Welcome to the university of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The following information is designed to provide you with the basic information you need to prepare for your arrival at UAB and what to do when you arrive.

Orientation and other required programs

All new international scholars are required to attend two programs designed to provide you with information about UAB and your immigration responsibilities. Attending these programs is required.

Required for all international scholars

The first thing you should do upon arrival at UAB is to check-in with the International Scholar & Student Services Office (ISSS). The staff will photocopy your immigration documents and provide basic information about UAB. We will also explain to you your immigration rights and responsibilities as well as introduce you to services and programs available to the UAB international community. Our office is located in the Smolian International House on the UAB campus. The full address is:

International Scholar & Student Services
1400 University Boulevard, HUC 250
Birmingham, AL  35294
Phone:  (205) 934-4383 or 934-1526 Fax:  (205) 934-8664
Email: Lisa Townsend (LTownsend@uab.edu) or Nick Rogers (nrogers@uab.edu)
Website:  www.uab.edu/isss

The second thing all international scholar employees are responsible for is attending the UAB New Employee Orientation. This program will provide information on health insurance, employee benefits, and general information about UAB. Your hosting department will assist you in getting scheduled to attend this program.

Student Health and Hospitalization Insurance

Physical Examination and Immunizations (Prices subject to change without notice)

UAB requires that all international scholars have proof of certain immunizations (Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Tetanus, and Tuberculin Skin test). Please go to the UAB Student Health website at www.uab.edu/studenthealth and download the Health History Form listed under the link “Student Health Service Application and Forms.” Refer to that form to view a list of required immunizations under the heading “Immunization History”. You should have pages 3 and 4 of this form completed by a physician prior to coming to the US. Please bring the completed health form and proof of immunizations with you. Scholars working in certain departments (this includes Joint Health Sciences, Health Related Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry and Dental School) will be required to obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine upon arrival at UAB. The cost of this vaccine is $50 US. For more information about this requirement, contact your hosting department directly. If you do not have a physical exam in your country prior to arriving in the US, you may schedule an appointment with the Student Health Service for an exam at the cost of $45.00. If you do not have the required vaccinations prior to your arrival, you will be required to get those in the Student Health Service. The costs for vaccinations are as follows: Tuberculin skin test $10.00-20.00, Measles (2 in a series) $36.36 each (given at Jefferson County Health Department).

Hospitalization Insurance (Fees subject to change every fall)

All international scholars are required to have acceptable health insurance coverage while at UAB. International scholars employed by UAB will be covered through one of the university employee insurance plans. Scholars that will not be paid by UAB may choose to purchase health insurance in their home country. In order to use insurance you already have, you must present the insurance policy to the Student Health Service. The policy must be in English and detail the specific benefits provided. The Director of the Student Health Service will decide whether or not your insurance policy is comparable to UAB’s. Plan ahead to either buy UAB’s insurance or prove that you have comparable health insurance. If your policy is not acceptable, you will be required to purchase UAB’s health insurance. NOTE: Short-term scholars (those individuals who will be at UAB less than 6 months) will have other health insurance options. ISSS staff will discuss these options with you at check-in.
HOUSING

On-campus Housing – only available for short-term scholars and postdoctoral fellows

Student Housing Office
University of Alabama at Birmingham
101 Denman Hall, 1604 9 Avenue S
Birmingham, Alabama 35294
Telephone: (205) 934-2092
Fax: (205) 934-7297 Email: studenthousing@uab.edu Website: students.uab.edu/housing

Off-campus Housing

Upon arrival in Birmingham, you can obtain information about housing, leases and household goods from the Smolian International House or the Housing Office. International scholars currently employed at UAB often help new arrivals find a place to live off-campus. Check with one of the International Student Groups listed on our website at www.uab.edu/isss.

Monthly rates for furnished off-campus housing range from $400.00 to $600.00. Renters or “tenants” usually have to pay their own utilities (i.e. electricity, water and telephone) and you must pay a deposit to the utility companies in order to receive the services. Most landlords require a deposit (usually the amount of one month’s rent) that may be refunded after the tenant moves out if no damage has occurred. You should take this into consideration when planning your budget. Having an established credit history is sometimes required in order to obtain an apartment off-campus. You may need to show evidence of employment at UAB or other proof of financial sponsorship and a bank statement indicating your ability to pay for your rent.

ARRIVAL IN BIRMINGHAM

Transportation From The Birmingham Or Atlanta Airport

If you are flying into the Atlanta, Georgia airport, there are shuttles that come to Birmingham (prices vary from $45-69).

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If you fly into Birmingham you should take a taxi from the airport to your hotel. The cost should be approximately $15.00 (be sure to say you are a UAB scholar). If you made reservations at the Smolian International House (I-House), take a taxi directly there. If you did not secure lodging before coming to Birmingham, we suggest that you stay at one of the recommended Short-term Accommodation locations. Contact the hotel upon your arrival and take the taxi to that location until you can get settled. If your flight arrives very late, you may wish to stay at one of the airport hotels which provide a shuttle from the airport to the hotel. This includes the Ramada Inn – Airport (205) 591-7900 (cost $78.00); Holiday Inn—Airport (205) 591-6900 (cost $69.00) the costs are subject to change. Next weekday, take a cab to UAB. You can use the Smolian International House address (1600 10 Avenue South) as a destination.

Temporary Housing

There is a shortage of low cost temporary housing in Birmingham. However, the International House has limited space available for one week at a rate of $30 per night (private room with shared bath) and a $20.00 advance deposit (which may be applied to the cost of the rent). Because space is limited and the service is available to those who contact us first, anyone wishing to stay in the I-House should make reservations in advance. Due to limited availability, reservations will not be confirmed unless you have a flight already set to come to the United States. We recommend you contact the I-House immediately if you wish to reserve a room.

Smolian International House
University of Alabama at Birmingham
1600 10 Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35205
Phone: (205) 934-1205
Fax: (205) 975-3226
Email: ihouse@uab.edu

If space is not available at the International House, you may find it necessary to stay in a hotel. Please see Short Term Accommodations for information on local accommodations. Please state that you are a UAB International Scholar to receive special rates.

As some hotels tend to be expensive it will be better for you to try to make reservations in the I-House or to arrange to stay with a friend in Birmingham when you first arrive. Above all else, make your plans early to avoid last minute stress! It is your
responsibility to find temporary housing for yourself not the responsibility of the university staff. We will try our best to assist you if something unexpected happens.

GETTING AROUND BIRMINGHAM

Public transportation around the city is limited to the inner city and only a few surrounding areas. Bus schedules are available which list routes for service. Transportation to the entire metropolitan area may not be available.

WHAT TO WEAR

The temperature in Birmingham, Alabama runs an average of 27 degrees Celsius for the Summer and 9 degrees Celsius for the Winter. Plan your wardrobe based on a generally mild climate. Light cotton materials are appropriate for the summer. Heavier clothing is required for the winter months in late November through March. Be sure to include a sweater and a coat for this cooler weather as well as appropriate rain gear.

University research staff dress informally for work. Women wear skirts or trousers with blouses or sweaters. Men wear trousers with sport shirts or sweaters. Both men and women wear jeans. You will want to bring a set of traditional native dress from your country to use at special occasions. In general, bring with you the minimal personal items needed. During your stay in the US, you will collect things.

CULTURAL GEAR

Your visit to the United States is a wonderful opportunity to share information about your culture. Many Americans and/or other international students and scholars may have never had an opportunity to learn anything about your country’s customs and history. Opportunities will present themselves for you to teach others about your home country. Bring items that may be used to display or which you may want to give as gifts.

MEDICAL RECORDS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

If you take prescription medications, have your doctor give you a copy of the prescription to bring with you. If you wear glasses, either bring a second pair or a copy of the prescription. If you have any medical records that are vital, your doctor should send a copy with you for use in this country. Medications and glasses can be obtained in the United States, but they may be more expensive than in your home country.

BRINGING FUNDS TO THE UNITED STATES

When you first arrive, plan to have money with you in a readily convertible form. DO NOT BRING LARGE AMOUNTS OF CASH!! Traveler’s checks or cashier’s checks payable from a New York based bank are recommended ways to carry your funds. International checks can take up to 10-15 days for the funding to become available. In setting up your new apartment in Birmingham, you will be required to make payment on several deposits for housing and utilities. You should bring at least $2,000 in living expenses even if you are funded by the University it will take up to 45 days for you to receive your first payment. You need to make sure you have enough money to support yourself until you get your monthly or biweekly payments.

STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Life at UAB can be an integral part of your experience in the US. One of the mainstays of events involving international scholars is with the I-House. This facility operates as temporary housing for international students and scholars during their initial stay in the US. Once you are at UAB for a while, you will notice that the I-House is a central location for international student/scholar events including dances, holiday celebrations, International Women’s Group, Conversational English classes, international group meetings, free Friday lunches and other activities. You may also be interested in participating in the Friendship Partners Program which connects internationals with an American family in the Birmingham community.

In addition to the activities at the I-House, UAB offers a wide variety of events throughout the academic terms: intra-mural (non-professional) sporting teams, sporting events, theatrical plays, symphonic performances, as well as, a film series of many of the most currently popular movies.

UAB has over 100 different nationalities represented on the campus. Some of these groups have established student/scholar organizations. Contact them to ask questions about UAB and/or to discover more about their organization. See this list under International Student Groups on our website for the latest listings at www.uab.edu/isss.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVER’S LICENSE

If you intend to drive while in the US, it will be necessary for you to bring an International Driver’s License from your home country or country of residence. A driver’s license from your country is not valid in the U.S. An International Driver’s License is valid for 12 months after which time you will be required to apply for an Alabama Driver’s License. If you are coming for a short-term exchange (less than 180 days), you cannot obtain an Alabama Driver’s License and can only operate with an International License.
Again, welcome to UAB! If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. The International Scholar & Student Services staff looks forward to meeting you!

**SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATIONS**  
(These rates are subject to change)

**Located within walking distance of UAB**

- **Best Western**  
  800 11th Street South  
  (205) 933-1900  
  $63.78 daily

- **Radisson**  
  808 20th Street South  
  (205) 933-9000  
  $112.86 daily

- **Pickwick Hotel**  
  1023 20th Street S  
  (205) 933-9555  
  Fax: (205) 933-6918  
  $98.02 daily (Includes breakfast)

**Furnished Studio Apartments – Short-term**

- **University Place**  
  951 18th Street South  
  (205) 933-2822  
  leasing@theplace.com  
  $660 one month stay  
  $550-605 p/month (3 months stay)  
  Deposit of $75 + $25 application fee  
  Cleaning Fee $75

**Not Near UAB but offers shuttle service to UAB** (Monday-Friday Shuttle Service)

- **Holiday Inn**  
  260 Oxmoor Road  
  (205) 942-2041  
  $62.70 daily

**PLEASE NOTE:** Rates may change without notice.

UAB/ISSS-it  
5/13/08