

Lenoir-Rhyne University

William and Robert Shuford Center for International Education (SCIE)



Exchange Student Handbook

*“You will never be completely at home again
because part of your heart will always be
elsewhere.*

*That is the price you pay for the richness of
loving and knowing people in more than one
place.”*

— Miriam Adeney

Hello, Exchange Student!

Thank you for your interest in Lenoir-Rhyne University!

At Lenoir-Rhyne, we stand proudly upon our strong foundation of excellence as passionate investors in a better tomorrow. Over the span of 125 years, our deep roots have given rise to a positive reputation that is sustained by our commitment to growth. At the core of who we are lies a profound compassion for others. We see the humanity in people and invest personally in the lives of all who cross our path.

The William and Robert Shuford Center for International Education (SCIE) welcomes students, like you, from across the world every semester. Our care begins with gracious interactions and extends through accessible student services and extensive community support. As one collective, we empower and challenge one another to know their inherent value and fulfill their potential in order to contribute meaningfully and successfully to every aspect of their lives.

Whether you plan to stay for one semester, or for an academic year, you will thoroughly enjoy your time at Lenoir-Rhyne and will become part of our Bear Family for life.

This handbook will serve as your guide through the LR application process, procedures prior to arrival, and resources once you are on campus. Please review it carefully and in its entirety as this will be an important resource during your time in the U.S. The handbook is formatted as a “checklist” so that you are able to mark off tasks that you have completed. Each task is listed in the appropriate order in which you are to complete them.

We wish you the best throughout the process and look forward to seeing you on campus!

Sincerely,

William and Robert Shuford Center for International Education



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Section I – Exchange Visitor Program

- What is the Exchange Visitor Program?
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What is the Exchange Visitor Program?

The primary goals of the Exchange Visitor Program are to allow participants the opportunity to engage broadly with Americans, share their culture, strengthen their English language abilities, and learn new skills or build skills that will help them in future careers. The Exchange Visitor (J) non-immigrant visa category is for individuals approved to participate in work-and study-based exchange visitor programs. Participants are integral to the success of the program. Here you can learn more about obtaining the J-1 Visa and other relevant visas.

College/University Student Program

Foreign students have the opportunity to study at American degree-granting post-secondary accredited academic institutions, or participate in a student internship program that will fulfill the educational objectives of the student's degree program in his or her home country.

College/University Students must:

- Be financed directly or indirectly by the U.S. government, the government of their home country, an international organization of which the United States is a member by treaty or statute, or supported substantially by funding from any source other than personal or family funds;
- Be carried out according to an agreement between the U.S. government and a foreign government, or according to a written agreement between American and foreign educational institutions, an American educational institution and a foreign government or a state or local government in the United States and a foreign government; or Student is participating in a student internship program that will fulfill the educational objectives for the student's degree program in his or her home country; or
- Pursue a non-degree program must be enrolled full-time in a prescribed course of study. The maximum duration of a non-degree program is 24 months inclusive of academic training.

Benefits

- **School Credit:** University/college students may engage in degree-granting programs until completion or non-degree granting programs for no more than 24 months.
- **Employment:** Students may engage in part-time employment under certain conditions, including good academic standing at their host institution.
- **Academic training:** Students may participate in academic training with or without wages or other remuneration during their studies with the approval of the academic dean or adviser and the responsible officer at their sponsor organization.

Short-Term Scholar Program

Short-Term Scholars must:

- Be a professor or research scholar or someone with similar education and or experience.

Benefits

- Educational enrichment: Participants collaborate on special research projects, teach a semester at a college or university, or lecture, consult or observe in a variety of settings in education and research in the United States.

More information

- The maximum duration of stay is six months;
- No program extension will be considered; and
- No change of category will be considered.

Two-year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

When you agree to participate in an Exchange Visitor Program and your program falls under the conditions below, you will be subject to the two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement. This means you will be required to return to your home country for two years at the end of your exchange visitor program. This requirement under immigration law is based on Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Two-year Home-country Physical Presence Requirement Conditions - An exchange visitor is subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement if the following conditions exist:

- Government funded exchange program - The program is financed in whole or in part directly or indirectly by the U.S. government or the government of the exchange visitor's nationality or last residence;
- Graduate medical education or training - The exchange visitor entered the United States to receive graduate medical education or training;
- Specialized knowledge or skill: Skills List - The exchange visitor is a national or permanent resident of a country which has deemed the field of specialized knowledge or skill necessary to the development of the country, as shown on the Exchange Visitor Skills List. Review the Exchange Visitor Skills List 2009.

Restrictions - If you are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement, you must return to your home country for a cumulative total period of at least two years before you can do any of the following:

- Change status while in the United States to the nonimmigrant categories of temporary worker (H) or intracompany transferee (L);
- Adjust status while in the United States to immigrant visa/lawful permanent resident status (LPR);
- Receive an immigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate; or
- Receive a temporary worker (H), intracompany transferee (L), or fiancé (K) visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

Section II – Applying to Lenoir-Rhyne University

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- Ensure that Lenoir-Rhyne University Offers Desired Classes
- Seek a Nomination from Your Home Institution
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- Understand the Financial Obligations

Use this page as a checklist.

Confirm that Your University is a Partner with Lenoir-Rhyne University

- Háskólinn á Bifröst
- Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFE)
- Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)
- Université de Bordeaux
- Universidad de Almería
- Universidad Pontificia Comillas
- Universidad del País Vasco (UPV)
- Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal
- Technische Universität Dortmund
- Evangelische Hochschule Nürnberg
- ISEP
- CONAHEC

Ensure that Lenoir-Rhyne University Offers Desired Classes

The Lenoir-Rhyne University undergraduate catalog and graduate catalog can be viewed [here](#) and you can search for courses by semester using the [Section Search](#).

- Courses are often the same from year to year, but you should ensure that there are several courses that may be applied to your study plan as there is no guarantee that we can register you for all desired courses. Please also plan for the following challenges:
 - Scheduling conflicts between courses.
 - The course you like is not offered in both semesters.
 - Some courses may be at full capacity.
- Our first semester runs from August to December (fall semester), and the second term runs from January to May (spring semester). The courses are listed as a three letter code for the department and a course number (for example, BUS 380) with a section letter or number.
- 100-200 level courses are introductory courses, and levels 300-400 are intended for upper classmen. Exchange students should not plan to register for a 500-level class without first consulting the SCIE.
- Undergraduate exchange students must register for at least 12 U.S. credits of in-person courses. Students may enroll in “Hybrid” courses to meet this requirement, but “Online” courses may only be selected as an addition to the 12 credits. Graduate students must register for 9 U.S. credits and only one course can be online.

Please create a list of five-ten courses that you would like to take, and send that to Brittany.Marinelli@lr.edu.

Seek a Nomination from Your Home Institution

A student interested in studying at Lenoir-Rhyne University must be enrolled full-time at their home university and may need to be nominated by the International Office of that university prior to applying. The nomination process differs by university, so contact your university's international office to inquire about the procedure. If you are applying through CONAHEC or ISEP, you may not need a nomination from your home university.

If you or the international office at your home university have any questions about the application process, please contact the William and Robert Shuford Center for International Education:

Interim Director

Brittany Marinelli

E-mail: Brittany.Marinelli@lr.edu

Phone Number: 828-328-7375

Check the LRU Academic Calendar

Make sure that the LRU semester dates do not conflict with your university's coursework or other priorities. You will need to arrive a bit early to attend a mandatory immigration orientation with the SCIE. The academic calendar is accessible [here](#).

Note Important Application Dates

Fall Semester Arrivals

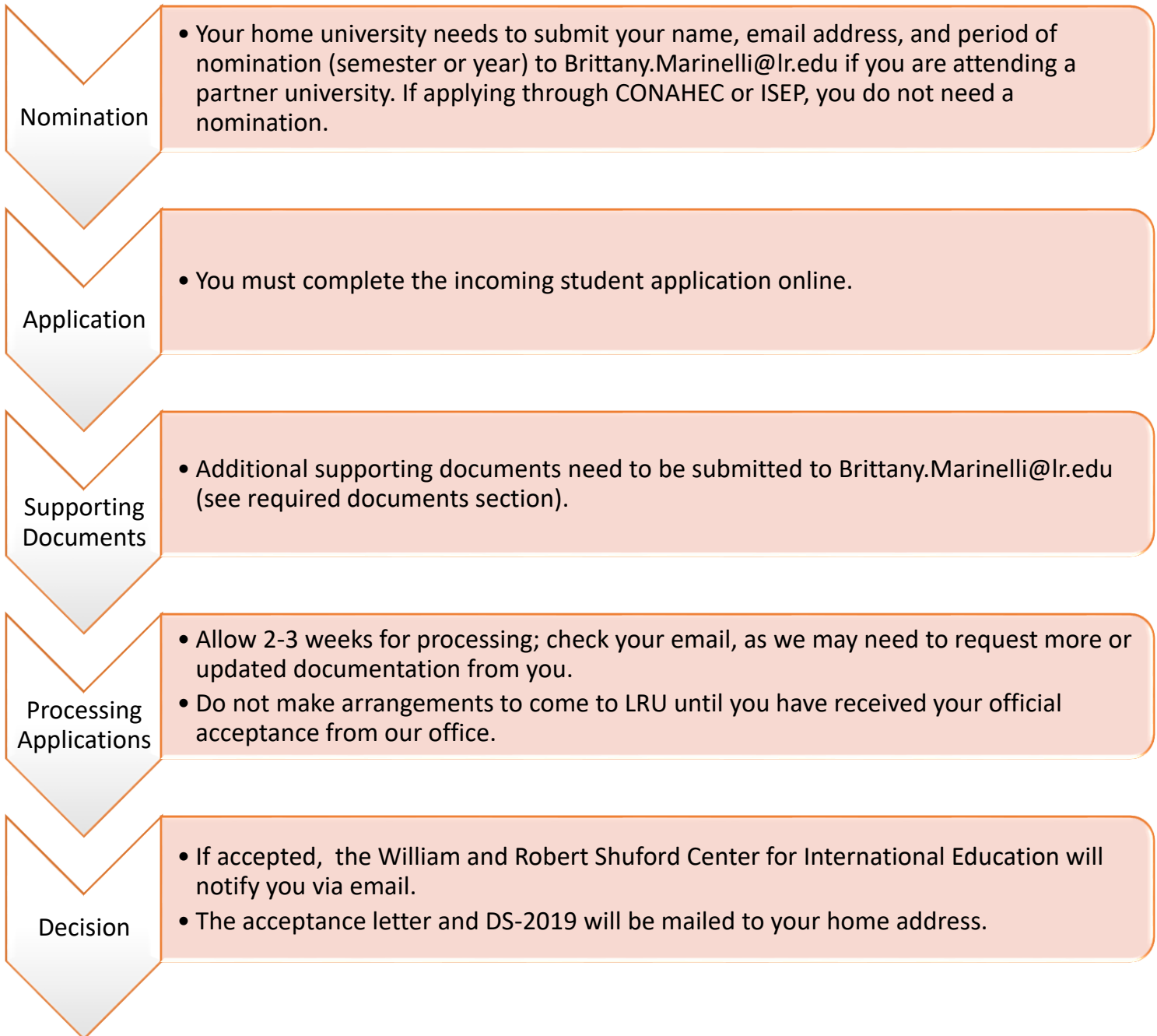
- Nominations submitted by **March 21st**
- Application documents submitted by **April 1st**

Spring Semester Arrivals

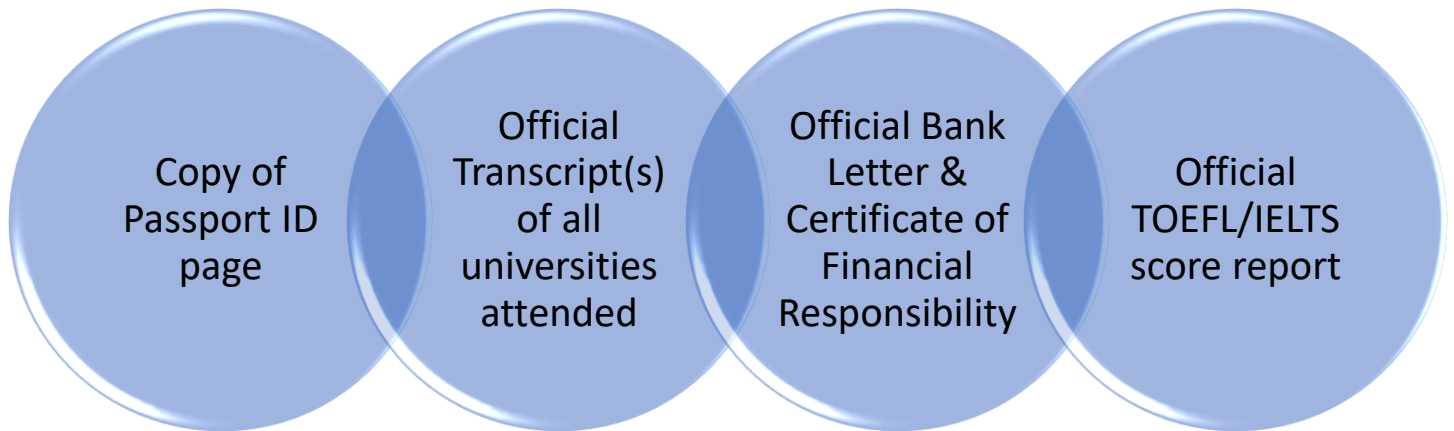
- Nominations submitted by **October 21st**
- Application documents submitted by **November 1st**

Familiarize Yourself with the Application Process

Here is an overview of the process for applying as an exchange student to Lenoir-Rhyne University:



Review the Required Application Documents



Details:

- **Copy of Passport ID page:**

Make sure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your studies are expected to end in the U.S. If you are in the process of renewing your passport, a copy of the expiring one will allow us to initiate your application, but you will need to send a copy of the new passport as soon as you receive it.
- **Official Transcript(s) of all universities attended:**

LRU requires transcripts of all post-secondary academic work, not just your current university. If you transferred from another institution or are a graduate student, all transcripts are required.
- **Official Bank Letter and Certificate of Financial Responsibility:**

Completed and Signed Statement of Financial Responsibility. Supporting documentation needs to be submitted for each source of support (for example, a letter from your university to confirm a stipend or scholarship, or an official bank letter in English stating that the person responsible for your living and personal expenses while studying at the LRU as an exchange student has a minimum of \$7,500 in his/her account for the semester (or \$15,000 for an academic year). ISEP students need to show a minimum of \$1,500 per semester.
- **Official TOEFL or IELTS score report:**

If you are non-native English speaker, and English is not the only language of instruction at your home university, you must submit one of the following:

 - TOEFL score of at least 550 paper, 213 computer, or 79 internet based; or 6.5 IELTS. A formal evaluation of language level issued by the home university can also be accepted in certain cases. We now also accept the Cambridge Exam.

Understand the Financial Obligations

As an exchange student, you enjoy the benefit of not paying LRU tuition fees. However, you are responsible for paying room & board fees, as well as health insurance fees and daily living expenses. Here is a breakdown of the costs:

- Lenoir-Rhyne University Room & Board (includes housing and unlimited meal plan): \$6,350.
- International Health Insurance: \$624
- Bedding Package Fee (optional): \$50
- Estimated living expenses: \$200-300 per month + \$200-300 for textbooks per semester

You will be responsible for paying your fees directly to the Student Accounts office or through your MyLR portal. You may pay the sum in full with either cash or card, and/or setup a payment plan upon arrival. You will need to pay your balance in full at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester. You can read more information about the Student Account's office [here](#).

If you do not pay your fees in full, transcript will be held until the balance is paid.

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Use this page as a checklist.

Receive Acceptance Letter and Form DS-2019

Upon acceptance, you will be sent an official acceptance letter via email from the SCIE. The SCIE will then create your DS-2019, which will be mailed to your home address, along with the acceptance letter. The Form DS-2019 is an official US documentation that allows you to apply for a J-1 visa. You will need both the acceptance letter and DS-2019 during the visa application process.

Exchange students are responsible for paying the shipping fees for the documents. Instructions of how to use eShipGlobal will be sent to students separately.

If you are coming to LRU through ISEP, your DS-2019 will be created and sent to you by ISEP.

Read the Information on Form DS-2019

Form DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status," is a Department of State controlled document that is produced through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS is the Department of Homeland Security database developed to collect information on the F, M, and J visa holders. The Form DS-2019 is the basic document required to support an application for an exchange visitor (J-1). It is a 2-page document. **Foreign nationals are required to sign page one of the form agreeing to the instructions and certification language relating to participation in the exchange program found on page two.** Each Form DS-2019 is printed with a unique identifier known as a "SEVIS ID number" in the top right-hand corner, which consists of an "alpha" character (N) and up to 11 numerical characters (E.g. N0002123457).

You will use your Form DS-2019 to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before traveling to the U.S. to begin your studies. When you receive your DS-2019, you must review your document for any corrections that need to be made. Check the spelling of your name, your date of birth, country of citizenship, etc. Also check the dates of your program. If corrections are needed, please contact Brittany.Marinelli@lr.edu immediately. If everything is correct, sign your DS-2019 (at the bottom of the first page) and make sure to read the second page for important immigration requirements.

Apply for the J-1 Visa

- **Paying the SEVIS Fee:**
All J-1 exchange visitor visa applicants must pay the SEVIS (I-901) fee prior to going to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for the visa interview. The fee may be paid on the [Homeland Security Website](#). **The Exchange Visitor should print the receipt and bring it to the Consulate interview as proof of payment in order to be qualified for the J-1 visa.**
- **Applying for a Visa:**
Although LR has admitted you (or accepted to sponsor you as a scholar) and issued the DS-2019 form, if you are coming directly from overseas, you must first apply for a visa from a U.S. Embassy/Consulate. (NOTE: a visa is not required for Canadians).

- **What embassy or Consulate should you contact for an appointment?**

The U.S. Embassy/Consulate closest to your home will usually process your visa application. You can use the [Study in the States Website](#), to assist with locating an embassy/consulate.

- **When should you apply?**

Check the embassy's processing time to ensure your visa will arrive on time. Most Embassies/Consulates have specific hours to review non-immigrant visa applications. Applicants generally apply online, but then must go to the Embassy/Consulate for an interview. Please check with the Consulate located closest to your home for their application procedures.

- Remember that the Embassy/Consulate will close for both U.S. and local holidays.
- All student visa holders are required to pay an additional MRV (machine-readable visa fee) before making an appointment for a student visa. (this is in addition to the SEVIS fee)
- Most U. S. universities begin their academic year in August, so this is a very busy month at the Embassy/Consulate. Plan ahead so you can arrive in time for orientation and class.

[Exchange Visitor Visa Information and Application](#)

In addition to paying the SEVIS fee, all non-immigrant visa applicants (that includes J student and scholar visas) must also pay a processing fee (non-refundable) visa application fee (this is called the MRV fee (see above)). See the [State Department Website](#). You can also find information on the [Study in the States Website](#).

- **What should you take to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate?**

It is crucial that you take **all** of the required documents with you for your visa appointment. If you do not, you may be required to return for a second time, which may delay your visa for several weeks.

Be sure to take:

- An unexpired valid passport and all previously issued passports
- The receipt of SEVIS I-901fee payment
- The DS-2019 form provided by LR or your sponsoring agency
- A letter of admission from LR
- Your valid passport, with at least six months validity on it from the date you will enter the U.S.
- A copy of your English language score, if you are a non-native English speaker
- Proof of finances documents

- Passport-sized photographs for your visa. [See photo requirements.](#)
 - Previous school transcripts, diplomas, or records (if requested)
 - Proof of ties to your home country. The J-1 visas is a non-immigrant visa, which means you must be able to show you will return to your home country upon completion of your program of study at LR. Visit the embassy website where you will apply for the visa for information on what documentation will show your ties to your home country.
- **What happens at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate?**
You will be required to speak with a consular official who reviews many visa applications every day. The consular officer will quickly review your documents and ask about your program at LR. Since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa, the officer will require documentation of proof of intent to return to your home country. The officer will then give you instructions about when to return to pick up your documents and your visa or when to expect them in the mail. If the officer feels additional information is required s/he will issue a request to submit additional information.
 - **When you receive your visa, review it!**
Make sure that the following information is correct:
 - Your first, middle and last name is spelled correctly
 - Your date of birth (DOB) is correct in the mm/dd/yyyy format
 - Your visa type is J-1

You cannot apply for or obtain a visa in the U.S. This means that if you enter the U.S. and your information is incorrect you will need to exit the U.S., apply for a new visa and reenter with the correct visa. If your visa is not correct it will affect your ability to obtain a Driver's License (DL) and/or a Social Security Number (SSN).

- **Do Not Enter the U.S. on a Tourist Visa**
You should not enter the U.S. as a tourist using a B-1/B-2 visa or using the WT-Visa Waiver Process. You are intending to be a student or scholar, so you should not apply for, or enter the country with an existing, tourist visa. You may encounter immigration problems if you enter the U.S. using an inappropriate visa. Do not worry; if you already have a tourist visa in your passport, this will not prevent you from getting a student visa. You cannot attend LR if you enter the U.S. on a tourist visa without taking steps to correct your entry record.

Make Travel Arrangements

Once you have received your visa, you should book your flight to the U.S. You should arrive at the airport in Charlotte the day before orientation begins (review important dates below). Once you have your travel plans, please send the full itinerary to Brittany.Marinelli@lr.edu.

Please note that someone from the SCIE will pick you up from the Charlotte airport and bring you to campus. However, if you arrive earlier than the designated date or late at night, you may be asked to stay in a hotel in Charlotte until someone can pick you up.

Set up Your LRU Account

Applicants who have been accepted by LRU will receive an account letter that has information about their new student email and unique LR ID. Your email and ID will provide access to several LRU systems and services.

Upon receiving the email containing your email address and temporary password, you will need to login to [MyLR](#) and create a new password. Please write this password down somewhere for safe keeping. If you forget your password before arriving to LR, the SCIE will not be able to help you reset it, so you'll have to wait until you arrive on campus to speak with our IT department. The IT department is open from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday-Friday; to contact the department, call +1 828-328-7350.

Your new email and password will give you access to see your billing information and course schedule on MyLR, Gmail (<http://www.gmail.com>) to access your LR student email, and Canvas (<http://canvas.lr.edu>) to access your coursework online. This information will be covered in the mandatory orientation upon arrival.

Complete the LR Immunization Record and LR Health Insurance Information

Complete the Student Health Form

All students must complete the Student Health form which can be found on the [Student Health Center Website](#). It is the first form (1- Undergraduate/Health Care Graduate Student Health Forms) under the heading Health Forms. You must also provide a copy of your Immunization Record for review. Information on the required immunizations and the immunization forms are part of the overall Student Health Form discussed above.

For ease of processing, please send the form and immunization records directly to Brittany.Marinelli@lr.edu as soon as you can. Once the form has been reviewed by the Student Health Center, the SCIE will communicate back to you any additional immunizations you may be required to complete in order to maintain enrollment in LR classes.

It is a good idea to have your immunizations taken care of before you arrive in the U.S. They tend to be cheaper for you at home, and since we do not provide immunizations on campus, you will need to arrange transportation to and from providers of immunizations in the U.S. The one item you are required by N.C. law to do in the U.S. is your TB screening (called a PPD test).

LR Health Insurance Information

On the Student Health Center Website, you should also review the [Health Insurance Policy](#) information for international students. We will also review this information with you during your immigration orientation.

Information about the Global Village and Campus Meal Plan

All exchange students are required to live on campus in the Global Village Residential Learning Community. A couple of months prior to your arrival date, more information about your roommates will be sent to you. We encourage you to contact your roommates in advance to start to get to know them.

Global Village Mission: The Global Village will promote meaningful interaction between students, across cultural difference, in a brave and hospitable living space in which residents approach their fellow community members with curiosity, patience and hospitality.

Global Village Residents will increase their cross-cultural skills by learning from each other, becoming more aware of cultural difference and similarity, and developing greater confidence in their cross-cultural interactions.

- **What is the goal of the Global Village?**

The goal of the global village is to foster cross-cultural learning in a friendly community. International students, primarily our exchange student population, are housed together with U.S. students who take interest in global, international topics and cross-cultural learning. Some U.S. students are ones who have returned from various study abroad programs, others are international business majors or international politics majors, and some are just curious students! By hand selecting community members, the SCIE ensures that exchange students will feel comfortable and welcomed by their new LR roommates.

- **What do we do?**

Residents of the GV are required to plan and host intercultural activities. The bulk of the intercultural activities take place every two weeks, planned by residents of a different apartment each time. In the past, apartments have hosted a romantic comedy movie night for Valentine's Day, done international karaoke together, painted pumpkins for Halloween, and watched a Premier League soccer game (with some cultural explanations built in).

- **What are the dorms like?**

The Global Village is in the Living-Learning Center (LLC) dorm. There are two types of apartments to choose from:

- Double rooms: two bedrooms with two students in each, one shared bathroom, a living room and small kitchen. Bedrooms come furnished with a bed, desk and wardrobe for each student. The living room has a sofa and coffee table provided.
- Single rooms: four single bedrooms with one student in each, one shared bathroom, a larger living room and small kitchen. Bedrooms come furnished with a bed, desk and wardrobe for each student. The living room has a sofa and coffee table provided. **Single rooms have an additional fee. If you are interested in a single room, please let the SCIE know.**

The SCIE can also provide you with a bedding package for \$50. The bedding package comes with all necessary bedding, one pillow, one towel, one wash cloth, and hangers for clothes. If you choose the bedding package, we will set your room up before you arrive so that you can just relax when you get to campus. We will add the fee to your student bill, which you can pay during the semester. No pre-payment is required.

To get an idea of what your dorm could look like, a virtual tour can be found here: [Living-Learning Center](#)

Meal Plan Information:

Students have an unlimited meal plan while studying at LR. You can access the cafeteria Monday-Thursday from 7am-7:30pm and from 9am-6:30pm on the weekend. The cafeteria has a lot of food to offer on a daily basis and is set up as an “all you can eat buffet,” so you can eat as much as you want. Here is how the cafeteria is laid out:

Home Line- hot entrees and fresh vegetables bring the taste of home to campus.

Deli – create your own sandwich with a variety of meats, cheeses, toppings, and toppings breads.

Pizza - hot fresh pizza with assorted toppings.

Salad Bar- create your own salad with a variety of fresh lettuce, vegetables, and toppings.

Soup- warm your soul with the homemade soup of the day.

Grill - specialty burgers, sandwiches and fries.

Desserts - a variety of delicious and homemade desserts to complete your meal.

Other than eating in the cafeteria, LR also offers other food options in the **Bears Lair Food Court** such as Starbucks, Chick-Fil-A, and Sandwich Shack. You can use your meal plan to eat at these locations on campus by using a “meal exchange” or “bearbucks”. You will have five meal exchanges each week to use outside of the cafeteria and you will also have \$100 in bearbucks, which can be used as a declining balance to purchase meals in the food court. More information can be found here: [LR Dining Services](#).

Connect with your I-PAL(s)

The International Peer Advisor/Leader (I-PAL) program is a great support system for incoming exchange students. Through the buddy/peer mentor program, you will be paired with one or more U.S. students who will assist you with adjusting to college life at Lenoir-Rhyne. I-PALs play a key role by helping the SCIE provide services such as Orientation, Peer Mentorship, and Social and Cultural Programming. Your IPAL(s) will hopefully become a friend that you will stay in contact with post-LR, and throughout your life.

And, although you will be paired with specific students, the SCIE will regularly plan and host activities for the entire group to participate in. For example, the SCIE usually takes all students to a NFL game in Charlotte, to the mountains to go hiking, hosts picnics on campus, movie nights downtown, etc.

Before you arrive at LR, you will receive an email with your I-PAL assignment. This email will include contact information so that you can get to know some local students before getting on the plane. It is recommended that you ask your I-PAL questions about campus life, organizations to join, the Hickory community, and tips for

what to pack for weather in North Carolina. The SCIE will also create a WhatsApp group for the I-PAL community, so please download the app now if you do not already have it.

Section IV – Arrival, Maintaining Status, & Getting Involved

- Entering the United States
- Reporting to Lenoir-Rhyne University
- Maintaining Status
- Support from the SCIE
- How to Get Involved!

Entering the United States

It is important to note that you cannot enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the start date listed on your DS-2019 form. **Carry your ORIGINAL immigration documents with you onto the plane because you will be required to present your passport and these documents to the Immigration Officer at your Port of Entry (POE).** When you arrive at your POE, you will be inspected for admission into the U.S. At this time you will present your passport, DS-2019 form and other requested information to the U.S. Immigration Officer. Remain patient and polite and answer all questions honestly. Your passport will be stamped with an entry date. Make sure that the stamp notes J-1 and D/S, which stands for Duration of Status. If your entry stamp is not correct, please ask the Immigration Officer to correct the stamp. Put these documents in a safe place because you will need to present them to the SCIE upon your arrival at LR. Losing these documents will cost you significant time and money to replace.

Please Note: You are required by USCIS to attend the institution whose Immigration documents you use to enter the U.S.

If you do not have the documentation needed to enter the U.S. you may be given an I-515A and granted temporary admission to the U.S. If you receive an I-515A, notify the SCIE immediately for assistance.

Reporting to Lenoir-Rhyne University

Once you enter the U.S. you MUST report to LR within 30 days. But keep in mind that SCIE will host a mandatory immigration orientation on the weekend before classes begin. Please make sure to be present for this mandatory orientation. At this orientation, you will 'check-in' with the SCIE, per immigration regulations, and your SEVIS record will be Registered or Validated, depending on your status. If you fail to check-in with SCIE, you are not maintaining your status, which can lead to serious consequences.

Maintaining Status

To maintain valid J-1 status, all exchange visitors (and their dependents) must:

- Report to the Center for International Education any change in their telephone numbers, email addresses, actual and current U.S. address and site of activity within 10 days of the change being made;
- Maintain a full course of study and satisfactory academic progress (if participating in academic year-long exchange);
- Avoid doing unauthorized employment; and
- Maintain insurance coverage that meets the requirements explained on page two of the DS-2019 throughout their stay in the U.S.

It is important to remember that all exchange visitors, whether students or scholars, in the J program, have a specific program to fulfill and any aspects of the SEVIS record should be updated as program information changes. Changes may include:

Extending the program: The request for an extension must be made in a timely manner, such that the extension can be granted before the end date of the exchange visitor's program. Extensions cannot be granted during the grace period after the end of the program.

Shortening the program: Sometimes circumstances in academic or personal life may prevail over program pursuits so that the need arises to end a program earlier than planned. In order to appropriately "end" a SEVIS record, the Center for International Education will need to speak with the exchange visitor about plans and advise the EV appropriately for the situation, keeping in mind all the requirements of J-1 visa status and the likely desire to avoid negative short and long-term consequences to an immigration record.

If an EV simply stops attending school, his or her record will be terminated as required by law. Termination can seriously affect chances for successful future applications for U.S. immigration status.

Transferring the program: Please note that any transfer to another J program and another J institution must be completed prior to the ending date on your DS-2019 form. Transfers during the grace period are not possible.

Please note that gaps in the J program are not permitted. EVs must be continuously enrolled in a full course of study, or fully engaged in their program.

All exchange visitors may enjoy the benefit of a 30 day grace period following the completion of their program. The 30 day grace period after completion of your degree is intended to give you time to pack your belongings, make travel arrangements for home, or to travel around the U.S. prior to departure. Exchange visitors must exit the US before the end of your 30 day grace period. Note that completion of program, not program end date indicated on the DS-2019, marks the beginning of the 30-day grace period.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MAINTAINING STATUS:

To maintain valid J-1 status, you must report to the Office for International Education any change in your physical address.

To maintain valid J-1 status, all exchange visitors (and their dependents) must maintain insurance coverage that meets the requirements outlined on page two of the DS-2019 form. The insurance offered by LR meets these requirements and will automatically be purchased on behalf of and billed to each exchange visitor unless (for scholars only) proof of alternative insurance that meets all requirements is provided. Additional information about the specifics of coverage may be requested at any time and will be provided via email upon request.

All exchange visitors may also be subject to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act as well.

To maintain valid J-1 status, a student must maintain a full-course of study. Registered students may add or drop a course during the drop/add period in the first week of classes, as long as a full course load is maintained. After the drop/add period, you must obtain prior authorization from the Center for International Education for a reduced course load. Immigration regulations allow an immigration officer (at LR, the Director

of the Center for International Education) to authorize reduced enrollment for J students for the following specific reasons only:

- A bona fide academic reason, as documented in writing by the academic advisor;
- Medical condition defined by a licensed physician or psychologist/psychiatrist.

Students sponsored by ISEP must consult ISEP's immigration officers regarding procedures and program rules for dropping below a full course of study.

To maintain valid J-1 status, you must avoid unauthorized employment. It is important to understand that, employment is any type of work performed or service provided in exchange for any benefit, including but not limited to money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board. Employment might include informal tutoring, babysitting, or teaching someone to drive or play a musical instrument if an exchange of benefit is involved.

Any employment (including paid and unpaid internship type opportunities, for academic credit, or not for academic credit) done without specific written authorization, and authorization in SEVIS, from the program sponsor (LR or ISEP) indicated in box 2 of the DS-2019 form is illegal. The SCIE can work with you to seek on-campus work opportunities and Academic Training opportunities only if it is deemed an essential and integral part of your program.

Support from the SCIE

The SCIE will assist you with getting settled in during your first few days at LR. A trip to Walmart will be arranged within the first 1-2 days of your arrival so that you can purchase necessities such as, bedding, toiletries, food, pharmacy items, etc. You can pay with cash, credit or debit cards; however, America is not a cash heavy country and people usually use cards.

The days before classes begin, the SCIE will also hold orientation sessions that will focus on immigration requirements, student health forms and immunizations, campus safety, registering for classes and other items that will help you get acclimated to LR. All segments of orientation are mandatory and students who fail to check in risk having their SEVIS record terminated, and will not be able to remain legally in the U.S.

While at LR, you are strongly encouraged to participate in cultural activities with your I-PALs and Global Village roommates.

Also, the SCIE will plan cultural, recreational, and educational activities throughout the semester that you are required to participate in per the regulations of the Exchange Visitor Program. As previously mentioned, the SCIE will offer some of the following trips during your stay:

- Hiking or Music/Art festivals in Boone and Asheville
- Shopping and cultural event/museum opportunities in Charlotte
- Family Dinners at local restaurants

How to Get Involved!

You will already have a robust support group through the IPAL program and Global Village community, but your time at LR will be more meaningful if you seek out other opportunities to get involved. It is recommended to research ways to get engaged through Student Life before coming to the U.S. so that you have an idea of what activities, clubs, and organizations interest you. You can explore LR's Student Life page [here](#) and you can find a virtual tour [here](#).

In the past, we have had exchange students join athletic teams, write for the campus newspaper (and win awards for their incredible journalism!), sing in the choir, and so much more. We want YOU to do the same and to truly immerse yourself into campus life and learn what it means to be a Lenoir-Rhyne Bear. As we say here...

GO BEARS!



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