

Northwest Missouri State University

International Agent/Educational Advisor Handbook

Table of Contents

ABOUT NORTHWEST	2
KEY FEATURES	2
REPUTATION AND ACADEMIC LEVEL.....	2
APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND ADMISSIONS STANDARDS	2
APPLICATION DEADLINES	3
ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT	3
CONDITIONAL (TENTATIVE) ACCEPTANCE.....	3
INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ADMISSIONS.....	4
MBA Admissions	4
Admissions criteria for other graduate programs	4
FINANCIAL AID	5
AMERICAN STUDENTS UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS STANDARDS.....	5
ENVIRONMENT	6
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY	6
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	7
AGENT PROCEDURES	7
GENERAL AGENT RESPONSIBILITIES	7
CHARGES AND COMMISSION PAYMENTS	8
COMMUNICATION WITH NORTHWEST	8
CAMPUS VISITS	8
THINGS STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW BEFORE TRAVELING	8
IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS	8
HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND RECORDS.....	9
HEALTH INSURANCE.....	9
SMOKING POLICY.....	9
ALCOHOL POLICY	9
JOBS FOR STUDENTS / SSN	10
MONEY	10
OTHER ITEMS THAT STUDENTSSHOULD BRING.....	10

About Northwest

This section offers a brief description of Northwest to help agents give accurate information to prospective students. We think Northwest is an excellent educational option for some students but not for others. Northwest seeks independent and outgoing students with an ability to immerse themselves in school and be active learners.

Key Features

There are several features which may be helpful in matching student interests with Northwest's strengths. Northwest can be described in the following terms:

- **Focus on student success.** We prove every day that we deliver excellent educational opportunities designed to help students succeed. There is an emphasis on quality teaching and providing excellent educational experience for students.
- **Safe.** Students report they feel safe. Northwest Missouri State University has been ranked as one of the safest campuses in the U.S. Crime statistics may be obtained from Northwest's Department of Campus Safety.
- **Affordable.** Northwest offers students lower tuition fees and gives our students more for their money compared to other U.S. universities.
- **A wide variety of programs of study.** Available programs are listed toward the back of the International Application form, on the web page, and in other publications. If a student wants a specific program, please check to be sure that Northwest offers that program.
- **Not too big.** With a population of 7,000 students, it is easy to meet new people and most professors know their students by name.
- **Friendly.** People in this part of the country have a well-deserved reputation for being hospitable and friendly. There are many activities for international students organized through the IIC office. For a list of student activities and groups see <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/getinvolved/toolbox/index.htm#toolbox>.
- **Reasonable admissions standards.** Academically successful students easily satisfy admission requirements.
- **Quiet.** Northwest is located in a small town of 12,000 people where there are not too many distractions from study.

Reputation and Academic Level

Northwest is a well-established regional university, supported by the state of Missouri. It has been in operation since 1905. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which is the official accreditation organization, and it is authorized to grant degrees by an act of the Missouri General Assembly (the state legislature) in 1919. All of Northwest credits are accepted for transfer at all American universities based on standard transfer practices.

Northwest is student centered. This environment places an emphasis on providing faculty that put the student and the student's success in top priority. Most Northwest teachers focus more on class interaction and active teaching rather than extensive research.

Northwest takes pride that it was one of the first universities in the U.S. to make computers widely available to students and continues to stay at the leading edge of technology. Every full time (9 hours) graduate and full time (12 hours) undergraduate student receives a high-speed, networked laptop. Networked computers and Wi-Fi hotspots are also widely available around campus for students to use. Over 50 % of Northwest classes are supported with on-line resources through a program called Canvas.

Application Procedures and Admissions Standards

Northwest is moderately selective in admissions. Students must have a minimum of 2.00 converted high school grade point average in a college preparatory curriculum. Undergraduate admissions standards for American students are summarized at the end of this section for the purpose of comparison. For international applications, the integrity of the student's native educational system is respected in regard to university entrance requirements. (This means that international students who are qualified to study at a university in their home country are admitted to Northwest Missouri State University.) All non-native English speaking international

students must demonstrate English ability using the iBT TOEFL® test, IELTS™, or other English proficiency exams. (See Language Requirements at <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/admissions/apply/international/criteria.htm> for more information.) All students must have proper academic preparation and a level of competence required. All students must show financial capability to pay for any amount above any scholarships provided. These requirements are explained below and in the international application.

Graduate admissions are determined primarily by a student's undergraduate grade point average and his or her score on the GRE or GMAT. Admissions standards vary by program. A summary of admissions standards for different programs is given in this section.

With the guidelines from this handbook, academic advisors can judge in most cases whether a particular student will meet the admissions standard. If there is any uncertainty, the Admissions Office can be consulted. Although applications are not evaluated officially until all materials (including the application fee) are received, the Admissions Office and Graduate Office can offer advice about whether a particular application is likely to be accepted. The admissions offices at Northwest hold sole authority for granting admission. Agents will not make admissions decisions, but may offer suggestions to potential students only.

Please direct all undergraduate and graduate admissions related questions to the Admissions Office, **NOT** the Director of International Involvement Center.

Application Deadlines

The Admissions Office requires time to evaluate applications after all the application materials are received, and Northwest does not want to accept a student for a session if it is too late for him or her to get a visa for that session. *(Also remember that students must have paid the SEVIS fee and received the receipt before they may appear for their visa interview. It can take up to 6 weeks to receive the fee receipt, depending upon the method of mailing chosen).* Therefore, application deadlines are as follows:

Fall (late August) intake:	July 1
Spring (January) intake:	November 15

English Language Requirement

Students who come from non-English-speaking countries must an approved English proficiency exam to be admitted. For TOEFL, an equivalent score of 500 on the paper-based test or 61 on the internet-based test is required for undergraduate admissions, and 550 PBT or 79 iBT for graduate admissions is required. For IELTS, a 5.5 band average for undergraduates and 6.5 band average for graduate students is required. See <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/admissions/apply/international/criteria.htm> for more information on exam types and scores.

Application Process

Agents should assist student to apply online. Go to <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/admissions/apply/international/apply.htm>

On the application form, the student's name should be exactly the same as the name in the student's passport. Northwest uses this information to prepare immigration documents. The student will have difficulty getting a visa if the name does not match the student's passport.

The application form asks for original of the student's academic record. However, the Admissions Office will accept certified transcript copies. Certified copies of the transcripts translated into English are required if the originals are not in English.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires Northwest to certify that international students have been accepted for full-time enrollment and have sufficient funds to meet all expenses: tuition, housing, transportation, etc. To satisfy this legal requirement, Northwest requires a Statement of Support (also called a Certificate of Financial Support or Certificate of Finances) and an original bank statement of the student's family, sponsor, or government. The statement certifies that the minimum amount of tuition, room and board, and personal funds is available, and that the student is permitted to export and exchange those funds into the United States. The name of the sponsor who signs the Statement of Support should be the same as the name on bank statement.

International Graduate Admissions

(In the event of discrepancies between this Handbook and Graduate Office, the latter policy or procedure will prevail.)

MBA Admissions

Entrance to Graduate School requires a 2.50 undergraduate GPA on a 4.00 scale. MBA students must also have **aminimum required GMAT of 440 or GRE of 285**.

Applicants with a three-year bachelor's degree will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Some applicants may be advised of their option to apply for a second undergraduate degree at Northwest and to take prerequisites for the graduate program.

Admissions Criteria for Other Graduate Programs

Admission to most graduate programs other than the M.B.A. is decided on the basis of the student's undergraduate G.P.A. and score on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Students may also need to provide a satisfactory writing sample.

Please refer to the graduate [catalog](#) for individual program requirements.

Financial Aid

Scholarships—A complete list of scholarships & eligibility requirements for International scholarships is available on our [website](#).

- **International Graduate Achievement Scholarship:** Awarded to graduate students who show excellence in their academic preparation in the amount of \$1,000 in their first semester & granted reduced tuition (In-State) if the student keeps their GPA above 3.3/4.
- **Northwest International Achievement Scholarship:** In-State tuition fees are awarded to undergraduates who score higher than the minimum English proficiency required for admission. See Language Requirements above for more details.
- **Merit Scholarship:** Based on a combination of SAT or ACT test scores + minimum high school GPA of 2.75/4.00. Awards range from \$1000-\$4000.
- Students that have extraordinary athletic ability in a sport that Northwest competes in is eligible for scholarships through the athletic department. If you have a student that may fit these criteria please contact the coach of that sport directly through the athletic web page.
- Transfer Scholarships are available to students transferring to Northwest with more than 24 university hours from an accredited university.

Student Employment

All students with I-20s in the USA must obtain authorization from DHS to work off campus. Dr. Philip Hull, the Director of the International Involvement Center will cover this aspect during orientation. Students may work on campus. Finding a job is competitive, however.

Students are strongly encouraged to get to know Northwest Missouri State University by engaging themselves academically in their first semester. Most offices want to hire students that are known to someone at Northwest before they make a decision. If you, as an agent, feel the student will need to work to cover expenses then you should talk honestly about the possibility that Northwest is not the best fit for them. Our student employment program does not automatically hire students because they need to work. This has proven very frustrating for some students and I hope you will help them understand that work should NOT be their first priority. Students may go to <https://agency.governmentjobs.com/nwmissouri/default.cfm?promotionaljobs=1> for current job listings.

American Student Undergraduate Admissions Standards

(This information is provided to give an idea of the academic level required for admission. International student admission is evaluated on an individual basis; however, students must have academic qualifications equivalent to those required for domestic first-time freshmen.)

Northwest is moderately selective; admission for students from the U.S. is based on a combination of ACT or SAT score, class rank, and grade point average. American students are required to have followed a college-preparatory curriculum that includes at least 24 units of credit from the following list:

- 4 years of English. Two years must emphasize composition or writing. One year may be speech or debate.
- 3 years of mathematics--high school level algebra and beyond, including algebra II.
- 3 years of science, not including general science; at least one unit must be a laboratory science.
- 3 years of social sciences. Must include American history and at least one semester of government.
- 1 year of fine arts in visual arts, music, dance or theatre.
- 3 units of additional coursework (1 year of practical art, 1 year of physical education, ½ year of health education, ½ year of personal finance).

- 7 units of electives (At least three units must be in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences or Foreign Language. The additional four units can include computer science and fine arts courses.)

In addition, American students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or above, on a 4.00 scale, and must meet the requirements in either Category I or Category II below.

- Category I: ACT composite score of 21 or higher, or SAT 980-1010 or higher (combination of Critical Reading and Mathematics scores)
- Category 2: Combined percentile index that equals or exceeds 100 points. (The combined percentile index is the total of the student's class rank percentile and the ACT or SAT percentile.)

At the graduate level, graduate assistantships are available through individual departments on a competitive basis. A graduate assistantship covers 100% of the standard rate of tuition. The technology fee and costs above standard are not covered. A small stipend is awarded with the Graduate Assistantship for living expenses. (It is possible to live very modestly on the living allowance.) In exchange, the student must work 20 hours per week in some area of the University. It is difficult to get a graduate assistantship before coming to Northwest, but many students get graduate assistantships in their second or third semester. An oral assessment is required. Additionally available for students who do not receive a GA position, but who have a Northwest Missouri State University graduate GPA of 3.3 or higher, will receive a fee waiver that effectively reduces their tuition to the in-state rate.

Environment

Maryville, where Northwest is located, is a small town (population around 12,000). Students enjoy the natural setting and the friendliness of the people. Students' parents will feel comfortable knowing there is very little crime compared to larger cities, and not many distractions to keep students from studying. Maryville has consistently been ranked among the Top 30 Safest University Towns by SafeWise.com. St. Joseph, a medium-size city, is about 40 miles (65 kilometers) to the south. Kansas City is about 90 miles (140 kilometers) south, and students occasionally go there for shopping and entertainment. Maryville, unlike similar sized town or cities in some other countries, has a full array of services for students. The city has a fully paved system of roads, and the university offers free transportation for students. There is a once daily, one way bus service to St. Joseph (i.e., it is impossible to take a day trip to this city using this option). The IIC will facilitate airport pick up on designated pick up days.

The weather in Maryville can be very warm in the summer (as high as 46° C). Winters vary, but there are always a few snowstorms. In some years it is very cold in the winter (as low as -23° C), but there are also years when the winter is milder. A student who stays all year must be prepared for cold weather in the winter, hot weather in the summer, and moderate but variable weather in the spring and fall. (Clothing is not too expensive here, so any student who does not own suitable clothing for all weather may buy clothing after arrival.)

International Students and Cultural Diversity

Because the presence of students from diverse backgrounds enriches the educational experience of all students, Northwest actively recruits international students. International students from 35 countries constitute approximately 8% of the student body. While that number is higher than the national average, one of Northwest's priorities is to increase student diversity.

For international students, Northwest provides several programs and activities, as well as opportunities for interaction with students from elsewhere. The International Involvement Center (IIC) provides a specific point of contact for international students. The Friends of International Students program provides opportunities for significant contacts between international students and community residents. Further, international students are housed in residence hall rooms together with American students or students from a different country.

With the guidance of the IIC, Northwest's multicultural organizations sponsor numerous multicultural activities throughout the year. These activities include International Education Week, International Flag Raising, the Moon Festival, La Fiesta Latina, Diversity Week, the Chinese New Year Dinner, the Indian Festival of Lights, and the International Student Organization's annual dinner and cultural show. These activities, as well as others, make international students feel welcome and comfortable.

Additional Information

A list of available programs of study is found in the International Student Application. The same information and much more is on the Northwest website: <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/admissions/intl/index.htm>. The undergraduate and graduate catalogs are available [here](#). For an international application, go to <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/admissions/intl/application.htm>. The English as a Second Language web page is found [here](#).

If you have a specific question, please feel free to ask someone here. If you send your inquiry to esl@nwmissouri.edu, it will be forwarded to the appropriate office. Or if you prefer, you can contact university offices directly. For that purpose, the following information may be useful:

General Info, Agency POC:	phull@nwmissouri.edu	(Dr. Philip Hull)
Orientation, Visas, OPT:	aheng@nwmissouri.edu	(Ms. Ashley Henggeler)
Applications for admission:	INTLADM@nwmissouri.edu	(Ms. Joni McDonough) Fax: 1-660-562-1821
Commission payments to agents:	dheitma@nwmissouri.edu	(Ms. Diana Heitman)
Airport pick-up, I-20 forms, OPT:	ELEES@nwmissouri.edu	(Ms. Erika Lees)
Medical requirements:	jfrueh@nwmissouri.edu	(Ms. Judy Frueh)
Payment of tuition, fees, etc.:	BURSAR@nwmissouri.edu	(Bursars Office)
Promotional materials:	INTLPROG@nwmissouri.edu ; see website	
Residence halls (dormitories):	reslife@nwmissouri.edu	

Agent Procedures

General Agent Responsibilities

We expect that agents will give accurate information about Northwest, including which programs are available, the amounts of fees charged by Northwest, possibilities for financial aid, and Northwest's location and environment. Agents should discuss with prospective students the possibility of applying to Northwest. If Northwest Missouri State University is the best option, you should help them with the application process. You will also help them with the visa and travel arrangements after they are accepted. It is expected that all agents will work with the administration to ensure students are following the application, **arrival**, and academic requirements as stated. Agents that try to get around the administrative requirements will not be favorably regarded. Agents are considered valuable to Northwest when they communicate honestly and frequently with Northwest's administrative offices and me (Philip Hull). Also, the best agents send dedicated students. On a personal note, agents can help to make sure my office knows about the students travel plans well in advance of their arrival.

We expect agents to assist the student to send all required application materials including the application fee of \$75.00 USD, and to help the student fill in the forms correctly. Instructions accompany all the forms and are relatively self-explanatory. For our clarity, please use the English alphabet on all forms, with no special symbols or letters that are not part of the English alphabet.

Agents **MUST** include the agency name on the online application as well as send a cover sheet and agency stamp on supplementary materials to ensure credit for commission.

Agents must not guarantee that a particular student will be admitted. However, since information about admission standards is available, it is possible to determine with a fairly high degree of certainty who will be admitted. (See the last section of this handout.) Agents can also consult with the Admissions Office by e-mail if clarification is necessary. The contract firmly states we hold sole jurisdiction over admissions.

Agents and student arrival: We ask agents to inform us about students' travel plans. We need to know exactly when the student will arrive, what airline they are flying, the flight number, and arrival time? Does the student need a ride from the airport? Will the student stay in the dormitory? There is no temporary housing at Northwest, so students arriving before the arrival day will need to stay in a hotel until the residence halls open or until they find an apartment. Sometimes students change their minds about coming after they are admitted, or they do not get a visa. It is helpful to us if you inform us when you learn that a student who has been admitted will not attend Northwest as scheduled, for whatever reason. Agents found deficient in this performance category, either by sending students too early or late, will have commissions penalties assessed.

NON Referral Policy: Agents may not derive any payment or reward for distributing Northwest Missouri State University's contact information and general agreement terms to a third party. This will result in a termination of the contract.

Charges and Commission Payments

Students are billed for tuition and housing fees after they arrive here. **Agents must not collect money for these purposes.** Applicants from countries with currency restrictions may be required to submit a deposit in advance. Please see the admissions homepage for more information.

Agent commissions are sent out twice a year, in November and April. Commission payments are only made for students whose accounts are not in arrears. (If a student receives a graduate assistantship that waives tuition fees, the agent commission will be based on the amount that the student would have paid for tuition.)

For consultancies with branch offices or business partners, we will make payment to the consultancy that has a signed contract. We ask that all consultancies that have branch offices or partners to collect the applications in the central office and send all applications from there to our admissions office. Please clearly indicate the consultancy name on the front of the applications. Any discrepancy in who advised the student will be dealt with by asking the student in question who their consultancy is and if that is not an entity with whom we are familiar, no reimbursement will be provided for that semester until written verification from the student and consultancy sufficiently describes the error. The main point being: please clearly collect, mark, and send application materials so we can make sure you get the commission payments.

Communication with Northwest

Usually the best way to communicate with us is by e-mail, but we also use regular mail, fax, FedEx or DHL, and calling during our office hours. Please be sure that we have current contact information (e-mail address, postal address, fax number), and notify us if there are any changes. Send your changes to: INTLPROG@nwmissouri.edu or PHULL@nwmissouri.edu

Campus Visits

We welcome agents who would like to visit the Northwest campus. Please contact us to make arrangements. We can meet you at Kansas City International Airport (MCI) and provide meals and a place for you to stay for a night or two in Maryville. Agents should send an e-mail to phull@nwmissouri.edu or CONNIEM@nwmissouri.edu to schedule a visit.

Things Students Should Know Before Traveling

Immigration Requirements

If a student enters the U.S. using an I-20 form from Northwest, the student is required to attend Northwest for at least one session. It is a violation of the law if the student does not attend any school at all.

If a student gets a visa using an I-20 form from Northwest and then decides to go to another school, she or he should apply for a new visa at the American consulate using an I-20 from the school that he plans to attend. Otherwise, students will be required to stay at Northwest for one session before transferring. There are no exceptions made to this rule. This rule primarily protects the agent's time and human resource investment.

Health Requirements and Records

Students must complete and send the Health Form found in the center of the glossy acceptance booklet sent with the I-20 or at <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/international/services/future/index.htm> under "I Got My F-1 Visa..." New students should bring copies of their immunization records, signed by a doctor on the doctor's stationery or an official form, showing that they have had the required vaccinations. Immunization records MUST be in English. If they have not had the immunizations, it is possible to get them here. If they do not have official records, they must repeat the immunizations here, even if they have already had them.

Before enrolling for the first time, all international students must also have a tuberculosis screening (regardless of prior BCG vaccine). This is currently done by a blood draw. Unless students show proof that they have had a recent tuberculosis screening in the U.S. within the past 12 months, they will be taken to the university health center during orientation for this test. If the test is positive, a chest x-ray is required. Students may not enroll in classes without this test. Health Center visits are made during the first day of orientation before classes further supporting the requirement for students to arrive on the arrival date. If this is impossible, tell the students to refrain from taking those vaccinations and they will be administered at Northwest for a nominal fee.

The required immunizations are: two vaccinations for MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). These must be given at least 4 weeks apart. These can be given prior to arriving to the United States but you must bring proof you have had the vaccines.

An additional requirement for students who live in the residence halls is one meningococcal vaccination (meningitis vaccine). Students who arrive without the vaccination will be taken to the university clinic to have it done immediately upon arrival. For non-residence hall students, the vaccination is strongly recommended.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is necessary to help cover the extremely high cost of medical care in the United States. Since it is imperative to have resources to cover costs of possible accidents or unexpected illnesses, international students at Northwest are required to purchase the university managed health insurance plan. In addition, international students are strongly advised to provide health insurance for any dependents accompanying them to the United States. A reasonably-priced group insurance plan with provisions for either individuals or families is available through the University. Plans also are available for a student's spouse and children at additional cost. Certain students in exchange programs, short term, non-degree programs, and government sponsored students may not be required to purchase Northwest plans.

Smoking Policy

Northwest is a smoke-free campus. Please advise students of this reality. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on campus grounds inside or outside. In the U.S., smoking is not permitted in public buildings and in many restaurants. Some Americans may be offended if a person smokes in an inappropriate place, where others can smell the smoke.

Alcohol Policy

According to Missouri law, no one under 21 is allowed to drink alcoholic beverages. This is a very strict rule.

No alcoholic drinks are allowed on the Northwest campus. Students should not bring them. If they have alcoholic drinks on campus (even if they do not drink them), they will be fined \$100 for the first offense and increasing in severity to expulsion with multiple offenses.

Jobs for Students / SSN

International students are not eligible for employment outside of campus without authorization. On-campus jobs are available but limited to a maximum of 20 hours per week, and students must compete with many other applicants. Obtaining employment is not guaranteed. Students cannot finance their education solely with on-campus employment. Authorization is obtained from a branch of DHS called USCIS.

The Social Security Number (SSN) is NOT authorization to work off campus. Students may apply for the SSN after they have been offered a job on campus. This number is not necessary to obtain to get a degree from any university. It is used by many companies to assess credit score, so students may feel pressured to get this number. No office on campus has responsibility to give a job solely to obtain a Social Security Number. In fact, this is an illegal act. Students must first find a legitimate job and then the SSN will be the result; NOT the other way around.

Money

In some countries, there are restrictions on currency exchange. Students may need orientation in how to convert their money into dollars. Agents are asked to familiarize their students with the mechanics of currency exchange if necessary.

Students should not carry large amounts of cash. Students will be able to use a debit/ATM card to withdraw money, but will want to open a bank account in a local bank. Then they can arrange for a bank transfer from home through that bank.

It is possible to transfer money directly to the university account. Information on paying bills via Flywire transfer and other means may be found here: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/bursar/payments.htm>

Other Items That Students Should Bring

Students will want to have pictures of their family, home, town, and other interesting places in their home country to show to people whom they meet here on their phones. Students should expect to share music from home that they've downloaded on their phone or other device.

If students do not have clothing for all seasons, ordinary clothing can be purchased here, and it is relatively inexpensive. Some students bring special local clothing from their home country for an international student activity.

If students need any special medicines, they may want to bring them. It is possible to get medicine here, but it may be a different type of medicine.

NOTE: Admissions requirements for any program may be changed without notice. Application fee is never waived.
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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.

Dr. Philip R. Hull
Director, International Involvement Center
Northwest Missouri State University
800 University Drive
Maryville, Missouri 64468-6001 U. S. A.

e-mail: phull@nwmissouri.edu
office: 1-660-562-1367