The Graduate School (TGS) 2020 New Student Guide

Key Dates

Mid-March
The I-20/DS-2020 forms will be available for all incoming international students to request an F-1 Visa through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISS). You will submit your documents through the OISS Portal. To ensure you receive your F-1 or J-1 Visa stamp in time, please visit the International Office’s website for full details and deadline.

July 1
The deadline to submit health records, including proof of immunizations, for all entrants. The penalty deadline for submission of all documents and meeting the requirements is 30 days after the start of classes.

Late August
Open enrollment for the Northwestern Student Health Insurance Plan (NU-SHIP) runs from July 1-October 1. NU-SHIP provides coverage September 1 through August 31, 2021. International students (students with an F-1 or J-1 U.S. Visa) are required to maintain enrollment in NU-SHIP for the entire time they are at Northwestern. Students who intend to use NU-SHIP are encouraged to confirm their enrollment via the online form in CAESAR by the last week of August to ensure timely access to benefits. Students also may enroll dependents during the open enrollment period (July 1-October 1), after they have confirmed their own NU-SHIP enrollment in CAESAR.

August/September
Versant (English proficiency) Testing for international PhD/MFA students

Early September
New students can obtain a Wildcard/student ID card. All students are encouraged to submit their ID photo online. Please review the guidelines and upload your photo on the Wildcard Photo Submission page. The Wildcard Office is open by appointment only. You must present a government-issued photo ID (e.g., your driver’s license, state photo ID, or current passport) in order to claim your card.

Early September
Full-time enrolled TGS students receive their U-Pass. Please submit your Wildcard photo ID electronically before you arrive on campus to ensure your U-Pass will be ready for your arrival. Passes are not active until the first day of classes for new students. TGS is finalizing pick-up details for the Fall Quarter, please check the U-Pass webpage in mid-August for details.

Early September
TGS will host a Virtual New Student Orientation. TGS New Student Orientation is typically held in person in September for new TGS students. For the 2020–21 academic year, we will be migrating this experience to a virtual format. Please look for more details by mid-to-late August.

September 8-10
The Office of International Student and Scholar Services’ Virtual Orientation

September 10
Northwestern Virtual Graduate Student Teaching Conference

September 11
Students can begin to register for classes at 9 AM

September 16
Classes begin

September 22
The last day to add a class, change a section, or change the grading basis for Fall Quarter. (No reductions are made to bills for dropped or swapped classes after this date. Last day for full tuition refund.)

September 18 (for Students Receiving a Stipend or Being Paid)
Students can enter their Direct Deposit details in myHR anytime between September 18 and September 24

October 10
First invoice for the academic year is generated. You will receive an email to review your account and pay any balance due by November 1. Even if you are receiving a stipend and full tuition support, you will still need to pay the Activity Fee.

October 23
The last day to drop a class. (No tuition adjustments can be made after September 22.)

October 30
Deadline for official transcripts to be received by TGS.

Academic Calendar
The University’s academic calendar can be viewed here.