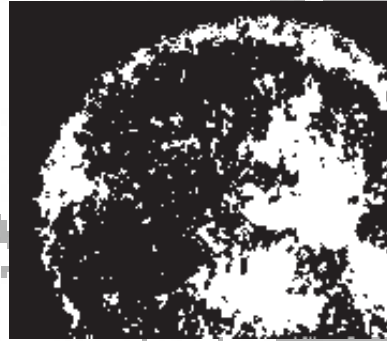


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



International
Student
Handbook
2006-2007

INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT AND
SCHOLAR SERVICES
Office of International Programs



9. Money and Banking

Financial institutions

It is not safe to keep a lot of cash (currency) with you. Financial institutions—credit unions, banks, and savings and loans institutions—provide a safe way to keep your money because they carry insurance on all funds kept in them. Most U.S. Americans pay their expenses with personal checks from their bank checking account.

Most financial institutions are open Monday through Thursday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Friday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION SERVICES

In general, local banks do not keep much foreign currency on hand. The downtown Wells Fargo Bank does have walk-in currency exchange. Which is a free service for Wells Fargo account holders and \$5.00 for others.

- Wells Fargo Bank, 6th St. and Marquette Ave., Downtown Minneapolis

For questions about currency exchange call 1-800-678-4653. Other banks offer international banking services and currency exchange, but you must call in advance for them to order the currency.

BANK ACCOUNTS

To keep your money in a financial institution you must open an account. Usually you need a picture I.D. when you open an account, and you are often asked to provide a Social Security number. Banks in the University area sometimes accept the U of M student ID card. Ask the institution's staff about the types of services it offers. These can vary widely.

However, there are basically two different types of accounts:

Checking accounts: Institutions often offer free checking if you keep a balance of \$100 to \$300 in your account; a few (e.g. Wells Fargo, TCF Bank) offer free checking with no minimum balance. Registered students can cash a personal check for cash with their U Card at a campus bursar's office. There is a charge of 50 cents per check, and maximum check amount of \$50.50.

Savings accounts: Savings accounts earn interest. You can withdraw any amount at any time during regular hours by transferring the funds to your checking account or taking it in cash. Some institutions will charge a monthly service fee if your balance is below a certain amount, or if you make more than a certain number of transactions per month. As the name implies, savings account transactions are mostly deposits, except when withdrawal are necessary for special purchases.

NEARBY INSTITUTIONS

Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union 651/291-3700 (This is specifically for employees of the State of Minnesota, as well as University of Minnesota students and staff.)

- 2520 University Ave. S.E., Minneapolis
- 95 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul

Associated Bank. 612/341-3305

- 1801 Riverside Ave. Minneapolis (West Bank)

TCF Bank

- 1501 University Ave. SE, Dinkytown, 612/379-8597 (*Note: TCF accounts can also be opened at the time and location where you apply for your U-Card.*)
- 615 Washington Ave SE, Stadium Village, 612/331-3639
- Inside Midway Cub Foods, 1440 University Ave., St. Paul 651/645-9888 (open until 8:00 pm)

University of Minnesota federal Credit Union 612/465-0400

- Stadium Village Mall 825 Washington Ave. Room 202, Minneapolis, This is specifically for University of Minnesota students and staff.

U.S. Bank, 612/872-2657

- 718 Washington Ave SE, Stadium Village
- 401 14th Ave. SE, Dinkytown

Wells Fargo Bank, 1-800-869-3557

- 2600 E. Franklin Ave., Cedar-Riverside Area 612/667-1391
- 3430 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis 612/316-3691

CASH CARDS AND CHECK (DEBIT) CARDS

Instant cash cards and check (or debit) cards look like credit cards. They allow you to withdraw money from your account 24 hours a day from ATM machines at different locations. Check cards are also used for purchase; the money is electronically transferred from your checking account to the merchant. You must have a checking account in order to get a check card. However, you can have an Instant Cash (ATM) card even if you only have a savings account.

Cards for different institutions may have different names, but most ATM machines serve several institutions. Just place the card in a machine and enter your personal identification number (PIN) to activate it. (Be sure to memorize the PIN number or carry it on a separate piece of paper.) Some machines take deposits, too. Banks sometimes charge a fee for these transactions, so try to use ATM machines affiliated with your bank.

If you decide to use a cash or check card, be sure to record your withdrawals, purchases, and fees in your checkbook! The same as you do when you write a check.

MONEY TRANSFERS

Students are advised to have money wired to have money wired directly to their own local bank account through electronic transfer from another bank. Do not have money wired to the University. Ask at your local bank for instructions for completing this process.

Money transfers are also available through a private company such as Western Union at 800/325-6000 (English language) or 800/325-4045 (Spanish). Western Union will require a Visa or Master Card credit card to transfer money over the telephone. Otherwise, you must visit a Western Union office to arrange a money transfer.

Recommendations for handling your money

Handling Money While Traveling

1. Consider buying a money belt to wear underneath your clothing.
2. Buy travelers' checks in U.S. dollars.
 - Buy them in small denominations—\$20 and \$50.
 - Sign them before leaving the bank.*
 - Keep travelers' check receipts in a separate place.
 - Recommended: (a) American Express (b) Citibank (Sometimes your travelers' checks may be refused.)
3. Do not carry large amounts of cash at any time. When traveling, carry no more than \$300-\$400 in cash.
 - Use small bills: \$5, \$10, \$20
 - Once you are settled, carry no more than \$50, unless shopping.
4. Always keep your money and travelers' checks on your person while traveling.
 - **Not** in a suitcase
 - **Not** left in hotel rooms, dorm rooms, or in the homes of friends or relatives

General Financial Tips and Advice

1. Your financial matters are personal and should not be discussed in public places. You should take responsibility for managing your own money.
2. It's always best not to borrow money. Similarly, do not lend anyone more money than you can afford to lose.
3. Always keep your belongings with you in public places, classrooms, libraries, and at parties.
4. If your money is stolen:
 - Inform the local or campus police immediately. File a police report.
 - Contact your travelers' check or credit card company for instructions.
 - Contact your international student adviser and your academic adviser.
5. Consider on-campus student employment for the following reasons:
 - earn spending money
 - establish savings
 - increase and practice your English-language skills
 - meet a variety of students and staff
 - get work experience in the United States
 - learn more about U.S. culture

Money Transfers and Bank Accounts

1. International money transfers, in most cases, take a minimum of 21 days. There is also a service charge. Each bank has a routing number of international money transfers. Ask your bank for their routing number. Your parents or sponsors will need this number as well as your checking account number in order to wire money to your account.
2. Open a bank account immediately at a bank near campus or your residence, convenient for you, that meets all of your particular financial needs.
 - Be sure to have your checks start with a high number, at least 1000.
 - Get a safe-deposit box for valuables and important documents such as jewelry, passports, birth certificates, money market certificates.

Advice About Educational Expenses

1. You are expected to pay your tuition and fees by the due date when billed each semester. You are personally responsible for all tuition and fees, even if you are sponsored by a funding agency or government. You can elect to pay in one, two, or three installments.
2. Penalty fees for late tuition payments are charged directly to the student. In some cases, sponsoring agencies will not take responsibility for the late fee and the student must pay it, even if the agency failed to make the tuition payment on time.
3. It is advised that you bring enough money with you for your first semester's educational and living expenses.
4. Health insurance is a requirement for all international students and dependents. Starting Fall 2003, all students at the University must be covered by the University of Minnesota Student Hospitalization Plan. You will not be able to have a private health insurance policy of your own.

Financial Tips Related to Housing

1. University residence halls must be paid in advance.
2. Most apartments require the first month's rent when you move in. Other charges may include:
 - Damage deposit
 - Key deposit
 - Application fee, which may include a background check
3. Always, at all times, keep dorm rooms and apartment doors locked.

4. Consider having your personal property insured.
 - Apartment (renter's) insurance, available from any insurance company, is not expensive but can save you thousands of dollars if property is stolen or damaged by fires, flooding, etc.
 - Travelers' insurance
5. Allocate some money for "settling in" to your new home for items such as small appliances, cleaning products, and other household goods.

Credit Cards, Instant Cash Cards, and Check Cards

1. Try to avoid the frequent use of credit cards. Buy only what you can afford to pay. If you do need to use a credit card, carefully review each month's statement, especially if you have used your account number on the web.
2. Instant cash cards (ATM) and check cards are useful and can be obtained when you open your checking account. Generally, a check card allows you to pay for items out of your checking or savings account and is honored by businesses in the same way as a credit card. However, unlike a credit card it cannot be used for amounts greater than the balance in your checking account.
3. Never leave your ATM receipts lying near the ATM machine.
4. Always remember to record your ATM (automated teller machine) withdrawals and check card purchases in your checkbook register! Do not rely on the balance printed on an ATM withdrawal receipt or even what you are told when you call the bank! (Checks you have written, for example, may not have been processed.)

Lifestyle choices and decisions

Most of your expenses are based on what you, as an individual, decide are important based on your new lifestyle here. You'll find some necessities (such as insurance) cost much more than you are accustomed to paying, while there are other ways to simplify your lifestyle and save money. Think about the following items. Which of these are necessities which you cannot change (e.g. tuition & fees)? Which could be easily modified to fit your budget (e.g. sending email instead of phoning home, buying used books)?

computer	food	rent & utilities
warm clothing, boots	transportation costs	stereo
credit card finance charges	books	renter's insurance
health insurance	car	eye glasses
TV/VCR	tuition & fees	
international travel	camera	
concerts, sports, movies	phone calls home	

Sample semester budget worksheet

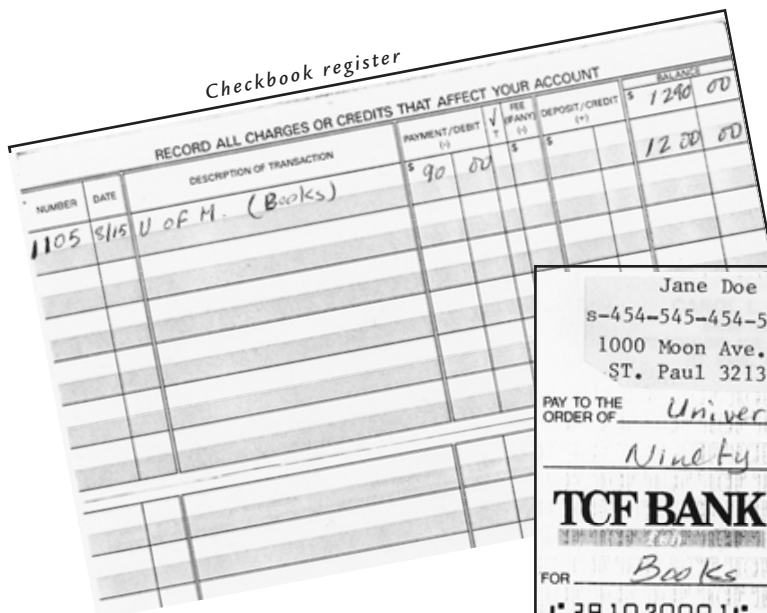
Here is a suggested format for a budget worksheet. By completing this, you will become more aware of your financial situation and should be able to manage your finances more efficiently. At the end of the semester, check to see how well you kept to your budget, then make adjustments for the next semester.

<i>Financial Resources</i>	September	October	November	December
1. Employment				
2. Funds from your sponsor				
3. Other funds				

<i>School Expenses</i>	September	October	November	December
1. Tuition				
2. Fees and Hospitalization insurance				
3. Special fees				
4. Books and supplies				
5. Miscellaneous				

<i>Living Expenses</i>	September	October	November	December
1. Food				
2. Rent and utilities				
3. Renters' insurance				
4. Telephone				
5. Clothing				
6. "Settling in"				
7. Child care				
8. Transportation				
9. Savings/emergencies				
10. Bills (indebtedness)				
11. Entertainment				

Keeping a checkbook



Sample check

