Fall 2019 Pre-arrival Webinar Series:
Understanding Orientation Expectations, Responsibilities and Placement Tests – Undergraduate Students.

Andrea: Hello, everyone. Welcome to our webinar pre-arrival webinar series for the fall 2019 for new international students. Today's topic is understanding orientation expectations, responsibilities, and placement tests. And this is a topic for undergraduate students.

If you have not attended our webinars before, let's just briefly review what the webinar series is about. It is an optional webinar series provided to incoming international students before they arrive in Iowa City. The objective is to help new international students to arrange plans for travel to and living in Iowa City, to understand orientation expectations and responsibilities, and to transition to student life and academics at the University of Iowa. All webinars are recorded and posted on our website. The web link is provided on the slide, and I would like to just add that we have recordings posted from all the previous webinars through webinar number 8; International Student Employment. So you're welcome to listen to all of the previous recordings up until that webinar and we will be posting webinar number 9 very shortly.

During the webinar if you encounter any difficulties with the technology, please let us know in the chat function. If you have any questions related to today's topic, please use the Q and A function to post your questions. We will answer them live at the end of the webinar as time permits.

If you have not received your I-20 or DS-2019 documents, please know that you still have to pay eShipGlobal shipping fee for us to mail you your document, because this is important to have in order for you to apply for your visa. This information is also contained in the pre-arrival checklist in iHawk, and the link is provided here on the slide. If you still have any questions or concerns regarding these documents or anything else in terms of your prearrival preparation, please contact the orientation team at their email address: isss-orientation@uiowa.edu.

Let's review some important dates. There is a mandatory orientation for all international students. The orientation is divided for graduate and undergraduate students. For graduate students, the orientation is taking place August 13 through 16. For undergraduate students, it's August 19 through 23. August 26 is the first day of fall 2019 semester.

Let's do some introductions of the presenters for today's topic.

Tina: Good morning, everyone. My name is Tina Arthur. I'm the Director of Orientation Services at the University of Iowa, and we are located in University College.

Brandon: Hello. My name is Brandon Paulson, and I'm a Senior Adviser in International Student and Scholar Services.

Maureen: Hello. My name is Maureen Burke, and I'm the Director of English as a Second Language Programs here at the University of Iowa.
Andrea: And my name is Andrea Siebenmann, and I am one of the ISSS Advisors and I am your webinar moderator.

Let's review today's goals. The goal number one is for you to learn about international student orientation. The next goal is to learn about undergraduate student orientation. Number three is to overview the University of Iowa English proficiency requirements. And then at the end, we will have a live question and answer time. Let's begin our presentation for today.

Tina: Good morning again. This is Tina Arthur. And I'm going to be talking about taking your placement exams, the Success at Iowa online course and attending On Iowa! for your welcome week.

So to start off with, all new students should complete required placement tests as soon as possible to prepare for your academic advising appointment during orientation. Advisors will review scores and discuss coursework with you during your orientation advising appointment. You will also review course work and register for fall classes with your academic advisor. To determine which tests you should take, review the placement test link on the new students.uiowa.edu website under the orientation tab. There are three types of placement test students can take prior to arrival on campus and those are math, chemistry, and world language. So, let's talk a little bit more in detail about those.

International students should take their math placement exams as soon as possible for early enrollment. If you have not taken calculus in high school or have not earned college credit for calculus, you should complete the Alex Math placement test. This test takes about 90 minutes to complete. Any student who has completed calculus or earned college credit for calculus should take the math placement test three the advanced math placement test. This test takes about 30 minutes to complete.

All students considering a major in engineering, the health sciences (like biology, chemistry or pre-medicine), or the natural sciences (like environmental science or geoscience), should take the chemistry diagnostic placement test. This test should take around 90 minutes to complete. If you have questions about which test to take, including which tests are required for which majors, or want to review course placement after you've taken a test, visit the newstudents.uiowa.edu website click on orientation, and then click on placement tests in the menu on the right side of the page.

If you've taken coursework in Russian, Latin, Greek, Japanese, or American Sign Language and would like to continue in these languages, placement test can be arranged once you arrive on campus. Again, to learn more about any of our language or math or chemistry placement tests, you can visit the newstudents.uiowa.edu website, click on orientation, and click on placement tests for more information.

The Success at Iowa course is a required online course for all new students at the University of Iowa. This class is delivered in five stages to give you information what is most applicable to your transition to University life. Stages one and two opened on July 1, 2019. You should try to complete these two stages prior to your arrival in Iowa City. You can log into the course on Iowa Courses Online or
icon.uiowa.edu to access the course. You complete each stage by passing the quizzes at the end at 80 percent or higher to move on to the next stage.

The Success at Iowa class will cover topics such as academic resources on campus, financial resources and information, transportation around campus, and information on how to transition to your new home. Stages three and four will open on August 26 which is the first day of class, and stage five opens about three weeks into the semester. The deadline for the course is September 27. So, the class will be completed in the first five weeks of the semester. Success at Iowa will help you learn about resources as you transition to the University of Iowa and Iowa City. The modules can continue to be accessed after you finish the course to give you an opportunity to review and revisit the information in the future should you need it. This is a great way to get started in understanding your new home and institution. Again, log into icon.uiowa.edu today to begin the course.

Finally, I want to talk a little bit about the welcome week On Iowa! program. And this is a program that happens before classes begin. You should check in to receive your personalized itinerary for On Iowa! You can do this starting on Tuesday August 20 on the second floor of the Iowa Memorial Union. There are over 100 events for new students from Tuesday through Sunday before classes begin. To see a full schedule, download the hawk tools app. On Iowa! gives you an opportunity to meet friends, learn about campus resources, and explore Iowa City.

Starting on Friday, you’ll attend the On Iowa! core program with your small group led by an On Iowa! student leader, which is a current student. Your small group will meet on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning and introduce you to the Iowa challenge. On Friday night, you'll attend kick off at Kinnick and take your class photo on the Kinnick Stadium field. The weekend concludes with convocation, which is the official opening of the academic year and the President's block party. We are excited to welcome you to campus and the Hawkeye family during the On Iowa! program.

Brandon: Hello, again. This is Brandon Paulson, and I’m going to be talking to you about international student orientation, which is August 19 through the 23rd. I just also wanted to remind you all before I talk about orientation, that if you have any questions throughout this webinar that you can ask those questions in the Q and A section. We will be answering those at the end of the webinar.

So let’s talk about orientation. So there's actually three goals that we have for orientation. One is to support the transition to student life and academics at the University of Iowa. So we want you to learn more about being a student here at the University, know what the academic expectations are, register for classes, and just make connections with the University's resources. We are also going to be highlighting cultural adjustment in immigration regulations to successfully maintain your F1 and J1 status, and finally we want you to connect with new students. There's going to be many opportunities to connect with students throughout orientation and On Iowa! And so, this is a great opportunity to make connections.

I’m going to talk and just provide an overview of the orientation schedule. So for students that have residence hall contracts, they are allowed to start moving in on Saturday, August 17. The residence halls will open at 12:00pm for new international students. You should be receiving more instructions from university housing and dining about moving in, but you will actually check in at the Residence Hall that you are assigned to. And then on Sunday, August 18, this is the date by which all new undergraduate
international students should arrive in the Iowa City area. We want to make sure that you're here, to be able to start participating in orientation the next day.

So I'm just going to provide again an overview of what orientation week is going to look like. So on Monday, August 19, that's going to be when you're going to check in with ISSS. We're going to have a welcome. You're also going to meet your small groups. So, we actually have orientation small groups with orientation leaders that you're going to be able to connect with other students in a smaller group, and then this is also the date that you'll have the English Proficiency Evaluation the written portion of it, and then we also be discussing immigration regulations on this date as well. Then the next day on Tuesday, August 20, this is really going to be focused on adjustment this day and we're going to have again, time for you to be spend in your small groups. Then on Wednesday, August 21, this is your academic day. Our focus is really on learning expectations for academics and meeting with your academic advisor to register for classes this day. And then we also we'll have small groups again where you're going to be able to connect with your small groups and discuss more what you've learned about academics and they'll be talking more about expectations as well. And then on Thursday, August 22 that’s our campus information day. So, we’re going to have different resources here on campus, services, discuss, you know, how they can support you here on campus. You’ll also be doing the immigration document check with ISSS, and then we also have a small group time. Then Friday, only in the morning we have some different sessions and opportunities to connect with some different resources, but the focus really is going to be on the course sessions starting on On Iowa! on that date.

So, I've already mentioned this, but we will be having small group. So each of you are going to be assigned to an orientation small group. This is something that you will find out what small group you have been assigned to when you check in during the welcome on the very first day of orientation. The small groups will have between about 15 to 20 students in them and we will have 2 orientation leaders, leading these small groups. With your small groups too, we actually have them assign different animals that are native to Iowa. So, you'll find out again, what your assignment is on that first day.

Small groups will meet, as I mentioned already, each day Monday through Thursday during orientation week and then our groups are actually being led by experienced current students. So we have both international as well as domestic students that will be leading these small groups. And then, the groups will be covering special topics, many of them related to what you are already learning in orientation. Plus we have a lot of fun social activities that will be happening. So, it's a great way to connect to meet other students.

Some things to consider for successful participation in orientation. You will receive a personal orientation schedule. It's important to follow your own personal schedule and attend all required sessions. There will be some optional sessions that will be noted on your schedule. Many of those will be social events that will be happening in the evening through On Iowa! Those aren't required, but if you would like to attend those we encourage you to attend those events. You for sure need to attend all the required sessions. And then, if you have a scheduling conflict with the English proficiency evaluation or your academic advising, which really shouldn’t be the case, but if there was a conflict those two things need to take priority. And then, it's also important to introduce yourself and get to know others. I mentioned, you're going to have many opportunities to make new friends through
orientation and make sure to fully participate in your small groups in the different activities and ask questions. This is a great opportunity to learn more.

And then, ISSS is currently working on creating all the individual orientation schedules. So this is not available yet for you, but very soon we will be having your orientation schedule available on the pre-arrival checklist on ihawk. We will send out an email once that schedule is available for you, but you will access your orientation schedule on the prearrival checklist.

And then I just want to highlight, too, that the ISSS orientation email, that's the place that you can always contact if you have any pre-arrival orientation questions, or if you're a student with a disability or need any type of mobility accommodations. Please contact our email and our orientation team will respond to any questions or needs that you might have.

And then finally I just wanted to highlight that we have pre-arrival resources, too, on our new students website. This has many great important information and resources available including not only prearrival orientation, but just information about culture and academics, and we have helpful links that connect you to different offices and services here on campus. So please make sure it to review this website.

Maureen: OK, well now that you know about orientation and about On Iowa! I will talk about the English proficiency requirement and the ESL support program. And also, I just want to remind you as we’re going through this, please don’t hesitate to post your questions, so that at the end, they are there and we can answer them in order. OK. So anyway, let's talk about the English language and the requirement for that, and the ESL support program. Most of you, well, all of you have met at least partially the English language requirement, because you have been issued an I-20 to study in your degree program or your DS-2019. But you might be wondering, “Well, why do we have this requirement?” The University of Iowa is aware that, even students with strong English language skills, face challenges in the classroom.

The University wants to assure that students whose first language is not English, know English well enough to study, without being hindered by language problems. And finally, the testing that we do, we want to identify any weaknesses, you might have in language proficiency, so that we can ensure that you will be successful in your studies.

Among the challenges that you will face, even if you are excellent at English language, is you’re going to find yourselves having a lot of reading and writing to do. You’re going to find yourself having to manage your time. To get your reading done. To go to your lectures. You’re going to have to follow lectures that are being spoken by both native speakers and those who are not native speakers of English and be able to take notes while you’re doing that. And in class you may be finding yourselves having to follow fast-paced discussions and the use of slang, idioms, and colloquial language that perhaps you have not had a lot of experience in your English study before; you’ve never had experience with them.

So, what exactly is the requirement? Students who have a 100 on the internet based TOEFL or a 600 on the paper based TOEFL, have fully met the requirement and don’t need to take the English Proficiency Evaluation. However, because the university offers support courses in English, students who submit a somewhat lower score, can begin their coursework.
So, this is the condition, however. Students must take the on-campus English Proficiency Evaluation, or you will hear it referred to as the EPE, prior to their first registration. So, if you have between, a TOEFL score between 80 and 100, you will have to take the test. If you have any IELTS score or if you have used an SAT or an ACT to meet your entrance requirement, you will have to take the English Proficiency Evaluations. Once you've taken the evaluation, you will receive your results, and if your results indicate that you need some ESL credit classes, you are required to enroll in those classes.

So, the University is allowing students to fully make the English language requirement while taking English language courses for credit, as well as major courses at the same time.

So, I know you're probably thinking, “All right, what's this evaluation like?” So, the evaluation has four parts to it for undergraduates. One is a 45 minute, 40 item reading comprehension and vocabulary test. Then we have a 30 minute writing sample, and you will choose from two different topics, and choose which one you would like to write about. You will write for 30 minutes and it has an academic writing emphasis. Next you will have a 30 minute listening and note taking test, and you will listen to two different lectures. They are approximately 7-9 minutes a piece. And then we will have a 10 minute interview. The listening test, the writing sample, and the reading test you will take on the first day of orientation, and then the next day you will take the oral interview, and that's a 10 minute interview or so with two ESL instructor's.

So, what is the reading comprehension and vocabulary look like? If you've taken the TOEFL or the IELTS, it's similar to that. It's multiple choice. It's focus is on comprehension skills and academic vocabulary from context.

The writing sample, the emphasis as I mentioned before, is an academic writing. You’ll be evaluated on content, your development of ideas, how you organize your writing, use of appropriate vocabulary, and language use or grammar.

For the listening test again, 2, 7-9 minute lectures. You will take notes and answer questions. And then there will be 1, 3 minute discussion for which you will have to answer questions, as well. The questions that you will be asked to answer are usually about main ideas and supporting details.

And finally, the oral interview. What's this all about? Its goal is to determine a student’s communicative competence. What does that mean? We want to make sure that you are able to understand the conversation and complex questions. We want to make sure that we can understand you. We don’t expect you to sound like a native speaker of English. We know that you will sound like a non-native speaker, but we want to make sure that there are no misunderstandings because of that.

Also, we want to determine if you are able to answer questions or narrate something with little hesitation. We will want to make sure that you can use precise and accurate vocabulary, and that you can make appropriate transitions between ideas. And, right there is our information to our website that has information specifically about the evaluation the EPE.

The results of the EPE. What are the possible results? Number one, no further work in ESL, and if that happens, you'll be very happy. Typically, however, we find that students are required to enroll in one or more ESL classes. Again, these count for degree credit. Enrollment in one or more non-credit English classes might be necessary you’ll find out as a result. This is rare. Or, the Intensive English Program
courses, which are very rare. Most students, about 95 percent, have to enroll in one or more ESL credit classes and very few into transitional or intensive English classes. About five percent need no further work in English.

So, the classes that most of you who are likely to be held for, there are five different classes: one in reading, one in writing, grammar, listening and note taking, and oral skills. So, these classes match what we have tested in the English Proficiency Evaluations.

Students must enroll in a minimum number of ESL classes for their first registration. And the more courses you need, the more courses you should enroll in your first semester so that you get your English to the point where you are going to feel comfortable in your study and be successful. And so you take these courses until you complete them. The University wants you to complete these courses within the first year.

They are aligned with what students need to do in the classroom, but courses work on skills and strategies and in critical thinking.

And as you meet with your academic advisor and even meeting within your small groups, if you need two or more ESL classes, you should think about building your schedule with courses that do not require a lot of reading and writing.

So how do ESL classes help students? They help to ensure that you are successful academically. They provide a foundation of language support for you during the first year and beyond. They allow students to adjust to studying in English, and they provide a small comfortable environment to ask about the U.S. classroom culture. And finally, they provide help with language questions related to other classes.

So, everyone at the University of Iowa wants to help you. We want to help you be successful. We want to help you have a great education experience.

Andrea: Thank you so much to all of our presenters for this topic today, and we will move on to the question and answer portion of our webinar. Again, if you have any questions related to what was presented, please feel free to post your questions in the Q and A portion of the software. Let’s go into the questions that we have received, so far. There are very specific questions on different topics that we can see. So, let’s start with one about the orientation. The question is, “Do I need to go to orientation if I’ve already studied in the United States?”

Brandon: That’s a great question. So our orientation is focused on helping all new students here at the University of Iowa transition and learn more about the University of Iowa as well as make connections with other students here. So, we do require, it is mandatory and required that all new international students, whether they’ve studied in the U.S. in the past or even if this is their first time here in the U.S., we do require that all students attend orientation because again, you’re learning more about the University of Iowa specifically and making connections with students here.

Andrea: Great, thank you. There is a question whether a student can come to orientation on Wednesday. I believe that what it means is that they may be delayed to attend the orientation. What would you tell to this student?
Brandon: I would say, so we do ask that all students arrive by that Sunday, August 18, and that is an expectation to be here for that date. If there is some type of situation you should always communicate with our ISSS orientation account, if you have some type of delay.

Andrea: Thank you. Let’s move on to other questions regarding orientation. What is the difference between On Iowa! and orientation? Can you answer that?

Tina: So, orientation is going to focus a lot on your cultural adjustment as well as the EPE test and the academic components of the university including meeting one on one with your advisor and registering for classes. On Iowa! focuses is a little bit more on your social adjustment to both Iowa City and campus and will allow you many more opportunities to connect with a variety of students and resources at the University and allow you to kind of pick and choose the things that you are really interested in learning more about here at the University.

Andrea: Perfect. To that, let’s move on to the next question which ties to the On Iowa! Whether it is mandatory, because student has some plans to visit friends after orientation.

Tina: On Iowa! is technically not mandatory, but we know that the students who participate in it are much more successful and connect to the university much quicker. And so while is not mandatory it is highly encouraged for both the core programming and the optional activities.

Andrea: Perfect. Thank you so much. I believe that there is another question related to the orientation and when students are meeting with their academic advisors. And so the student is asking whether they choose their classes when they meet with their academic advisor.

Brandon: Yeah that’s a great question. I can mention on Wednesday, August 21, that’s when you’ll be meeting with your academic advisor. You will work with your academic advisor to register for classes. And so there is different options generally for you to choose which classes that you would like to enroll in and you’ll meet with your advisor to kind of find out what would be the best schedule for you for your first semester.

Andrea: Alright, thank you so much. I hope that helped answer question to our student. Again, if you have any other questions related to this topic feel free to post them. We do have a few more questions. So we will go through them right now. The question is about the test, and specifically the math test. The student is asking whether it is required for the exchange students as well.

Tina: It potentially could be. It depends on what kind of credit you're bringing into the university, and what classes you plan to take. So if you're planning on taking a math class, I would plan on taking the placement exam. These don't count for credit. They just help us place you into the appropriate coursework for your ability, and so if you are planning on taking a math class on Iowa, you should plan on taking the math placement test.

Andrea: Wonderful, thank you. And also, another question related to the quizzes or perhaps it may be related to the testing. So, if student doesn't reach a certain percentage specifically, for example, if they get below 80% on their testing, what happens then?

Tina: I think this question is referring to Success at Iowa because you need 80 percent to pass the quizzes and move on to the state in stages. The quizzes can be taken as many times as necessary in
In order to pass if you don't pass on the first round, I would encourage you to go back and review the module, and see what you've missed, and then retake the test.

**Andrea:** Perfect. Thank you so much. I believe that the remaining questions that we have, are related to the English proficiency and the requirements. So let's start with the first question asking if the student already took IELTS, whether they still need to take the EPE English proficiency.

**Maureen:** Whether you take TOEFL, IELTS, SAT, ACT, only a 100 IBT or 600 paper based TOEFL exempts you from taking the EPE. Everybody else needs to take the EPE. And the reason for this is that the TOEFL test is the test that most closely reflects the kinds of things that you need to do in an academic setting. And the IELTS is a little bit different from that.

**Andrea:** Excellent. Thank you. And perhaps a question relating to the TOEFL testing. So is it possible for student to retake TOEFL if they would like to avoid taking any ESL classes?

**Maureen:** That could happen, but it has to happen and the University would have to have your official test score by the time that you come for orientation. If the University does not have an official TOEFL score of 100 or 600 by the time that you arrive in Iowa City, you have to take the test. Once the test is taken you cannot retake the TOEFL to not have to take the ESL classes.

**Andrea:** Alright. Thank you so much. Another question is that the student was notified that they don't need to take the EPE test, but then if they are still interested in taking any English classes can they do that?

**Maureen:** In most cases, yes, but we would want to make sure that you would benefit from the English class that you would really need it. Also, we would need to make sure that we had room in the classes, but that has not been a problem. We will certainly work with you to give you what would be of greatest benefit to you.

**Andrea:** OK, perfect thank you so much. How about if students take English classes at the beginning of their program. Do they need to worry about their graduation being delayed because of this? Also, if the ESL classes cost more in tuition?

**Maureen:** English classes should not delay your graduation. They do count for graduation and most students take more than 12 credits each semester. So, no, they will not delay your graduation. And they are part of your full-time tuition. So those are the ones that ESL credit classes. If your test results show that you are not able to do credit classes in your test is lower, then it's possible that you would have to pay more for the non-credit classes, and it's possible also that depending on how well you do in those and how quickly you get out, it could delay your graduation but, it won't necessarily delay it.

**Andrea:** OK. I hope that helped to address the concerns that student had about their graduation timing. We have a few other questions. And actually, one of them is still related to the English classes and since we're still on that topic and specifically if student takes the English class at another college, do they still need to take class here at the University?

**Maureen:** Yes, you do, because every school's requirements and needs and student needs for success are different.
Andrea: OK perfect. Thank you so much. There is a general question whether there is a fee for orientation. Are students being charged for that?

Brandon: Yes, it’s another great question. So there is a one-time orientation fee that is assessed for every international student undergraduate student. And, that fee is for supporting the cost of orientation. The fee is currently $120, and it’s assessed by ISSS.

Andrea: OK great. Thank you. And we have one more question left for our presenters and we still have time to answer more questions, if you have any regarding the orientation, Success at Iowa, On Iowa!, or ESL classes, or EPE testing. So feel free to ask those if you have any concerns. But we have one more question from one of our participants, and specifically the question is whether they can get college credits from AP tests, and they already sent their score to the school.

Tina: Great question. It really depends on which college you are admitted to, because each college sets their own standards for what they accept for AP exam credit and how that satisfies credit in the college. So if you've already sent your scores we do need official scores from your AP test. So admissions will review your scores and apply credit to your transcript, to your degree audit, if you qualify for credit.

Andrea: OK. All right. Well, thank you so much for asking the questions to our presenters today. We don't have any more questions. But you're certainly welcome, again, to follow up with us. Specifically, we have other reminders about contacting us, and we will go over that very quickly soon. You should be receiving a reminder to please submit a brief survey, online survey, that we have for you as participants at this webinar. It will be very helpful to hear from you and to have your feedback on the webinar to help improve our future webinars. So, thank you very much for completing the survey from today. And if you don't have time to do it right now, you can still access the survey on our website for the webinar, and it's under number 8 and there is a link to the feedback survey right there. Then, reminder about some contact information as I was saying, if you still have any questions about your pre-arrival and any other issues about your immigration documentation, feel free to contact our orientation team at their email address ISSS-orientation@uiowa.edu. And then also I would like to point you to our website with a lot of additional resources for new international students and the web link is provided on the slide, and it's https://international.uiowa.edu/new-students. OK. And this is the end of our webinar and our webinar series for new international students, and we thank you so very much for your participation, for your questions, and we look forward to seeing you at the orientation in a few weeks. So everyone says, “Go Hawks!”