

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
NEW ORLEANS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

information for
NEW
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS



Center for International Education

The staff of the Center for International Education (CIE) are here to help you adjust to Loyola, New Orleans, and the U.S. We coordinate all university programs for international students and help you understand and abide by the complicated immigration regulations. Whether you are coming to Loyola for a degree or just one semester, we will help you make the most of your experience at Loyola through the following programs and services:

- International orientation
- Assistance with all immigration matters, including SEVIS
- Advising on cultural, linguistic, academic, financial, immigration, or personal questions
- Administration of health insurance for international students
- International festivals including the Country Fair and International Week
- Excursions to tourist sites both in and out of the city
- Cultural activities and get-togethers
- And much more...

We hope that you will take advantage of the services and activities sponsored by CIE and by the university. We look forward to meeting you and having you join our community.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

The Center for International Education has special orientation sessions for international students prior to the start of classes. These programs cover information that you as an international student need to know whether this is your first time in the U.S. or you have studied here already. The international student orientation also provides a wonderful opportunity for you to meet other international students, and it's a great way for you to begin your Loyola experience. Remember, the orientation program is mandatory and you must attend. To read more about orientation and view the schedule for the semester you will be arriving, visit loyola.edu/cie/international-student-orientation.

Topics covered in Orientation

- Get to know your fellow international students
- SEVIS and Immigration: Everything you need to know to stay in status
- Introduction to U.S. academic life
- Working on campus and in the U.S.
- Getting involved on campus: The International Student Association and more
- Adjusting to the U.S.
- New Orleans music
- Student panels

Loyola Numbers

- Enrollment: 3,858 (total); 2,593 undergraduates; 1157 graduate students; 82 Doctoral students; 494 law students; 473 Master students; and 108 other students
- Ranked for the last 25 years among the Top Southern Regional Schools by U.S. News & World Report
- Ranked as having one of the "Best College Libraries" by Princeton Review
- 130+ student organizations
- 48 states represented
- 50 countries represented
- 90% of faculty hold highest degree in their field
- 12:1 student to faculty ratio

12 Ideals of Jesuit Education

- Pursuit of Excellence
- Respect for the World, Its History and Mystery
- Learning from Experience
- Contemplative Vision Formed by Hope
- Development of Personal Potential
- Critical Thinking and Effective Communication
- Appreciation of Things Both Great and Small
- Commitment to Service
- Linking Faith with Justice
- Special Concern for the Poor and Oppressed
- International and Global Perspective
- Discerning Mindset: Finding God in All Things



Preparing for Your Arrival

APPLYING FOR A VISA

If you are coming to Loyola University from outside the U.S., you will need to have an F-1 student visa or J-1 exchange visitor visa to enter the country. You cannot study full-time on either a B-2 tourist visa or the visa waiver program. If you have questions about other visa categories, please contact CIE.

SEVIS FEE

The SEVIS fee is a one-time non-refundable fee and is required of those who are applying for an F-1 based on an I-20 issued for "initial attendance" or for a J-1 visa DS-2019 issued to "begin a new program." F-1 students pay \$350 and J-1 exchange visitors pay \$220. This is an additional fee separate from the visa application fee set by your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You must pay the SEVIS fee before your visa interview or, for Canadian citizens, before applying for admission at a U.S. Port of Entry. Proof of payment must be presented at the visa interview or Port of Entry.

More information: ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq

Keep in mind the following:

- The SEVIS fee cannot be paid at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or at the U.S. border. Currently, the options for individuals to pay the fee are by credit or debit card via the Internet, by check or money order mailed to SEVP, and by using Western Union Quick Pay. Any organization or individual may use one of these payment methods to pay on behalf of a student or exchange visitor. See ice.gov/sevis/i901 for more information.
- You can schedule your visa interview prior to paying the SEVIS fee. However, you will not be issued a visa unless the Visa Officer can verify that the SEVIS fee payment has been made.
- To complete form I-901, you'll enter your
 - SEVIS ID number (printed at the top left of your I-20 or top right DS-2019; starts with the letter N)
 - Loyola's School Code, **NOL214F00095000** (F-1 students), or
 - Loyola's Program Number, **P-1-05040** (J-1 students).

If you pay by internet (preferred method):

- Complete Form I-901, called "Fee Remittance for Certain F, J and M Nonimmigrants", online (fmjfee.com) and supply the necessary credit card information. Write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Print a copy of the online receipt. Be sure to make copies of your online receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents.
 - Once you have paid the SEVIS fee, you can print a receipt anytime by going to fmjfee.com and clicking on the "Check I-901 Status / Print Payment Confirmation" button.
- Bring the receipt of fee payment with you to your visa or Port of Entry interview.

Visa officers and U.S. Port of Entry inspectors should be able to verify your SEVIS fee payment electronically, but in case of any issues, having a printed receipt is the best evidence of payment. You should keep your fee receipt until you complete your exchange visitor program (J-1) or receive your final degree (F-1).



Preparing for Your Arrival, cont.

VISA WAIT TIMES

It is important that you make your visa appointment as soon as possible because the appointment wait time can be very long.

Check the current visa wait times at your embassy or consulate: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html

VISA APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE U.S.

Visa procedures vary from one consulate or embassy to another, so it is very important that you check the website of the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your country (find it at usembassy.gov) for specific instructions.

Standard items required for the application:

- ☐ Current passport, valid for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the U.S.
- ☐ Form I-20 for the F-1 visa or a DS-2019 for the J-1 visa.
- ☐ Evidence of financial support for the period of time and the amount indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- ☐ Form DS-160. The form is available on the State Department website: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html
- ☐ Visa processing fee receipt. See the website for the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your country for specific instructions on paying this fee.
- ☐ Proof that you have paid the SEVIS fee.
- ☐ One 2x2 inch passport-style photograph.

More information: ceac.state.gov/genniv/default.aspx

You should also be prepared to provide:

- Transcripts and diplomas from any previous institutions you have attended.
- Scores from standardized tests that were required by Loyola, such as the TOEFL, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, etc.
- Financial evidence that shows you or your sponsor have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period of your study (income tax documents, paycheck stubs, original bank statements, etc.).
- Proof that you have a residence abroad that you have no intention of abandoning and that you plan to return home after your studies.

A short interview is also required.

AFTER YOU APPLY

The Consulate will place a visa in your passport. This is your permission to enter the U.S. If this is your first time attending school in the U.S., your F-1 or J-1 visa must list Loyola University New Orleans as the school that you will be attending. You cannot enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019. If you encounter any problems obtaining your visa, contact CIE at cie@loyno.edu or +1 (504) 864-7550.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/visa-process

TRANSFERRING FROM A SCHOOL WITHIN THE U.S.

If you are presently in the U.S. studying at another institution on an F-1 visa, you will need to have your SEVIS immigration record transferred to Loyola. You must maintain valid immigration status in order to have your record transferred. If you are leaving the U.S. prior to enrolling at Loyola and you have a valid F-1 visa, you can simply re-enter with your F-1 visa and Loyola's I-20. Your visa does not have to say Loyola University New Orleans.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/transfer-to-loyola

Before You Arrive

IMPORTANT DATES

As you prepare for your arrival and make travel plans, pay special attention to the following dates:

- The first day of International Student Orientation. You should arrive at Loyola the day before. The residence halls will open then for you to move in. If you arrive before this date, you will have to stay in a hotel.
- The last day to register and add a class (the Friday of the first week of classes).
- The last day to drop a class (the Friday of the second week of classes).
- The last day of exams. This is also the last day you are allowed to stay in the residence halls. The residence halls close during the winter break, but you can leave your belongings in your room.

View academic calendars: academicaffairs.loyno.edu/records/academic-calendars

HEALTH INSURANCE

Medical care in the U.S. is very expensive, and a minor injury or illness can be costly. Because of this, as an international student, you are required to have health insurance. This requirement is for your safety, should you become ill or need to seek medical attention. Since health insurance is mandatory, you will be charged for and covered by an insurance policy obtained by Loyola on your behalf, unless you submit proof of comparable personal coverage. The health insurance charge will appear on your first student bill.

If you want to decline your coverage under Loyola's accident/sickness policy, you will need to complete and submit the [International Health Insurance Waiver Form](#). You must submit this form to waivers@lewer.com by the following deadlines:

Students studying in Fall or Academic Year: July 31

Students studying in Spring: November 30

After these dates, no waivers will be accepted, and you will have to pay the insurance charge on your student bill. You should contact your insurance company before you arrive at Loyola and well before the deadline, since it may take several days for them to complete the waiver petition. Even if you are waived from the insurance requirement, you will need to re-submit your waiver form each academic year. Our office can answer any questions you have about the Loyola health insurance coverage. Please note that pre-existing conditions will not be covered during the first enrollment period.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/healthcare-medical-insurance

IMMUNIZATIONS

Loyola University New Orleans and Louisiana law requires all students to submit vaccination documentation. This requirement can be met by providing evidence of prior vaccination, being vaccinated, or signing the waiver at the bottom of the immunization compliance form. Registration for any course will be conditional until the completed proof of immunization compliance form has been reviewed by Student Health Services. Failure to submit the completed form will result in a "hold" being placed on your LORA account.

More information: studentaffairs.loyno.edu/health/immunizations

HOUSING

Residence Halls

Living on campus is a very positive experience for new students. Residence hall life is not only a great way to get to know other students, but also allows you to experience living in a community. All freshmen and sophomores are required to live in the residence halls. The rooms are double occupancy, furnished with single beds, closets, study desks, and chairs. Bedding is not provided by the university, so students usually purchase it when they arrive. You can also choose to pre-order linens online and have them delivered to Loyola at <https://www.universityandstudentservices.com/luno>.

Housing Application and Placement

You will receive an email from Residential Life containing housing application instructions. Housing placements are made in July for the fall semester and in December for the spring semester. Residential Life will email you after placements have been made with information regarding your room assignment and roommate(s).

Off-Campus Housing

Apartments near the university are limited. Most apartments within walking distance from the university are rented long before the school year begins. There are also many apartments located a greater distance from the university which will require the use of a bicycle, automobile, or bus. Some apartments are available with furniture for a higher cost. Most require one month's rent in advance and another month's rent as a damage deposit, and many require a one-year lease.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/off-campus-housing

Arriving in New Orleans

New Orleans Food

New Orleans is world famous for its food and has some of the best restaurants in the country. Currently, there are over 1200 restaurants in the city—and counting! We do love our food. When you are here, don't be afraid to try new foods like crawfish or gumbo. You will be surprised by all the wonderful flavors.

To help you get started, we have listed a few terms which you will need to understand the local menu along with a list of a few restaurants. Happy eating!

- Beignet (BANE-YEA): Sweet doughnuts with lots of powdered sugar on top.
- Crawfish: Look like tiny lobsters, known locally as “mudbugs,” and served a lot of ways.
- Gumbo: A thick soup with many variations.
- Jambalaya (JUM-BO-LIE-YA): New Orleans paella with rice, seafood, and meat.
- King Cake: A large, ring-shaped cake decorated with frosting and sprinkles and eaten only during Carnival season.
- Po-Boy: A sandwich on French bread with oysters, shrimp, roast beef, or other seafood/meat.

New Orleans Directions

“Lake,” “River,” “Uptown,” and “Downtown” are the four points of the New Orleans compass. We determine our location on the basis of where we are in relation to Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River and upriver or downriver from Canal Street. Loyola is on the lakeside of St. Charles Avenue. Audubon Park, across the street from Loyola, is on the riverside of St. Charles Avenue. Loyola is uptown or upriver and the French Quarter is downtown. It can get confusing, because the river curves and streets follow the river, and for some, the sun rises over the west bank of the Mississippi! Don't worry, you will learn how to navigate here in no time.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

☐ **Contact Information.**

Center for International Education
6363 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118
+1 (504) 865-7550

Loyola University Police Department (LUPD)
+1 (504) 865-3434

- ☐ **Copies of your passport and immigration documents.** Keep copies separate from your passport and original immigration documents (I-20 or DS-2019).
- ☐ **Letter of acceptance from Loyola.** Keep this accessible in case the United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) requests to view it at your Port of Entry into the U.S.
- ☐ **Money.** Bring enough accessible money in cash, debit cards, or traveler's checks (approximately U.S. \$900) for initial living expenses such as food, household items, and transportation.
 - While traveler's checks are a safer way to bring in money, you must cash them at a bank.
 - Textbooks are quite expensive in the U.S. Budget for U.S. \$300–\$600 per semester after your initial semester.
- ☐ **Your driver's license.**
 - You can use your home country license to drive for three months and as an alternative form of ID.
 - If you plan to drive or rent a car, you should get an international driver's license before you leave your home country. Please note that an international driver's license is only valid for one year.
- ☐ **Photographs, souvenirs, music, crafts, videos, picture books, recipes, and clothing from your home country.** You can use these items to share your culture with your friends at Loyola. These items can also be used at the Country Fair, an annual event in which international students cook and display tables with information for the Loyola community.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/pre-departure-information

GETTING TO CAMPUS FROM THE AIRPORT

The university can be easily reached by taxi or by the Airport Shuttle. Taxis cost \$36 and the Airport Shuttle costs \$24. Taxis from the airport do not turn on their meters because the prices are fixed. Taxis are located outside the baggage claim area. Tickets for the Airport Shuttle can be purchased by the door exiting the baggage claim. The railroad and bus stations are located downtown, a short distance from the university.

If you know the residence hall in which you are staying, you can tell the driver to take you directly there. If you do not know your residence hall and you arrive between the hours of 8:30 and 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday, you can call CIE at +1 (504) 864-7550 or Residential Life at +1 (504) 865-2445 for your residence hall and room number. After hours or on the weekend, call the Loyola Department of Public Safety at +1 (504) 865-3434.



When You Arrive

Your first few days in New Orleans and at Loyola will be filled with a variety of new experiences, like meeting your advisor, getting to know your roommate, finding an apartment, and learning all about what the university and the city have to offer. In addition to these exciting activities, we want you to be aware of just a few more things that will help you adjust to life on campus. You will receive more information during the orientation, but the information below will get you started.

CELL PHONES

Because most cell phone companies require a social security number, the Social Security Administration's restrictions on issuing social security numbers for F-1 or J-1 students without proof of a job or an explicit job offer have made it much more difficult for international students to open an account with a cell phone company. You can, however, open an account without a security number at some cell phone companies in the New Orleans area, but they often request a \$100–\$250 deposit in this case. Almost all cell phone companies also offer the option of prepaid wireless service, where you pay for a pre-determined amount of usage per month in advance.

BANK ACCOUNTS

You first need to determine whether or not you need to open a bank account while you are studying here at Loyola. If you will primarily use an ATM card from a bank in your home country to withdraw cash, or if you will only be in the U.S. for a short time, then opening a new account in New Orleans may not be practical. However, if you will study at Loyola for a year or more, plan to eventually get a job on campus, or will receive money via international wire transfers, then opening an account may be necessary. While there are many choices, you should consider the following factors when deciding on a bank:

- Proximity to Loyola, especially if you do not have transportation
- Fees charged (monthly or per transaction)
- Number and location of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)
- Minimum deposit, if applicable

Loyola has three ATMs on campus: Capital One, Hancock Whitney National Bank, and Loyola/Tulane Federal Credit Union. Whitney has a full-service banking office on Tulane University's campus (across the street from Loyola). Many banks require that international students obtain a letter from our office before opening an account. If this is the case, please let us know.

ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

F-1 students are allowed to work on campus for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the Fall and Spring semesters. During the summers and on official school breaks, students can work over 20 hours per week. Students can complete an employment application in the Human Resources office once they arrive on campus. Most students, however, find jobs by inquiring directly at offices and departments around campus. F-1 students are not eligible for the Federal Work-Study program because it is funded by the U.S. government, but they can apply for all student assistant positions which are funded by the various campus departments. If you are hired, you will need to apply for a social security number (see below). You will also be required to file federal and state income taxes each year. CIE will email you access information for a free tax software program in February.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

A Social Security Number is a 9-digit number assigned by the SSA primarily to track a worker's wages, but it is often used by companies and other government agencies to identify things like one's credit history, driving record, etc. It is entirely different from the Campus Wide ID assigned to you by Loyola.

Social Security Number Application Requirements

- Proof of employment or an explicit job offer
- Letter from CIE
- Letter from your on-campus employer
- No application fee

Note: It may take between 10 days and 6 weeks to receive your Social Security Number.



Tuition, Fees, Billing & Payment Plans

Incoming and returning students who have registered for classes are billed prior to the beginning of the semester. Payments are due by August 1 for the Fall semester, and by December 15 for the Spring, unless other arrangements have been made. Students who register at the beginning of the term must pay when they register.

Semester billing and due dates: finance.loyno.edu/student-finance/payment-timelines

You can pay with cash, personal check, money order, e-check, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover. You can also pay online through [Flywire](#). With Flywire, you set up your payment amount to Loyola, then they calculate the conversion and give you a quote in your currency, including an extra service fee. That quote is locked in for a specified amount of time so you can initiate the payment with your financial institution.

MONTHLY BUDGET PLANS

Loyola accepts monthly payments through specific private agencies. These agencies offer monthly plans with no interest for a low enrollment fee. Monthly payments are not accepted without enrollment in one of these plans.

More information: finance.loyno.edu/student-finance/monthly-budget-plans

QUESTIONS ABOUT PAYING YOUR BILL?

[Student Financial Services](#) can assist with your questions related to tuition and fees, billing, payment plans, refunds, scholarships, financial aid, and more.

Location

Loyola is located in the Uptown section of New Orleans, the perfect area from which to explore New Orleans. The city is rich in history, and offers cultural, tourist, and recreational activities such as walking through the French Quarter and the Garden District, visiting music clubs and beautiful parks, and experiencing festivals, such as Mardi Gras (Carnival) and the Jazz and Heritage Festival. The historic streetcar runs in front of Loyola, allowing you easy access to most of these attractions.

New Orleans Neighborhoods

New Orleans is a city of neighborhoods, each with its own character and architectural style. New Orleans has 20 historic districts on the National Register, more than any other city in the United States! The main neighborhoods for students are:

- French Quarter: New Orleans' main tourist attraction.
- Garden District: Built by "Les Americains" after the Louisiana Purchase.
- Uptown: Loyola and Tulane Universities are here, along with Audubon Park.
- Warehouse District: Arts district with museums, galleries, and converted warehouses.
- Fauborg Marigny: Where locals go to hear music.
- Bywater: Destination area for art, restaurants, cultural activities.



Loyola Technology

LOYOLA ONLINE RECORDS ACCESS (LORA)

You can use [LORA](#) to view the course catalog and your class schedule, view your housing and meal plan, and view and pay your student bills.

How to Log In Using Loyola Single Sign On

1. Go to sso.loyno.edu.
2. Enter your username. This is the first part of your Loyola email address.
- Example: ioloyola
3. Enter your password. If this is your first time logging on through Single Sign On, your password has been preset to the first two letters of your first name in UPPERCASE and the last 4 digits of your 99 number (noted in the letter attached to your immigration document).
- Example: IG1234
4. If you have forgotten your password or need help with LORA, email sturec@loyno.edu.

RESIDENCE: YOUR HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

You will access [Residence](#), Loyola's housing management system, to apply for housing and complete your room selection. Residential Life will send your login information to your Loyola email after you've been admitted to Loyola.

How to Log In

1. Visit studentaffairs.loyno.edu/residential-life/myhousing.
2. Click the link for Residence in the Apply for Housing section.
3. Select the Resident option.
4. Enter your username. Your Residence username is your Campus Wide Identification (CWID) number.
5. If this is your first time logging in, check your Loyola Gmail for your assigned password.

YOUR LOYOLA GMAIL

Loyola Gmail is the official electronic communication by the university. Students are expected to check their email regularly, even during the summer. In addition to personal communication, you will also receive important information via email about your student bill, housing, meal plan, and academic information.

How to Log In

1. Visit gmail.com.
2. Enter your username in the ID field. Your username is your entire Gmail address (username@my.loyno.edu). If you do not know your Loyola Gmail address, you can find it by logging into LORA.
- Example: ioloyola@gmail.com
3. Enter your password. Your default password has been preset to the first two letters of your first name, the last 4 digits of your 99 number (noted in the letter attached to your immigration document), and the letters "lu" (as in Loyola University).
- Example: ig1234lu

HOWLCONNECT: YOUR GUIDE TO CAMPUS LIFE

HowlConnect provides access to a list of all student organizations, a calendar of campus programs and events, and resources for getting involved at Loyola.

How to Log In

1. From Loyola's Single Sign On, select HowlConnect.
2. Log in with your CWID and password.



After You Arrive

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

The Center for International Education has special orientation sessions for international students. These programs cover information that you as an international student need to know whether this is your first time in the U.S. or you have studied here already. The orientation includes information on immigration and SEVIS, academic and cultural opportunities available at Loyola and in New Orleans, working in the U.S., and much more. The international student orientation also provides a wonderful opportunity for you to meet other international students, and it's a great way for you to begin your Loyola experience. Remember, the orientation program is mandatory.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/international-student-orientation

IMMIGRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Since 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has tracked international students electronically through SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. Colleges and universities are required to report whether or not students are enrolled, attending full-time or part-time, working on campus, etc. Certain events require authorization from CIE and notification in SEVIS—for example, if you drop below a full-time course load. It is very important that you understand and follow all the regulations for F-1 students or J-1 exchange visitors. Whenever you have a question, ask the staff at CIE. It is our responsibility to know the rules and explain them to you, but it is your responsibility to follow the regulations.

Important Note: This information is not exhaustive and is subject to change without notice.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/international-students

Immigration Responsibilities Checklist

You may be confused by the many forms, numbers, and deadlines, but below are the most important requirements:

- ☐ Keep your passport valid at all times, unless you are exempt from passport requirements.
- ☐ Attend the school that DHS has authorized you to attend (the school that is on your I-20 or DS-2019).
- ☐ Always enter with your I-20 and F-1 visa or DS-2019 and J-1 visa if you are entering the U.S. to enroll or attend school.
- ☐ Complete an official immigration transfer whenever you change educational institutions within the U.S.
- ☐ Complete a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters. Get authorization from CIE before you drop a course.
- ☐ Apply to CIE for an extension of your program if you cannot complete your degree by the program end date on your I-20 or DS-2019. You must apply for the extension prior to the expiration date on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- ☐ Get a new I-20 before changing degree levels or study programs.
- ☐ F-1 & J-1 students **cannot** work off campus unless they have first received authorization from CIE or USCIS. This includes internships off campus, whether paid or unpaid.
- ☐ F-1 students can work part time on campus during the school year (less than 20 hours/week) and during summer and official school breaks (up to 40 hours/week). J-1 students must obtain permission in advance from CIE to work on campus.
- ☐ Request a travel endorsement on your I-20 or DS-2019 from CIE before traveling outside the U.S. Have your documents checked by CIE before leaving the United States for any travel outside the country.
- ☐ Carry copies of your passport, I-20, or DS-2019 with you at all times in New Orleans. Carry the originals when traveling outside of New Orleans, even within the U.S.
- ☐ Report a change of address directly to CIE or to the university through LORA within ten days of your move.
- ☐ Submit required tax forms to the IRS if you earn income in the U.S.

Cultural Adjustment

Most new international students go through a phase of adjustment, often called “culture shock.” It is neither as shocking nor as sudden as most people expect, but rather simply part of the process of adjusting to a new culture. You have probably already started along this process, even if you are still in your home country.

Right now, you are preparing for this new adventure. You are busy saying goodbye to friends and family and anticipating what studying at Loyola and living in the U.S. will be like. Surprises await you when you arrive. People may walk and talk more quickly (or more slowly), traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. The housing arrangements, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange. Such differences are easy to see, and most people learn how to navigate them quickly.

At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exciting. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and the U.S. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns that you can learn and depend on. You may classify aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or “quaint.”

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences rather than similarities will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem irritating rather than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned. This anxiety and irritation, that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community, is “culture shock.”

The common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings with host nationals
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility towards the host culture

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. It is important to remember that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through.

An effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event that has bothered you, analyze it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation.
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response.
- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture.
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future.
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works.
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or watch a movie in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, get in touch with your friends and family from home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the U.S.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that the reactions and perceptions of others toward you—and you toward them—are often based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to conflict, the easier it will be to make adjustments that can help you avoid difficulties.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/adjusting-new-culture

Climate

New Orleans is tropically warm and humid in the summer; however, all buildings are air-conditioned. Lightweight summer clothing is appropriate. Fall and spring are often very beautiful with bright, warm days and cool nights. The winter is short; yet, there are times when the temperature drops below freezing. It rains a lot, so be sure to bring an umbrella.



International Student Organizations

Adjusting to a new environment can be exciting and challenging. New international students at Loyola often have a lot of questions and concerns before and after their arrival at Loyola. Getting involved in ISA or inBUS can help with your transition.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION (ISA)

ISA works to foster cultural understanding on Loyola's campus. ISA is a great way to meet new people from different countries and backgrounds and to help educate the Loyola community about your own culture. ISA sponsors both on-campus and off-campus activities that promote cultural diversity and expose students to different people and cultures. They educate students, faculty, and staff on international student issues through open forums, speakers, and film series. ISA hosts two signature events, the Country Fair and the International Student Scholarship Soirée. They also have a range of other activities such as volunteer work, student panels, movie nights, and other fun activities that encourage cross-cultural interaction.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/isa

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Cultural Connections is an organization that aims to better integrate exchange and international students into the Loyola community by bringing together U.S. American and international students. As an international student, you are automatically a member! Cultural Connections helps create long-lasting friendships and helpful support systems between students, and events organized by Cultural Connections give international students an opportunity to experience Loyola University, the city of New Orleans, the region, and the culture. Past activities have included swamp tours, camping trips, movie nights, potluck dinners, Mardi Gras parties and meet-ups, concerts, and crawfish boils.

More information: loyno.edu/cie/cultural-connections

New Orleans Festivals

New Orleans is a city of festivals and events. Many of them are free. Below is a list of just a few of the festivals. Find out more information at nola.com/festivals.

- Art for Art's Sake: First Saturday of October. Coordinated gallery openings with food, drinks, music, and a street party on Julia and Magazine streets.
- New Orleans Film Festival: October
- Magazine Street Blues Festival: November
- Oak Street Po-Boy Festival: November
- Mardi Gras or Carnival: A two-week season in February or March. You'll hear lots more about Mardi Gras!
- French Quarter Festival: April
- Jazz and Heritage Festival: Last weekend of April & first weekend of May

Loyola Country Fair

Loyola hosts the Country Fair every October. This free event showcases Loyola's diverse international community and gives students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to spend the afternoon "traveling" the world.

At the Fair, Loyola's international students as well as U.S. American students set up tables where they showcase a variety of items (flags, pictures, native clothing, artifacts, etc.) and food from their home countries or from countries where they studied abroad. Live music, displays, and cuisine from a variety of countries are featured.

LET'S GET IN TOUCH

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