

The Graduate School (TGS) 2025 New Student Guide

Key Dates

Below are some important dates and deadlines as you begin your journey at Northwestern. For additional key dates and information, please visit the University's [2025–26 academic calendar](#).

March

- » New student immigration document requests are available for all incoming international students through the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services \(OISS\) Portal](#). To ensure students receive their F-1 or J-1 visa in time, please visit the [OISS website](#) for full details and the deadline.

July

- » Northwestern students are required to submit proof of immunizations and enter their vaccine/lab dates via the [Health Portal](#) **as soon as possible**. The penalty deadline for completing all documents and meeting the requirements is 30 days after classes start, after which a non-refundable \$100 late fee will be charged. Please note that **it takes 2–3 weeks** to process submissions.
- » Open enrollment for the Northwestern Student Health Insurance Plan (NU-SHIP) runs from **Tuesday, July 1 – Wednesday, October 1**. NU-SHIP provides coverage starting September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026. 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 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.
- » Registration for the [Fall Quarter Academic Kickoff](#) opens; this interactive day of informative sessions is designed to facilitate graduate student and postdoc transitions to teaching roles at Northwestern. It is held twice annually, every fall and spring.

August–September

- » The Graduate School's [2025 New Student Orientation](#) will be a hybrid experience with an online, self-paced orientation course in Canvas that will launch on **Monday, August 11**, a series of virtual Q&A sessions in late August and early September (more details will be shared with incoming TGS students in August 2025), a [webpage](#) of campus resources and TGS-affiliated student organizations, and an in-person TGS Resource Fair at Norris University Center on the Evanston campus on **Thursday, September 11 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**. All aspects of The Graduate School's orientation are suggested, not required.

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September

- » [Versant Testing](#) for international PhD/MFA students. Students within the testing pool will be contacted in July.
- » All currently enrolled TGS students may opt in each quarter to receive a [CTA University Pass \(U-Pass\) transit card](#) at a discounted rate through the quarterly TGS U-Pass Transit Card Fee. Please submit your Wildcard photo [electronically](#) before **Friday, August 29** to ensure your U-Pass will be ready for your arrival. U-Passes are not active until the first day of classes for new students. ***TGS is finalizing the pick-up details for the Fall Quarter, please check the [U-Pass webpage](#) in mid-August for details.***

Early September

- » New students can obtain a Wildcard/student ID card. **All students are required to submit their ID photo online.** Please review the guidelines and upload your photo on the [Wildcard Photo Submission page](#). To obtain your Wildcard, [appointments are recommended](#), but not required. You must present a government-issued photo ID (e.g., your driver's license, state photo ID, or current passport) to claim your card.

Wednesday, September 3

- » Deadline for official transcripts to be received, reviewed, and verified by The Graduate School.

Tuesday, September 9 – Thursday, September 11

- » The Office of International Student and Scholar Services' (OISS) [Graduate International Student Orientation \(G-ISO\)](#)

Thursday, September 11

- » TGS students can begin to register for classes at **9:00 AM**. [Registration instructions can be found here](#).
- » TGS Resource Fair from **10:00 AM – 12:00 PM** in Norris University Center on the Evanston campus.
- » Foreign nationals that have been within the U.S. for 31 days or more in 2025 must complete the [Foreign National Information System](#).

Friday, September 12 (for Students Receiving a Stipend or Being Paid)

- » Students need to enter their Federal W-4 and Direct Deposit details in [myHR](#) between **Friday, September 12 – Tuesday, September 23**.
- » Paper or electronic State W-4 forms need to be submitted to [askHR](#) between **Friday, September 12 – Friday, September 19**.

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Monday, September 15

- » The [Fall Quarter Academic Kickoff](#) takes place from **9:00 AM – 3:15 PM** at Norris University Center; this interactive day of informative sessions is designed to facilitate graduate student and postdoc transitions to teaching roles at Northwestern. It is held twice annually, every fall and spring.

Tuesday, September 16

- » Fall Quarter classes begin.

Thursday, September 18

- » TGS Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Success (GPS) New Student Welcome Reception from **4:00–6:00 PM** in Guild Lounge at Scott Hall on the Evanston campus.

Monday, September 22

- » Last day to add a class or change a section. (No reductions are made to bills for dropped or swapped classes after this date. Last day for full tuition refund.)

Friday, September 26

- » Last day to [request academic accommodations](#) for religious observance in Fall Quarter.

Friday, 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 **Saturday, November 1**. Even if you are receiving a stipend and full tuition support, you will still need to pay the quarterly TGS U-Pass Transit Card Fee if you opted in to receive a U-Pass.

Friday, October 24

- » Last day to drop a full-term class for Fall in CAESAR. Any requests after this date result in a “W” on the transcript and must go through the course withdrawal process.