Host Friend Program Handbook

A guide to hosting international students

Center for International Students

University of Wisconsin Eau Claire
“I had a chance to meet wonderful people through the Host Friend Program who made me feel so welcomed. I learned a lot about the local community and felt more comfortable being in a new and foreign land after having spent those few days with my host family. It was a great experience!”

-International Student, Malaysia
The Center for International Education (CIE)  
Schofield Hall #3  
intled@uwec.edu  
715-836-4411  
www.uwec.edu/cie

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Welcome to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire’s Host Friend Program!

You have truly made a wonderful decision to host an international student; they will thank you later! We are lucky to have such a diverse community of international students representing over 40 different countries on our campus. We are also very fortunate to have kindhearted Eau Claire area community members available to host. We truly hope you find the program a fun and rewarding experience that will have you hosting for years to come!

The Host Friend Program is one of the top reasons why international students choose our internationally esteemed university! The program is highly regarded and enjoyed by international students and hosts.

As a host you can expect to:

» Pick up students at the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport or Chippewa Valley Airport Service bus terminal
» Provide a weekend home stay (where the fun starts!)
» Help with periods of transition & cultural adjustment
» Introduce students to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, & US culture
» Learn about your students culture
» Create life-long friendships

The Host Friend Program matches international students with kindhearted and compassionate individuals and families such as yourself. You will be introducing international students to new, unique, and exciting customs, adventures, and experiences they would have been unable to enjoy without your support.

“Thanks to all of you who already participate and who will participate in this program. There are no words to express the gratitude that we have for all you do...Thank you!” — Celia, International Student, France

“Hosting international students for several years has brought our family unlimited joy. It has also offered us the opportunity to be good ambassadors for our own country. Hosting has encouraged our children to be open minded and eager to learn.”

— Connie, Host Friend
Hosts are NOT responsible for issues related to finances, immigration, visa, academics, medical, emotional, or housing students for long periods of time. Trained professionals on campus and in the Center for International Education are here for that purpose. If you should have any questions, please contact the Community Outreach Coordinator or Center for International Education at 715-836-4411.

The Host Friend Program and CIE can advise hosts on what may be appropriate in their interaction with students, but there are many aspects that we cannot advise students on. As hosts, you are encouraged to seek out additional community resources on your own.

We have provided the contact information for a few of UW-Eau Claire’s student support offices below.
This guide serves as a general introduction to hosting an international student through University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire’s Host Friend Program. It will provide an overview of the host friend responsibilities and expectations as well as offer practical suggestions. It is recommended that you attend the new host friend orientation meeting to fully understand the integral role as a host friend.

The home stay weekend is fast approaching and excitement is starting to set in. Soon you will be welcoming your international student to Eau Claire and America for the first time!

The new host friend orientation meeting will:

» Help prepare you for your first hosting experience
» Provide information for potential hosts
» Provide opportunity to ask questions and get answers
» Offer insights, tips, and pointers from veteran hosts
Both our hosts and students come from a variety of religious, cultural, and political backgrounds. Sharing viewpoints, opinions, and experiences regarding these subject areas will likely be one of the most interesting and rewarding aspects of this program for hosts and students. However, students and hosts should never begin a relationship for the purpose of attempting to change another person’s religious faith, cultural background, or political affiliations. Ideally, it’s expected that students and hosts should strive to better understand values different from their own, rather than judging or trying to actively change the other person’s way.

What STUDENTS are EXPECTED to Do:
1. Respond to invitations/emails/phone messages from the hosts.
2. Notify hosts in advance if the student must cancel an engagement.
3. Be kind and respectful towards the host.
4. Contact the CIE if the student can no longer continue the host relationship for any reason.
5. Contact the CIE if the host does not contact the student after a six week period.

What HOSTS are NOT EXPECTED to Do:
1. Provide housing for long periods of time in between semesters or during vacation periods.
2. Provide housing for visitors to the student or family of the student.
3. Loan students money or co-sign on loans.
4. Assist with immigration, visa, academic, emotional, or medical problems or issues.

What HOSTS are EXPECTED to Do:
1. Pick the student up at the Eau Claire airport or shuttle service and house the student for 2-3 nights before Orientation Week begins.
2. Drop the student off for orientation programming and residence hall move-in (hosts are welcome to assist students with dorm move-in. Resident Assistants will be available to assist the students, as well).
3. Contact the student by phone/email/mail at least once a month during the semester.
4. Be kind and respectful towards the student.
5. Contact the CIE if the host can no longer continue the relationship.
6. Contact the CIE if the student does not contact the host within a six week period.

Both students and hosts receive this information
Typically, students will arrive in Eau Claire by airplane or by shuttle service. All students are informed upon acceptance to UW-Eau Claire that they are expected to make travel arrangements to Eau Claire. Host Friends are expected to pick their students up at the Chippewa Valley Airport, Chippewa Valley Airport Service shuttle terminal, or by other agreed upon arrangements. All hosts should receive their student’s arrival information from their student at least a week in advance.

As with any type of travel, there can be delays. Don’t be surprised if your student’s flight schedule changes due to canceled flights, heavy traffic, lost luggage, etc. Students are asked to carry their hosts’ contact information and are encouraged to inform their hosts in the event of delays.

**Arrival:**

» Arrive at the pick-up site early. Don’t be surprised if your student’s schedule changes due to canceled flights, heavy traffic, lost luggage, etc.

» Speak clearly - make a point of learning the pronunciation of your student’s name and let the student know how you wish to be addressed.

» Make a sign with your students name clearly printed so they know where you are when they arrive.

**Chippewa Valley Regional Airport**

3800 Starr Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54703
admin@chippewavalleyairport.com
715-839-4900
www.chippewavalleyairport.com

**Chippewa Valley Airport Service**

(shuttle from MSP airport)
6204 Chuck Lane
Eau Claire, WI 54703
intladm@uwec.edu
715-830-9400
1-877-811-4211
www.chippewavalleyairportservice.com
First Night of Home Stay

The first night the student is in your home can be awkward for you and your student. Try to make your student feel comfortable by doing the following:

» Give your student a tour of your home and show them where they will be sleeping.

» Explain how the bathroom works: toilet (after each use), water faucets, and shower. It can be very different from their home country and a student may be embarrassed to ask.

» Briefly explain any house rules you think pertinent and go into more detail after your student is rested.

» Don’t plan any big activities for your student’s first night and day here. Your student may just want to rest and get used to the time difference. Remember that something as simple as a neighborhood walk or trip to the supermarket could be an exciting cultural experience for your student.

» Prepare to make a trip to the store for personals and clothing if your student’s luggage is lost or late.

» Keep plenty of night lights around the house or leave a central light on.

» Leave some type of food and drink in the student’s room (nuts, crackers, fruit, water, soda, etc.). Your student may feel uncomfortable asking for food when they first arrive, especially if they are hungry in the middle of the night.

» Suggest that the student make a phone call or send an email home to let his/her family know that they have arrived safely. This may help the student and their family back home feel at ease.

» Avoid a lot of dialogue on the first night. Your student will most likely be tired from traveling and it can be even more exhausting trying to understand English.

» Let your student know he/she is welcome to help themselves to something to eat and show them where the food is located.
Hospitality Hints

1. Become familiar with at least some basic facts about your student’s home country. Learn the location, climate, customs, etc. This information can easily be found on the Internet or at the library.

2. Make plans for your next get-together before dropping your student off at their residence hall. The worst thing you can do is to see the student one time and never have contact again.

3. Make sure when you plan an activity with your student that time, place, dress, transportation, and duration of activity are clearly understood. Provide transportation when needed. Give all details in writing if possible and then call a few hours before the meeting time to confirm plans.

4. Keep in mind that some cultures do not stress punctuality. Let your student know that when you set a time for a dinner or outing, being late may cause problems or cancellations. Different cultures have different views of time. Respect your student’s time as well.

5. Welcome your student with warmth and friendship. Learn to pronounce their given name. Practice pronouncing their name with them until you can say it reasonably well. Refreshments: juice, tea, coffee or soft drinks are usually appropriate and appreciated.

6. Speak distinctly, but not loudly. It is more helpful to pause between sentences than to speak each word slowly. Try to avoid use of slang and idioms. Ask your student to repeat anything you do not understand and encourage your student to do the same with you.
Help your student feel at home. Be natural. Find mutual interests or hobbies. Treat them as part of the family. Explain new things. Show them around your home. Share photographs.

Show real interest and get them to talk about themselves. Ask about family, education, home life, culture, customs, food likes and dislikes, aspirations, activities, plans, etc. Learn greetings in their language. Give your student time to answer and encourage them to ask questions about you as well.

Be interested in the issues that matter for international students. Most are much more willing to talk about politics or religion than Americans are, but remember - discuss, don't argue. Don't pry if they seem hesitant.

You may not always understand or agree with your student, but you should be willing to accept their perspectives. Try to keep an open mind without making value judgments of “right or wrong” or “better and worse” between aspects of their culture and yours. Recognize these are simply “different.”

Direct/Indirect Communication. Be aware of different styles of communication in different cultures including: personal space, eye contact, use of silence, body language, etc. Don’t be offended if your student does not look you in the eye. If preferred, talk to your student about their communication styles.

Your student may have dietary restrictions because of religious or cultural background. Try to find out if the student has restrictions prior to arrival and plan your meal accordingly. It is always appropriate to ask about food restrictions or allergies. Ask your student if they want to help shop for and prepare the meal.
Cultural Adjustment (a.k.a. Culture Shock)

Studying abroad can be one of the most exhilarating learning experiences of a student’s life. Or, it can turn out to be a series of bewildering and frustrating incidents that leave them longing for home. Culture shock is a logical reaction to differences they encounter in a foreign culture and is a normal feeling. Luckily, it is only one phase in the process of getting into the culture of a foreign country. The various phases which a student might find themselves going through in this process include:

» Being fascinated with all the new things they are experiencing
» Feeling uncomfortable because they don’t belong
» Rejecting the new culture and people as being strange
» Learning to decipher foreign behavior and customs
» Accepting and enjoying the new culture

Emotional reactions to these various phases will influence how one relates to local citizens. Naturally, being excited and fascinated with new behavior and customs will help pave the way for positive interactions.

Two Probable Reasons Why Culture Shock Occurs:

1. Much of what happens in the new environment may strike the student as unpredictable or senseless
2. The student is aware of idiosyncrasies of their own culture, but they have no experience with American ones

Aside from the basic preparation of the “hows” and “wheres”, students will need to take some time to investigate the “what am I likely to encounter”—that is, things that will happen as they live with people whose values and attitudes are different from their own. By understanding what your students are going through, you will be better prepared and compassionate to their situation and able to assist them in their transition. The stage is set for culture shock when the thrill of the arrival fades and the new culture no longer seems just like home with a few differences. To see a visual representation of cultural adjustment, please refer to page 14 of this handbook.
Cultural Adjustment (a.k.a. Culture Shock)

Signs of Culture Shock

- The student may begin to feel anxious.
- Insomnia and oversleeping are fairly common indicators of culture shock.
- Emotional reactions can include withdrawal, irritability, moodiness, or exaggerated elation.

Many will deny that they are going through culture shock no matter how apparent or severe the symptoms. Finally, there are some students who seem to breeze through the entire exchange experience without suffering from culture shock at all, though in some cases this might be attributable either to their skill in hiding symptoms or the failure of others to perceive them.

What Can You Do? Listening patiently and offering support is very helpful. Recommend campus facilities if the “culture shock” seems to be a serious problem for your international student. In other words, if the behavior change is severe enough to interfere with a person’s daily routine, meeting student expectations, eating properly to maintain health, socializing, etc. UW-Eau Claire’s Counseling Services has trained support staff ready and able to help students cope with such struggles.

Getting Over “Culture Shock”: Culture shock can happen during the first few days in a new culture, but it is more common after one has been somewhere for a few months. The main thing to know is that, whenever it strikes, it is perfectly normal. The next thing to know is it usually only lasts a little while -- or is like a specific type of stress. Think about how one handles stressful situations at home. A few possibilities include exercising, talking/e-mailing with friends or family, journaling, joining a club or activity, or planning a weekend trip. Above all, there is a need for an adjustment period.

How Cultural Differences Relate to You: Discovering cultural differences and experiencing “culture shock” are both powerful learning tools. Through these, one can gain a high degree of self-understanding and personal growth. Past students have pointed out that by studying abroad, they gain a greater education in what it means to be from their home country and also in how the rest of the world’s population lives and thinks. Many have noticed that bad moments (even days) are quickly forgotten, and even the experiences that seemed trying at the time are priceless.
Let’s take a look at the Cultural Adjustment Curve

**Pre-departure Anxiety:** There’s a lot to do before going to another country. Students often become overwhelmed with details and are nervous about leaving family and friends for so long. Boarding the plane can bring enthusiasm back.

**“The Honeymoon”:** Just like with many new relationships, the first reaction to a new culture is often euphoric. Your student has finally arrived after months, maybe years, of planning. The differences in scenery, food, language, or customs can be exhilarating!

**Initial Culture Shock:** This is where the excitement of differences can often quickly turn to frustration.

**Surface Adjustment:** This can occur when your student has settled into a new routine.

**Culture Shock:** This is a state of mind your student may reach when the deeper differences between cultures are experienced and the novelty of the difference decreases. There may be unresolved cultural conflicts in the classroom, with friends, or with the society in general.

**Adaptation & Adjustment:** It takes time for your student to adapt and adjust to their new environment. Skills they developed in previous transitions will help them when they encounter future intercultural challenges. Adjusting and adapting to a new culture requires the ability to know themselves well and to know the ways of the culture and its expectations of them.

**Reentry Shock or Adjustment:** Your student will face a number of challenges when he or she returns home. It can be challenging to make sense of their experience in the U.S., especially if they have to immediately find a job or return to their studies. With re-entry, the goal is not to jump right back into everything. Students want to put their new found skills to good use: seeing things from another point of view, speaking another language, and learning of another area of the world. Staying connected with the friends they meet while abroad is one strategy that can lessen the shock of reentry.
Social Relationships: While Americans may be open and friendly, it can take time to develop actual friendships. International students are often discouraged that making friends isn’t as easy as they thought it would be. Some international students have commented that they feel Americans are insincere. Mistaking American friendliness to friendship, they are disappointed when relationships do not take on deeper meaning. In many other cultures, friendship is reserved for very few people, is based on mutual love and respect, and involves unlimited obligation. In the U.S., close friendships certainly exists, but Americans also have many “friends,” among whom the foreign student may only be one. Talking about how friendships develop in the U.S. may help the student achieve a realistic view of what can be expected of his or her American friends.

Achievement: In the U.S., status is primarily based on what individuals have achieved on their own, including education and the level of success in their employment. Many students’ cultures dictate that respect is given based on other qualifiers such as age or title. Additionally, some international students may not be used to the high level of competition in the U.S.

Informality: The U.S. lifestyle is generally quite casual and this can be shocking to some international students who are accustomed to a more formal structure. Some students may find it unusual in the beginning to use first name and dress casually.

Individualism: Americans are encouraged at an early age to develop and pursue their own goals. There is a higher value placed on self reliance than in many other countries where parents or families help with decision-making. In many countries, being part of a group is more important than focusing on one individual.

Privacy: The U.S. on the outside appears to be open and transparent, with open homes and office doors. However, Americans enjoy time alone, value private space, and are guarded with what they consider personal information. International students may have difficulty adjusting to this, especially if they live in residence halls and share a room with an American student.

Time: Americans take pride in using their time wisely, which is why they tend to plan events in advance. Punctuality is valued in the U.S. and this can be a major cultural adjustment to many. Americans may “live by the clock” but this is no true in many other cultures. In some places, for example, the time noted on a social invitation implies one should arrive an hour or more later. In others, an invitation is to be extended several times before it is accepted.

Equality: International students are often used to a hierarchical system or one in which genders are treated differently. It is important for international students to know that in the U.S. everyone is to have equal opportunities and have the same rights as everyone else.
**MY STUDENT NEEDS A DOCTOR!**

1. **EMERGENCY SITUATION**
   - Serious Injury or Illness
   - In case of an EMERGENCY, please dial 911

2. **CALL “ASK MAYO”**
   - 1-855-839-0004
   - Free 24/7 hotline.
   - Advises on care & clinic/facility options.

**HOME CARE if:**
- Your student has a minor illness or injury
- Your student does not need medical attention from a clinic, hospital, or Physician.

**GO TO AN OFF-CAMPUS FACILITY**
To determine in-network & out-of-network providers:
- Identify network providers prior to your student's stay to quicken your response to an emergency situation.
  - www.firsthealth.coventryhealthcare.com

**UW-EAU CLAIRE STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**
- Crest Wellness Center (Upper-Campus)
  - (715) 836-5360
  - www.uwec.edu/shs
- Hours (during semester):
  - M-F: 7:45-4:30pm
  - W: 7:45-7pm
- *By appointment
- *Hours vary during breaks

**STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE CONTACT INFO:**
- Student Assurance Services
  - 1-800-328-2739
  - http://www.sas-mn.com/
Health Insurance

Policy Information

All students are required to purchase accident and sickness, medical evacuation, and repatriation insurance each semester throughout their studies. Insurance is a requirement of international student visas. Students are charged for insurance through their student bill and are automatically enrolled by the CIE. There are no exceptions to the insurance requirement.

The Center for International Education works with Student Assurance Services to offer an Accident & Sickness insurance policy.

For benefit and coverage amounts, students can contact Student Assurance Services or find the information on our CIE website.

During international student orientation week, students are given temporary insurance cards, educated about their insurance benefit and coverage, what to do, and where to go when health services are needed (emergency and non-emergency).

Insurance policy info: www.sas-mn.com
Network providers: www.firsthealth.coventryhealthcare.com
This contact information is also noted on students insurance cards.

Campus Health Services

UW-Eau Claire Student Health Services

Student Health Services (SHS) functions as a well-equipped outpatient medical facility that provides quality health care at low costs. Students are seen by appointments. Student Health Services is located on Upper Campus in the Crest Wellness Center.

Services Provided:

» Diagnosis & treatment of general medical problems
» Minor surgical problems
» Women’s & men’s health care
» Lab services
» Immunizations
» Health education
» Nutrition counseling Tobacco cessation
» Contraceptive management
» Sexually transmitted infection testing

*Mental health is care and treatment is provided through Counseling Services.

Services NOT provided

» Dental services
» Treatment of broken bones
» Surgical procedures not considered minor

For a full list of services: www.uwec.edu/SHS/services
Do students have health insurance? Yes. All students are required to purchase health, medical, evacuation, and repatriation insurance each semester throughout the entire period of their studies. The coverage begins as soon as they arrive in the U.S.

Who can I call about student benefit and coverage? Please contact Student Assurance Services.

Do students have dental insurance? No. The Accident & Sickness Insurance policy does not cover regular dental treatment, but will in the event they are damaged in an accident. Students have the option of purchasing dental insurance through Student Assurance Services.

Do students have a prescription medication coverage? Yes. The insurance card acts as a prescription drug card. Students can contact Student Assurance Services for prescription benefits.

When should students go to the Emergency Room (ER)? When the student is in an emergency situation. Go immediately to the emergency room or call 911.

Do students have access to on-campus health care? Yes. UW-Eau Claire has an on-campus Student Health Services that offers a wide array of out-patient services. For a full list, please visit: www.uwec.edu/SHS/services

What should the student bring when visiting an off campus facility? Bring the student's health insurance card (if available) and a form of identification.

What is “Ask Mayo?” Ask Mayo is a free hotline available 24/7 where students (hosts can call on students' behalf) can call and talk to a trained, experienced, and multilingual registered nurse. The Ask Mayo nurse will provide information such as: level of care, within what time frame should care be administered, possible home care remedies, hours and location of on-campus health services, and nearest Urgent Care facility (but will not verify if the facility is in network or not). Call toll free 1-855-839-0004.
Your international student may want to learn as much as they can about life in the U.S. while they are here. Activities that you think are boring or typical may be a unique experience for your student! Some international students come to the U.S. with a pre-made list of things they want to experience. **Hosts are not expected to fund their students portion and should be discussed prior to making plans.** Here are a few suggestions:

**Arts & Musics:**
1. Attend musical concerts of any kind.
2. Visit an art gallery or museum.
3. Attend a theater production.
4. Visit the UW-Eau Claire Foster Gallery.
5. Attend Volume One’s Sounds Like Summer Concert Series (students staying for the summer).
6. Attend blues or jazz music in Owen Park.

**Holiday Celebrations:**
7. Family celebrations (anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, graduations, etc.).
8. Participate in Halloween celebrations, Thanksgiving dinner, Easter, etc.
10. Carve pumpkins for Halloween.
11. Participate in charitable activities associated with a holiday.
12. Attend or host a birthday party.
13. Attend services and/or celebrations of a religious holiday such as Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah, or Christmas.
14. Participate in Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations and service-oriented activities.
15. Observe Memorial Day ceremonies and parade.

**Sports & Leisures:**
16. Attend a professional or amateur sporting event on campus or in the community.
17. Go ice skating, skiing, sledding, ice fishing, etc.
18. Go camping, boating, water sports, swimming, etc.
19. Have a movie night (at home or theaters).
20. Go bowling or miniature golfing.
22. Visit a local amusement park, carnival, street festival, or parade.

**Community Life**
23. Visit the Chippewa Valley Museum.
24. Visit Eau Claire area apple orchards, pumpkin farms, or corn mazes.
26. Farmers market (Phoenix Park, Festival Foods, Oakwood Mall, etc.)
27. Visit a political campaign office.
28. Attend a city council or town hall meeting.
29. Attend a PTA meeting at a local school.
30. Visit local parks: Owen Park, Carson Park (Eau Claire), or Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls.

**Daily Life:**
31. Include the student in everyday family events (dinner, children’s activities, visiting relatives, etc.).
32. Cook an American meal with your student.
33. Take your student to your work for a day.
34. Visit a municipal service facility, such as a police station or fire station.

**On Campus:**
35. Tour the UW-Eau Claire campus and residence halls.
36. Attend campus activities (Concert Series, Artist & Forum Series, plays, Blugold sporting events).

**Local Pride:**
37. Do the Eau Claire Polar Plunge.
38. Visit a national or state park or other unique natural features in your community.
39. Sample a local delicacy that is a specialty of the town or region.
40. Take an architectural tour of the community.

41. Take a historical tour or visit a historical landmark or museum.

**Surrounding Areas:**
42. Tour the Woodshed in Augusta.
43. Tour the Amish farm community.
44. Visit Madison, Green Bay, or other Wisconsin cities.
45. Milwaukee (Petit National Ice Center, Mitchell Horticultural Dome, IMAX Theatre, Grand Ave. Mall, Brewers Baseball game, etc.).
46. Go to the National Fresh Water Fishing museum in Hayward, WI.
47. Go to the Mall of America.
49. Go to the Minneapolis/St. Paul (shopping, concerts, sporting events, restaurants, plays, etc.).

**Stores:**
50. Visit the thrift stores in the area (Goodwill, Hope Gospel Mission).
51. Take a trip to Oakwood Mall.
52. Shop at a local grocery store.

Need more ideas, check out the latest edition of: Volume One Leader Telegram
Or join our Host Friend Program Facebook page!
**Tidbits**

**Residence Hall Closings:** Most residence halls will close during breaks (i.e. Thanksgiving, spring break). If students have a valid reason to stay on-campus anytime during these break periods due to work, Winterim classes, athletic or music departmental commitments, or if the student is an international student, they must complete a Break Authorization Form found on the Housing and Residence Life website: [www.uwec.edu/housing](http://www.uwec.edu/housing). If students do not live in Chancellors, Thomas, Towers, or Governors Halls, it is their responsibility to find someone whose room they can stay in. Male students can only stay in male-designated rooms and female students can only stay in female-designated rooms. Students should talk to the residence hall Residence Assistant (R.A.) or Hall Directors about any concerns.

**Blugold Cards:** is the official photo identification card of the UW-Eau Claire. The Blugold Card Services office will issue students their cards during orientation week. Blugold cards are used for:

» Door access at select residence halls and academic buildings
» Point-of-sale: meal plan, textbook rentals, & general campus purchases
» Reduced-price tickets for many campus activities and events
» Access to McPhee Physical Education Center facilities
» Free use of the Eau Claire Transit System
» Access to the Blugold Account debit card system

Through the university’s banking partnership, students also have the option of using their Blugold Cards as ATM or signature-based debit cards for transactions on and off campus.
Quite often one of the first things a new international student will want when they arrive in the U.S. is a cell phone. One of the best options for new international students is to get a “pay as you go” phone or a “prepaid” phone. Especially for 1 or 2 semester exchange students. Many international students will come to the U.S. with their cell phone from home, assuming they can buy a U.S. SIM card (a SIM card is a data card inside the phone that allows calls). In the U.S., very few companies allow you to purchase a SIM card to be used in a different phone. Most companies will sell you a phone which comes with a SIM card in it. However, companies such as T-Mobile will allow out of country phones to be used with T-Mobile’s SIM card. It is recommended that the student do some research before buying into a plan (prepaid or contract).
The Community Outreach Coordinator will email hosts their student’s residence hall assignment once they have been determined by the Housing Department. This email will contain detailed information about parking and locations of residence halls.

At each hall there will be Resident Assistants (R.A.’s) and/or student Peer Guides to greet the students and help with move in. You can expect the drop off time to take no more than 10-15 minutes. This is also an orientation day and moving in must be accomplished quickly to start the day’s orientation.

Each room will be furnished with linens (1 blanket, 1 bedspread, 1 pillow, 1 pillow case, and 2 sheets). Students may choose to bring additional linens as desired. If you need to drop off your students earlier than the designated time, please let the Community Outreach Coordinator know so alternative arrangements can be made.

The University’s meal plan does not start on the first day of orientation, so it is important that your student plans to have enough money for food throughout the week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Also, please be aware that international student orientation week is very intensive and will last from morning to early evening each day. This means that you will not be able to see your student during orientation week as they have activities and meals scheduled daily. The spring semester home stay runs a little longer than fall semester. Host friends will be required to host the student until the residence halls are ready mid-week.

**Housing & Residence Life**
Towers Hall #112  
(Upper Campus)  
housingoffice@uwec.edu  
715-836-3674  
www.uwec.edu/housing

**Upper Campus:**
- **Bridgman**  
  (715-836-4893)  
- **Chancellors**  
  (715-836-5057)  
- **Governor’s**  
  (715-836-5410)  
- **Horan**  
  (715-836-3179)  
- **Murray**  
  (715-836-2760)  
- **Oak Ridge**  
  (715-836-3214)  
- **Sutherland**  
  (715-836-4248)  
- **Towers South**  
  (715-836-4760)  
- **Towers North**  
  (715-836-3327)

**Lower Campus:**
- **Putnam**  
  (715-836-344)  
- **Katharine Thomas**  
  (715-836-4386)
1. **How do I become a Host Friend?** It's simple. To start the process, an application must be completed. The profile asks for general information in addition to preferences, attributes, characteristics, common interests, hobbies, likes, dislikes, etc. of which are all reviewed and considered in the matching process. To apply, go to [www.uwec.edu/cie](http://www.uwec.edu/cie). A phone interview, background check, and two reference checks are also part of the acceptance process. After the online profile has been submitted, the Community Outreach Coordinator will contact you for the next steps.

2. **Do I have to be married with children to be a host?** Host Friends may be single, married, domestic partners, retired, or families with children. Host friends live in the Eau Claire community (metro area at large) and are volunteers. Hosts are not current traditional UW-Eau Claire students.

3. **Do the students stay with their hosts the entire time they are in Eau Claire?** No. The required home stay is typically 2-4 days and is the weekend before international student orientation week. To review semester home stay dates, please refer to the Host Friend website. After the home stay weekend, it is the responsibility of the student and host to stay in contact with one another. We highly encourage students and hosts to maintain contact at least once a month.

4. **What if we have a vacation planned during the time they’re here?** Once the students have settled into their life in Eau Claire they generally become pretty independent. We encourage hosts and students to maintain contact at least once per month during the student’s first semester at UW-Eau Claire, but you should continue to go about your life as you normally would, including vacations.

5. **Can I host more than one student at a time?** Yes! Some Host Friends host two or more students at once. Many who have continuing students will host additional new students in subsequent semesters.

6. **Can I request a student from a particular geographic region?** Yes. The Center for International Education encourages interaction between host and students of all cultures. However, if there is a particular region you have a connection to we will try to match you with a student from that region.
7. Do I have to provide a separate room for my student during the home stay? No. We do require the student has a place to sleep and still be able to maintain some privacy. If they will be sharing a room with a household member or another student, we require a single gender room.

8. Do I have to pick my student up at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport? No. Students are required to make their own travel arrangements to Eau Claire. Hosts are asked to meet them when they arrive in Eau Claire, either at the Chippewa Valley Airport or at the Chippewa Valley Airport Service shuttle van terminal.

9. Should I help my student move into the residence halls? Hosts Friends are expected to bring their student to the UW-Eau Claire campus residence halls on move-in day. Host Friends are not required to help the student move in, but it would be a nice gesture.

10. How long does each student attend UW-Eau Claire and which countries are represented? International students study at UW-Eau Claire for varying lengths of time. Some students are on a semester or year exchange, and others are degree seeking students who will be in Eau Claire for two or more years. Other students come for the Intensive English Program (IEP) specifically to learn English. The international students at UW-Eau Claire represent over 40 different countries and from regions all around the world.

11. What kind of activities can I do with my student? The possibilities are endless! You can invite them over for dinner, take them on local trips to places of interest, walk in the neighborhood, go shopping, invite them to holiday celebrations, attend UW-Eau Claire campus events, and much more! You and your student will choose activities that you can enjoy together. Even your daily life can be interesting to your student.

12. Am I expected to provide housing for my student over academic breaks? No. Host Friends are not required or obligated to house students after the initial home stay weekend. Select residence halls are open on campus during the holiday and extended breaks that students are welcome to stay at. The Housing office must be contacted well in advance to make arrangements.

Housing & Residence Life: www.uwec.edu/housing
1. **Who are the hosts?** Host Friends may be single, married, domestic partners, retired, or families with children. Host friends live in the Eau Claire community and are volunteers. Hosts are not current traditional UW-Eau Claire students.

2. **How will we be matched?** Students are matched with host friends by comparing the students’ profile with the host friends’ profile. The profile attributes, characteristics, common interests, hobbies, likes, and dislikes are all reviewed and considered in the matching process. This process helps to ensure the best match for the host and student. To apply, students need to submit an online application.

3. **When will I know who my Host Friend is?** The matching process can take several days to several weeks to assign host and student matches. The Community Outreach Coordinator will start the matching process after the application deadline. Once the host and student has been matched, an email will be sent immediately to both student and host with each other’s contact information so introductions can be made and relationships started. **Student application deadlines:** June 30 for the fall semester and November 30 for the spring semester.

4. **How long do I stay with my host?** The required home stay is typically 2-4 days and is the weekend before international student orientation week. To review semester home stay dates, please refer to the Host Friend website. After the home stay weekend, it is the responsibility of the student and host to stay in contact with one another. We highly encourage students and hosts to maintain contact at least once a month.

5. **Do I live with my host on holiday breaks?** No. Host Friends are not required or obligated to house students after the initial home stay weekend. Select residence halls are open on campus during the holiday and extended breaks that students are welcome to stay at. The Housing office must be contacted well in advance to make arrangements.

6. **Will my hosts pick me up from the airport when I arrive?** Yes. Your Host Friend(s) will pick you up once you arrive in Eau Claire. Most students arrive through the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport or Chippewa Valley Airport Service (CVAS) shuttle van via the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Host Friend(s) are not required or obligated to pick up students at any location outside of the Eau Claire metro area. The CVAS has a convenient shuttle van that transports passengers to and from the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport and Minneapolis-St. Paul Interna-
7. **What kinds of activities will I do with my host?** The possibilities are endless! You can expect to be invited to dinner, take local trips to places of interest, take a walk in the neighborhood, go shopping, attend holiday celebrations, attend UW-Eau Claire campus events, and much more! You and your host will choose activities that you can enjoy together.

8. **Do I have to participate in the host friend program?** No. The Host Friend program is optional and completely voluntary for both students and hosts. It comes highly recommended, as the Host Friend program is a great way to learn about American culture, practice English with native speakers, create life-long friendships, have fun, and much more! Check what students and host have to say about the program on our website [www.uwec.edu/cie](http://www.uwec.edu/cie).
The CAMPUS HILL area of Garfield Avenue is closed to all non-university vehicles.

VISITORS who have not received specific instructions should stop at the Visitor Center for parking and other campus information.

To reach LOWER CAMPUS from CLAIREMONT AVENUE (Hwy. 12), exit Clairemont at the Patton Street stoplight. Make an immediate right turn onto Lexington Boulevard and another right turn onto State Street, proceed down hill.