and recommend a
- Encourage maximum development of talents
- Be a resource for referrals to appropriate professional personnel
Dos and Don’ts of Academic Advising at NSU

DO
• See your NSU advisor
• Make appointments when your advisor can spend time with you. Periods after registration tend to be less hectic. Appointments during peak registration times are often limited because of the number of students who schedule appointments at that time.
• Keep your own records (grade reports, classes taken, etc.). Bring them with you to assist your advisor.
• Get answers in writing. Make a copy for you and one for your file.
• Assert yourself. Ask questions! Repeat questions and clarify answers.
• Take responsibility for reading about those rules and regulations that affect you. Ask for an appointment with another advisor if you want to change advisors at any time.

DO NOT
• Take advice from just anyone.
• Wait until registration periods to see your advisor.
• Assume your advisor has access to all your records. Keep your materials to assist your advisor.
• Assume your advisor will automatically tell you everything you need to know.
• Assume that only your advisor (and not you) should be familiar with university rules and regulations.

Typically, your advisor is a faculty member who teaches within the department of your chosen major field. For information about academic advising, or to find out who your advisor is, contact your Academic Department or College Dean.

(Section on academic advising is taken from NSU 2007 Orientation 1010: Instructor’s Manual. The Academic Community: Your Academic Advisor & the Registration Process Session Outline)

VISITING AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR VISITING A FOREIGN STUDENT ADVISOR.
Just a reminder:

ALWAYS check with a Foreign Student Advisor before:
- traveling out of the U.S.,
- transferring to another school,
- considering employment,
- dropping a class or
- completing your studies.

Also note: Academic requirements may be less than immigration requirements. If your Academic Advisor recommends that you register for less than full-time, you should see a Foreign Student Advisor.

Grading Scale

Most classes are on a 10-point grading scale where 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, and below 60% = F (check each class syllabus for specific grading scales). Students earn grades for each course. These grades are worth quality points. Quality points are used to compute a student’s grade point average (GPA). At NSU, quality points are assigned to grades as follows: 

\[
\begin{align*}
A & = 4.0, \quad B = 3.0, \quad C = 2.0, \quad D = 1.0, \quad F = 0.0.
\end{align*}
\]

GPA = \frac{\text{quality points}}{\text{attempted hours}}. You can also compute your GPA by visiting the GPA Calculator provided by the University College at: http://www.nsula.edu/universitycollege/gpalc.asp.
Standards of Academic Conduct

Academic standards and practices are influenced by culture. What is considered appropriate academic behavior in your home country might be different from what is appropriate in the United States. Therefore, it is important that you understand U.S. standards and practices. Not meeting these standards can result in charges of academic dishonesty and possible expulsion from the University.

The U.S. definition of academic dishonesty is based on the cultural values of individualism, fairness, the idea that individuals must think and work independently, and a strong value of original thinking, creativity, and invention.

At Northwestern State University, academic dishonesty is defined as:

1. Collaborating, conspiring or cooperating during an examination with any other person by giving or receiving information without authority.
2. Copying or obtaining information from another student’s examination paper. “Duplicity” defined as the offering for credit identical or substantially unchanged work in two or more courses without approval in advance by the instructor(s)
3. Submitting as one’s own, in fulfillment of academic requirements, any theme, report, term paper, essay, other written work, painting, drawing, sculpture, or other art work of another person.
4. Substituting for another person or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self to take an examination.
5. Using material during the examination not authorized by the person administering the examination.

For additional guidelines regarding academic standards, refer to the most recent version of the NSU Student Handbook. A copy can be obtained online at www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook.

Exams and cheating

It is common in many countries for students to study and work together to prepare for exams. This is customary in the United States as well. However, once in the classroom, students are on their own for exams. Students cannot copy or discuss answers with each other during an exam. It is essential in the U.S. education system that each student be evaluated individually on his or her own work. “Cheating” is defined as copying someone else’s work or taking prohibited information or tools to an exam.

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism” is defined as the use of any other person’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own work in fulfillment of academic requirements. In the United States, this will be considered an attempt by you to pass off the ideas or words of another person as your own. Plagiarism is one of the most serious violations of the standards of academic conduct in the United States. It can ruin your academic career.

Of course, when you are writing a paper, you research many sources and present or summarize other people’s ideas. But you must name your sources and identify when you are using their words and ideas by these methods:

- Name your sources in the text
- Put quotation marks around words and sentences that you copy from someone else’s work
- Provide footnotes and endnotes (even when you are paraphrasing someone’s words).
- Include a list of references or a bibliography

This also applies to the work of other students. Discussing ideas for a paper with friends is okay, but it is not acceptable to hand in papers that are the same as your friends’ or to let someone else write your paper for you, even though the ideas are yours.

Helpful resources on research and writing

Consult a publication manual from your discipline, such as the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (http://apastyle.apa.org/) or the Modern Language Association (http://www.mla.org/homepage/), for specific guidelines on citing the written and spoken works of others.

- Ask in your department if a particular style or publication manual is used in your field.
- Look on the web for software tools for publishing and managing bibliographies.
- Contact the Writing Lab at (318) 357-6272 or online at: http://www.nsula.edu/langcomm/writingcenter/

University Academic Calendar

Each semester the University Registrar's Office publishes a calendar detailing important academic dates and deadlines in the Schedule of Classes. The calendar includes registration dates, payment schedules, and official university holidays, drop and add deadlines, final examinations dates, and commencement exercises. The deadlines set on this calendar do not change, so it is important to be aware of the dates listed and how the deadlines affect you. A current copy of the University Academic Calendar can be obtained in the University Catalog, the Schedule of Classes (available in the University Registrar, Admission's Office, University Bookstore), and online at: (http://www.nsula.edu/registrar).

Miscellaneous Cultural Information

U.S. Holidays and Customs

January 1: New Year's Day. Schools, offices, banks, and most stores are closed. Starting this day and the night before (New Year's Eve on December 31st), people gather to celebrate the start of the new year.

January (3rd Monday of the month): Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday. Most schools, offices, and banks are closed. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was an African-American minister and civil rights leader who received the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize.

February 14: Valentine's Day. This holiday celebrates love and romance. "Valentines" or tokens of love (cards, candy, gifts) are exchanged.

February (3rd Monday of the month): President's Day. Most schools, offices and banks are closed. This holiday celebrates the February birthdays of two famous U.S. Presidents: George Washington, the first U.S. President and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Armies that won independence for the U.S.; and Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth U.S. President who held the office during the U.S. Civil War and is remembered for abolishing slavery.

February (Tuesday before Ash Wednesday): Mardi Gras. This holiday is a unique Louisiana tradition indicating the final day of the Carnival season. Parades, king cakes, bead necklaces, and masquerade balls celebrate the final day before the beginning of the Roman Catholic season of Lent.

May (last Monday of the month): Memorial Day. All schools, offices and banks are closed; most stores are open but may have shortened hours. On Memorial Day, all the war dead and civilian dead are memorialized.

July 4: Independence Day. All schools, offices and banks are closed; most stores are open but may have shortened hours. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. With this document the thirteen colonies declared their independence from England and became the United States. Fireworks displays are traditionally seen on this holiday.

September (1st Monday of the Month): Labor Day. All schools, offices and banks are closed; most stores are open but may have shortened hours. This holiday celebrates the contributions and efforts of laborers.
October 31: Halloween. For some people this holiday has religious significance but for most Americans, it is a children’s holiday. Children dress up in costumes and go from house to house “trick or treating” to receive treats of candy. The phrase “Trick or Treat” means “Give me a treat or I will play a trick on you.” If your children will be trick or treating, for safety reasons they should only do so accompanied by an adult, during the times designated for trick or treating by the local government and the candy they receive should be inspected by an adult for any tampering before they eat it.

November (3rd Thursday of the month): Thanksgiving Day. All schools, offices and banks are closed, most stores are open but may have shortened hours. On this holiday, people gather to give thanks. The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1621. The Pilgrims gave thanks for their harvest and survival and shared a feast with the Indians (Native Americans). Today, the traditional Thanksgiving meal includes family members gathering together and eating a roasted turkey.

December 25: Christmas Day. All schools, offices and banks are closed, most stores are closed and the ones that are open may have shortened hours. By origin, this is a Christian holiday (celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ). Because it is a federal holiday, it has become somewhat secularized so that many people, regardless of their religion, gather together on this day to enjoy the company of others and exchange gifts and hopes for “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.”

Natchitoches Festivals

1st Saturday in April: Natchitoches Jazz/Rhythm and Blues Festival offers simultaneous musical entertainment from many different states located throughout the downtown area. Dozens of bands and one major headliner provide the best in Jazz and Rhythm/Blues music. Begins at 10am and ends at Midnight.

2nd Weekend in June: Melrose Plantation Arts and Crafts Festival sponsored by The Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches (APHN). It is an arts and crafts festival held on the grounds of famous Melrose Plantation, a National Historic Landmark, containing nine buildings in the complex.

July 4th: Celebration on the Cane is a real American style 4th of July. Beginning at 6pm, the event offers hot dogs, apple pie, homemade ice cream, along with Sousa Marches, Patriotic Choirs, and other forms of American music. There is also a Fireworks show along the beautiful Cane River.

3rd Weekend in July: Natchitoches/NSU Folk Festival hosts hundreds of folk musicians, storytellers, cooks, dancers, and craftsmen for this unique historical event held in the Northwestern State University Prather Coliseum. It is sponsored by the NSU Folk Life Center.

1st Saturday in December: Natchitoches Christmas Festival is the highlight of the Christmas Season for most of Northwest Louisiana. The day is crammed with a parade, arts and crafts shows, food vendors offering nearly anything imaginable to eat, live entertainment on the Fleur de Lis stage (Downtown on Front Street), Carnival, children’s programs, and a 20 minute fireworks show. Over 150,000 visitors flock to the “City of Lights” each year for this celebration.

(Courtesy of Natchitoches The Real Yellow Pages, August 2008)

Temperature

Temperature is measured in degrees Fahrenheit in the U.S. as opposed to degrees Centigrade used more commonly around the world. The conversion equivalents are:

Freezing Point: 0 degree Centigrade(C) = 32 degree Fahrenheit (F)
Boiling Point: 100 degree Centigrade(C) = 212 degree Fahrenheit (F)

Conversion formula: (F degree - 32) x 5/9 = C degree or F degree = (C degree x 9/5) + 32
**Time Zones**

The U.S. is divided into 4 time zones: Eastern (eastern states); Central (central and midwest states including Louisiana); Mountain (west and southwest); and Pacific (west-coast states). Each zone is one hour different from the adjacent zone, thus if it's 5:00 p.m. in Natchitoches; the time will be 6:00 p.m. in New York; 4:00 p.m. in Denver; and 3:00 p.m. in Los Angeles. Also, the U.S. follows a Standard/Daylight Savings time system whereby we change our time during Spring/Summer (the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November) to gain one hour of additional daylight. This period is referred to as Daylight Savings Time. The remainder of the year (the first Sunday in November to the second Sunday in March) we switch back to natural or "standard" time. We remember which direction to set our clocks by the phrase, "Spring forward; Fall back."

**Weights and Measures**

The U.S. system of weights and measures is different from the metric system used in most countries. Some common Equivalents are listed for your reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric System</th>
<th>U.S. System</th>
<th>Types of Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Centimeter</td>
<td>0.394 inches</td>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Meter</td>
<td>3.28 Feet</td>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kilometer</td>
<td>0.621 Miles</td>
<td>Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Litre</td>
<td>1.06 Quarts</td>
<td>Liquid Volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kilogram</td>
<td>2.21 pounds (lbs.)</td>
<td>Weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the U.S. system, the following equivalents are commonly used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 inches = 1 foot</td>
<td>5280 feet = 1 mile</td>
<td>2 cups (16 oz) = 1 Pint</td>
<td>16 ounces = 1 pound (lb.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 feet = 1 Yard</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 pints = 1 quart</td>
<td>4 quarts = 1 gallon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approximate U.S.—Metric equivalencies for commonly used measures are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 meter = 1 yard</td>
<td>5 kilometers = 3 miles</td>
<td>1 liter = 1 quart</td>
<td>1 kilogram = 2 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 grams = 1 pint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Temperature, Time Zone, and Weights and Measures Sections were adapted from the University of Michigan’s 2003 International Student Handbook)

**Additional Helpful Websites: (INCLUDE ALL WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS GUIDE)**

**NSU**
- Counseling & Career Services: [www.nsula.edu/ccs](http://www.nsula.edu/ccs)
- myNSU Portal: [http://my.nsula.edu](http://my.nsula.edu)
- Registrar: [www.nsula.edu/registrar/](http://www.nsula.edu/registrar/)
- Speed Demon Office: [www.nsula.edu/onecard](http://www.nsula.edu/onecard)
- Student Activities & Organizations: [www.nsula.edu/studentactivities](http://www.nsula.edu/studentactivities)
- Student Technology (Computer labs): [www.nsula.edu/student_labs/](http://www.nsula.edu/student_labs/)
- NSU Student Handbook: [www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook](http://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook)
- Writing Center: [www.nsula.edu/langcomm/writingcenter](http://www.nsula.edu/langcomm/writingcenter/)
TRAVEL

STA Travel:  www.statravel.com
Student Universe:  www.studentuniverse.com
Orbitz:  www.orbitz.com
Travelocity:  www.travelocity.com
Expedia:  www.expedia.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Low Cost insurance options for students:  www.macori.com
Currency Exchange Rates  www.xe.com
Directions:  www.mapquest.com
Natchitoches Guide:  www.natchitoches.net

NAFSA:
Association of International Educators  www.nafsa.org
University of Louisiana System  www.uls.state.la.us

Popular Search Engines:

Google:  www.google.com
Yahoo:  www.yahoo.com

Textbooks:
Amazon  www.amazon.com/Textbooks
Campus Corner  www.campuscornerinc.com
Half.com  www.Half.com/Textbooks
University Bookstore  www.NSUBookstore.com