

Frequently Asked Questions

Transportation:

How can I travel in Iowa city?

Public buses:

- The University of Iowa run a bus service called CAMBUS which is free to all students and the general public.
- The cities of Iowa City and Coralville also have bus transportation services. However, the Iowa City and Coralville public busses are not free.
- Passes for city services can be purchased at a cost of \$50 per semester through MyUI (<https://transportation.uiowa.edu/student-u-pass-program>). It costs \$1 per ride to ride a city bus without a pass.
- It is suggested that you download the “Transit” app to your smartphone upon arrival to the University. Transit app can be used for viewing bus schedules for CAMBUS, Iowa City, and Coralville bus services (<https://transitapp.com/>).

Private vehicle:

- Many students have personal vehicles, however it is not necessary to have your own car to be successful and have fun in Iowa City and the surrounding areas.
- Parking can be a bit of a hurdle to overcome on campus and in the city (see parking section for more details)
- Even with a car on campus, it is beneficial to download the transit app as CAMBUS tends to be the primary form of transportation.

Bike:

- Traveling the city and surrounding areas by bike is a common pastime and mode of transportation for many students and residents.
- Bike rentals, among many other pieces of recreational equipment, are available through UI Outdoor and Recreational Services (<https://recserv.uiowa.edu/outdoor-rental-center#!prices>)
- Bike racks are located across campus and are welcome for use. Just make sure to supply your own bike lock.
- There are beautiful and well-maintained biking trails within the city and surrounding communities.

Walking:

- Depending on where you live, you can also walk to campus.
- There are many off-campus housing options available near the University of Iowa campus and within proximity to other necessities (e.g. grocery stores).

Where can I park my vehicle and what are the costs?

- Parking in Iowa City can be tricky. Many apartments in Iowa City do not include parking in the rent price so make sure to plan accordingly. However, apartments further away from the university often include parking in the rent.
- To obtain a university parking sticker you must register your vehicle with the University of Iowa Parking and Transportation. Costs range from \$100 - \$279 per semester, depending on the parking lot.
- Hourly parking ramps are also available throughout campus and downtown Iowa City.
- Motorcycles and Mopeds are often seen around campus because parking for these vehicles is much more cost effective compared to a car. Moped and Motorcycle parking lots are available throughout campus.

What are car rental options in Iowa city?

- Car rental options available in Iowa city are Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Hertz and Zipcar.
- Uber, Lyft, and Yellow Cab of Iowa City are common ridesharing/taxi services in the area.

Do I need an Iowa driver's license to drive in Iowa?

- If you are a student or visitor and have a current valid driver's license from your home state or country, you do not need an Iowa driver's license to drive in Iowa.
- If you do not have a previously obtained driver's license, then you will need to obtain a license to legally operate a motor vehicle.

Payments and Costs:

What type of compensation will I receive?

- The University of Iowa Graduate College pays for tuition, and all students in the Human Toxicology program receive a \$31,500 stipend annually.

When will my first paycheck be?

- It is important to keep in mind that your appointment doesn't begin until the middle of August. Therefore, you will receive your first paycheck September 1st, but your first full paycheck will not be until October 1st.
- Paychecks are distributed the first on the month each month (as long as the first of the month isn't a holiday).

What other costs will I need to cover?

- There are no other fees that need to be paid for out of pocket, but you will need to provide your own supplies (notebooks, computer, etc.).
- Some, but not all, classes require the purchase of a textbook. However, you can often get by without buying a textbook through utilizing online resources provided by the university library.
- Casarett & Doull's Toxicology: The Basic Science of Poisons is a common textbook for nearly all Tox courses. It is available online through the college of pharmacy, however as an aspiring toxicologist you will probably invest into purchasing one day.

- There are international fees every semester that need to be paid by the student.
- Furniture and rent deposits are also a one-time expense that you need to prepare for.

What are the average monthly expenses I should be prepared for?

- Rent in Iowa City ranges depending on number of roommates and location. Besides rent, other costs to consider generally include electric/gas, groceries, internet/cable, insurance, phone bill, gas (car owners), parking (depending on location), etc.
- There is not designated housing for PhD students at the University of Iowa. Rents in Iowa City depend on whether you have a room-mate. If you have a roommate they are usually in the \$600-700/ month range per person. If you don't have a roommate then they are in the \$800-\$950 /month rate unless you decide on a really nice furnished apartment then they would be closer to \$1000-\$1300/ month range.

Are there good childcare/schools in the area?

- Yes, there are many daycares in the area. Bright Horizons and Melrose Day Care Center are two locations close to the UIHC.
- The Iowa City school district is also very good, if you have children that are school-aged.
- Due to COVID-19, it may be beneficial to call ahead for requirements or policy changes.

Weather:

What kind of weather should I expect?

Average Weather in Iowa City varies.

- The summers (Late May- August) are long, warm, humid, and wet. Average temperature ranges from 70-95°F.
- Autumn (September - Early November) tends to be cool, cloudy, Average temperature ranges from 50-70°F.
- The winters (Late November- February) are freezing, dry, and windy. Average temperature ranges from 20-50°F.
- Spring (March- Early May) is usually rainy and cool. Average temperature ranges from 40-60°F.

What type of clothing will I need to buy?

- A good winter coat is a must buy as winters are very cold and windy. However, this won't be needed until November so don't hurry to buy one yet. Hats, gloves, warm socks are also good buys.
- Throughout the rest of the year, t-shirts, sweaters, shorts, pants, etc. are good to have.

Rotations:

Are rotations chosen for you?

- The interdisciplinary nature of our program is wonderful as it provides freedom in choosing rotations in areas of personal research interest.
- It is the responsibility of the student to reach out to professors/lab who you are interested in rotating with.

What labs are available to rotate in?

There are many labs and professors within, and outside of, the Human Toxicology program willing to take students on.

- In the past students have rotated in labs housed within: Free Radical and Radiation Biology (FRRB), Neuroscience, Pharmacology, College of Engineering, Cancer biology, Occupational and Environmental Health, College of Public Health, Chemistry, Biology etc.
- Reach out to a PI and discuss research goals to see if it is a good fit.

How many rotations can I do?

- During your first year within the program you are required to complete three rotations. Remember, the purpose of a rotation to see if the lab is a good fit for your interests and work style.
- Hopefully after three rotations you can find a lab that has room for you and fits your interests. If need be, you can complete a fourth rotation.

How do I choose a lab to rotate in?

- It is beneficial to look at professor research focuses and set up rotations early on.
- If you need help drafting an email to send to a potential PI, feel free to email any member of the Human Toxicology SAC.
- It is important to be clear up front if the lab has funding to take students on, even if it feels like an uncomfortable topic. This usually is more comfortable in-person.
- Make sure to discuss mentor styles and talk to lab members. If you feel intimidated writing an email or setting up a meeting any one of us can help.

Groceries and Food:

Where can I buy groceries from?

- The grocery store options available in Iowa city and Coralville area are Walmart, Aldi's, Target, Hy-Vee and Costco. Apart from these grocery store chains, there are multiple small grocery stores too.

Where can I buy International groceries from?

- Starlight Market provides many Asian staples.
- Iowa City African & Oriental Market is also a great alternative with many African necessities.
- La Regia restaurant has some authentic (and delicious) Mexican food. Right next door there is a small Hispanic market.
- Taj International Foods is a good option to buy Indian and Asian groceries.

Is there an option to order groceries online?

- Yes, groceries can be delivered at home from some grocery stores. (ALDI's, Hy-Vee, Walmart etc.). Curbside pickup is another option available.

What are some popular restaurant options in Iowa city?

There is so much that goes into making a place feel like home and food is a good one! Below are some of local favorite restaurants.

- Stella is an American restaurant serving burgers, sandwiches etc., Basta is a great option for Italian cuisine, Bluebird diner is a nice breakfast option, Thai spice serves Thai specialties, Masala serves good Indian food, Formosa is a great place to try Sushi. Apart from these, there are many more options one can explore!

Housing:

What are the housing options available for graduate students?

- Graduate students typically live off-campus. Options include staying in apartments or houses with or without roommates.

How can I find a place to live?

- The University of Iowa's off-campus housing portal is a great place to start looking for housing. Apart from that, there are various websites which list available rental options that one can look at. Here are some links that may be helpful:

<https://offcampushousing.uiowa.edu/>

<https://www.apartments.com/>

<https://www.zillow.com/>

<https://www.trulia.com/>

Recreation in Iowa City:

What are some area parks?

- Parks/ Trails within Bus distance:
 - Ryerson's Woods
 - Mormon Trek Trail (Paved trail in wooded areas)
 - Hickory Hill Trail (Nice trails in woods, perfect for a day hike)
 - Clear Creek Trail
 - Pappy Dickens Preserve
- Parks/Trails Short car ride:
 - Coralville Dam Complex
 - Lake MacBride
 - Palisades-Kepler State Park
- Parks in Iowa (1-3 hours Away):
 - Maquoketa Caves (About 1.5 hours away but perfect for a weekend)
 - Wildcat Den State Park
 - Backbone State Park

Are there any good camping areas?

- West Overlook Campground
- Sugar bottom Campground
- Tailwater West Campground