Spring 2021 Pre-arrival Webinar Series: Orientation expectations, Responsibilities and Placements Tests (AM)

Andrea: Hello, everyone and welcome to our webinar on orientation expectations, responsibilities and placement tests. This is a webinar which is part of the ISSS pre-arrival webinar series for all new international students starting their program with the University of Iowa in the spring 2020 semester. Welcome. The next slide will be a brief greeting from one of our university administrators who is a dean of the graduate college.

John: Hello, my name is John Keller and I serve as the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean of the Graduate College here at the University of Iowa. I want to welcome you to this webinar about graduate college orientation and I want to let you know that my colleagues and I here in the graduate college are here to help you with your students success. We very much look forward to having you join us here at the University very soon.

Andrea: Thank you very much and even though Dr. Keller has welcomed the graduate students, we do have some undergraduate students who are joining us for this webinar and we welcome them as well for the spring semester. Now, about the webinar series. If you have not attended any of our previous webinars, I would like to remind you that this is an optional webinar series that is provided to incoming international students before they arrive in Iowa City. There are a couple of objectives of these webinars and one of them is to arrange plans and help 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.

Andrea: Please know that all webinars are recorded and posted on the website where you registered for the webinar, which is international.uiow.edu/prearrival-webinar. And just a quick reminder that we have all three previous webinars already posted and those recordings are available for your use.

Andrea: During the webinar, if you encounter any technical difficulties, please let us know in the chat function. However, if you have any questions related to today's topic for our presenter, please use the Q&A function to post your questions. We will do our best to answer them live at the end of the webinar, as time permits.

Andrea: If you have not received your I-20 or DS-2019 document, please note that for F-1 students, their I-20 can be sent electronically. We were provided, we were given permission by the government to share these documents by email while students still need to print them out and use them for their travel as hard copy documents. However, for J-1 students who need their DS-2919 documents in order to apply for visa, it still requires that you please complete and pay for eShipGlobal shipping to receive the document abroad. So, only once you have the I-20 or DS-2019 document, you can apply for your respective visa. The same information is also provided in the pre-arrival checklist in iHawk, which is
ihawk.uiowa.edu. If you have any questions, please contact the ISSS orientation team at isss-orientation@uiowa.edu.

**Andrea**: Let's review quickly some important dates. So, for the new students trying to arrive to the United States please note that December 19, 2020 is the earliest date you can arrive to United States. January 18th, 2021, on the other hand, would be the latest day to arrive to Iowa City. In this season, we would like to remind you to please make sure that you have enough time before the school starts so that you can perhaps spend a few days in self-isolation, should that be necessary if you do not feel well after you travel and so that you may be ready for your class attendance, if you do have in-person classes. Then, a reminder about mandatory orientation. This will take place January 19th through 22nd and it's going to be conducted online. And then on January 25th, starts the spring 2021 semester.

**Andrea**: Let's do some presenter introductions.

**Lisa**: Hi everyone. I'm Lisa Kelly, I work in the graduate college in the graduate success office and I'm going to be talking to the graduate students about their orientation and things they should know about in spring semester.

**Kate**: Hi everyone, my name is Kate Garrett. I'm an Associate Director in undergraduate orientation services and I'll be chatting about that process today.

**Brandon**: Hello everyone, my name is Brandon Paulson and I'm an Assistant Director in International Student and Scholar services and I will be discussing international student orientation for all new international students.

**Melissa**: Good morning, everyone. My name is Melissa Meisterheim, I'm the Director of English as a Second Language Program and I’ll be talking about English language support and testing. Thank you.

**Andrea**: And my name is Andrea Siebenmann. I am one of the ISSS's advisors and I am also webinar coordinator and moderator for today.

**Andrea**: Let's quickly review today's goals. We will review orientation for graduate students as well as the orientation placement tests and Success at Iowa course for undergraduate students. You will learn about the ISSS orientation schedule and participation expectations. And then finally, you will understand the English proficiency requirements for undergraduate and graduate students. At the end of the webinar, we will leave as much time as possible to answer any questions that you may post to our presenters today. And now the presentation. Lisa?

**Lisa**: Hey, everyone. So as I just said, I'm here today to talk to you, to the graduate students who are watching, about what orientation responsibilities and things for you at the beginning of your time here at Iowa. You can go to the next slide.
Lisa: So, the first thing for you to know is probably early next week, you're going to get an email to your UIowa email and it's going to come from ICON, which is what we call our learning management system and that's where all your courses will have an ICON site. So, this is a good chance for you to get to know ICON and get to know how to work with it. And this will be an invitation to join our orientation ICON course. You can join that course and you'll have lots and lots of resources available to you, it's set up in a series of modules. Everything from, you know, finding housing, to learning about Iowa City and the restaurants and the things to do and lots of information about navigating your graduate student experience, campus resources, all kinds of things. It's going to feel like a lot of information right away but you're going to have access to that website, so that ICON course, the entire time you're at Iowa, so you can always refer back to the resources that are available to you there at any point that you are interested in something. Like I said, that's going to come out to people who are coming in the spring, that's going to come out to you probably early next week, so be on the lookout for that email. It may come to your junk email because it's a big email but hopefully you'll be able to receive that and join the ICON course. You also will have access to all the sessions from our fall 2020 orientation. If you're not able to attend orientation in the fall, or you're just starting in the spring, we had a fall orientation with student panels, a keynote address and information from a bunch of different campus resources and when you receive the email about the ICON site, you'll also receive this website that you can go to see all the sessions we had on the fall orientation, so you can use that to orient yourself to Iowa and to what to expect. Also, if you get these slides, you can go to that website here as well and get a head start on seeing those sessions. Next slide?

Lisa: One thing to know about Iowa that's different between undergraduates and graduate students is in graduate school your department is your home base, so if you're in the English department or the mechanical engineering department or the geography department, that's where you're going to get most of your information and resources. Information about assistantships or ways you can work or do research on-campus, information about what courses you should take, information about what experiences you should participate in, on and off campus. There's going to be a program coordinator who is a director of graduate studies and both of those people will be meeting with you probably as soon as you arrive to campus, to talk to you about what courses you should take, how you should register for courses, department meetings, all kinds of things like that, so you really want to focus on your department first as the home base for getting all your information. They will also potentially have a small department orientation for you when you arrive. However, if you or the department have any questions or they're not able to answer things for you or you want to know more about how university works or things, you can always come to the graduate college, and as the Dean Keller said in the welcome, we're always happy to help you and get to get to know you. And one of the ways you can do that is on the next side.

Lisa: So, as I said, I work in the graduate student professional development office, or grad success office, and this is an office that's open to all graduate students. So, like so even though I said that your main information is going to come from your home base, there are places on-campus where you can go for additional help and additional information. Our office, if you're interested in external fellowships or grant writing support, we can help you with your applications. It's never too early, even at the beginning of your graduate career, to think about what careers you want to have. We can help you with
exploration and planning for careers, also with job materials if you're writing resumes or CVs or teaching statements, all those things we can help you with and we also help with teaching support through the CIRTL program, which is the Center for the Integration of Research Teaching and Learning. We can help you improve your teaching and be ready to teach effectively in a college classroom and again, the website for our office is listed here and we really hope that you come in early and often to visit us and get to know the resources we provide for you and the graduate college is here to help you as you transition to Iowa, so we welcome you here. And I think that's my last slide, but let's check.

Lisa: Oh, one last slide, yes. If you're new to Iowa City, as all of you will be, the grad guide is this website developed by graduate students for graduate students and it gives you information about where to live, where to eat, entertainment, things to do around Iowa City. If you're bringing your family, it has information about child care, all kinds of things that are helpful for you as you're settling into Iowa City and becoming comfortable with the area and again. I think you're gonna get these slides after the webinar, but it's gradguide.uiowa.edu and it's also referenced in the ICON course I talked about as well, so we hope you check out that resource because it's developed by graduate students for graduate students and they keep it up really nicely. And with that, I will transition to the next speaker, thank you. If you have any questions afterwards, I'm happy to answer.

Kate: Good morning everyone, my name is Kate Garrett and I am going to be chatting with you all about undergraduate orientation, specifically placement tests, Success at Iowa and our On Iowa! spring welcome.

Kate: So, first we'll talk about placement tests for undergraduates students. All new students should come or should complete required placement tests as soon as possible in order to prepare for conversations with your academic advisor. Advisors may review scores and add coursework to your schedule based on your major. During your undergraduate orientation advising appointment, you can review coursework and your schedule and finish registering for classes with an academic advisor. To determine which test to take, please review the placement test link on the newstudents.uiowa.edu website under the orientation tab. You can access the placement test through the admissions profile or what we call the orientation tile in MyUI or like I mentioned before, through the newstudents.uiowa.edu website. As we discuss, there are three types of placement tests that students can take: math, chemistry and world language. We'll discuss all three in the next few minutes.

Kate: First, let's talk about math placement exams. There are two types of math placement exams and you should plan to take math placement tests as soon as possible for early enrollment in course work. If you have not taken calculus in high school or have not earned college credit for calculus, you should plan to take the ALEKS math test. This test takes about 90 minutes to complete. Any student who has completed calculus or earned college credit for calculus should plan to take the advanced math placement test. This test should take about 30 minutes to complete. Now, we'll chat a little bit about the chemistry tests. Any student considering a major in engineering, health sciences like biology, chemistry or pre-medicine or natural sciences, like environmental science and geoscience, should plan to take the chemistry diagnostic placement test. This test should take around 90 minutes to complete. If you have
questions about which of these tests to take, please view the newstudents.uiowa.edu website, click on orientation and then click on the placement test link on the menu on the right side of the page. There you'll find a list of majors, for math and chemistry tests, to help you determine which required test you should be taking. Again, you can access placement tests through the admissions profile or the orientation tile in MyUI or from the newstudents.uiowa.edu website.

Kate: If you're interested in starting a new language at the University of Iowa, you do not need to take a placement test. However, if you have previous experience with any language listed above, you will want to continue taking, or I'm sorry, and you'd like to continue taking coursework in this area, you will need to take an online placement test prior to enrolling in the language course. These tests take around 25 to 30 minutes to complete.

Kate: If you have taken coursework in American Sign Language or Arabic and want to continue in these languages, please review the information about these languages on the new student's website and email the appropriate contact to set up a test. Again, to learn more about the language placement test or any of our tests with math, chemistry or world languages you can visit newstudents.uiowa.edu, click orientation and then click placement test for more information about each area.

Kate: Next, I'll be talking about our Success at Iowa online course. Success at Iowa is a required online course for all new undergraduate students at the University of Iowa. This class is delivered in five stages and gives you information when it is most applicable to your transition to the University of Iowa. Stage one opened on December 1st, which was just a few days ago. Success at Iowa will help you learn about resources as you transition to the University. The modules can be continued to be accessed after you finish the course to give you an opportunity to revisit information in the future should you need it. This is a great way to get started in understanding your new home and institution. You should plan to complete the first two stages before you begin classes at the University of Iowa in January. You can log on to the courses at Iowa courses online or ICON, as Lisa mentioned earlier, at icon.uiowa.edu. And you'll need to complete each stage by passing the quizzes at 80% or better in order to move on to the next stage.

Kate: And finally I'd like to share some information with you all about the On Iowa! spring welcome for undergraduate students. This series of events will be an opportunity for you to connect with your peers, either in-person, if you're in Iowa City, or virtually, if you're completing your program as an online student. You'll have an opportunity to meet other students and learn about resources that can help you thrive as a Hawkeye. Students are invited to attend a small group Hawkeye welcome virtual session either Sunday, Monday or Tuesday January 24th, 25th or 26th, you only need to attend one to get to know some more things about your transition. To see the schedule details, including some fun events, visit oniowa.uiowa.edu. We hope to see you there. Thank you all for your time this morning and allowing me to share about the placement tests, Success at Iowa and the On Iowa! spring welcome for undergraduate students. As always, On Iowa, Go Hawks, and now I'll transition to the next speaker.

Brandon: Thank you, Kate. This is Brandon Paulson again and I'm going to be talking about international
student orientation. And again, this orientation is for all new international students studying at the University of Iowa.

Brandon: First thing I'm going to talk about are some goals that we have for international student orientation. The goals of the orientation is to support the transition to student life and academics at the University of Iowa. We're also will be highlighting cultural adjustment and immigration regulations to successfully maintain your F-1 or J-1 status, if you'll be studying on-campus in the spring semester, as well as connect new students with each other. And that's a very important goal that we have because we want you to make new connections with other students.

Brandon: So, to provide just an overview of our orientation due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the University of Iowa will be hosting online international student orientation starting January 19th through the 22nd of 2021. All new international students will be participating in orientation regardless, if you'll be starting your studies on-campus or online in the spring 2021 semester. You'll connect with other new students and receive the support you need to succeed through this virtual experience. And the orientation has a little bit different components, depending on if you're undergraduate student or a graduate and professional student. Both groups of students will be participating in international student orientation together, but there's just some additional or different requirements. First, for the undergraduate students, Success at Iowa, the stage one course, that's something that you'll want to complete in ICON that Kate just talked about. This will help prepare you to meet with your academic advisor and will help you complete the orientation tile which is the next step in MyUI. And then we'll also have an orientation ICON site that has many different resources and recorded sessions that you'll be able to view about different campus resources and then you'll be able to participate in this international student orientation, that'll be happening again, January 19th through the 22nd. And then graduate and professional students, you will be making sure to complete and access that orientation ICON site as well as attend and participate in the international student orientation.

Brandon: So, I'll talk more about each of these things in more detail. The orientation tile in MyUI, again, this is for undergraduate students only, you'll be getting access to this and should work on accessing this after you've completed that Success at Iowa stage one but this will have different resources and items to prepare for your academic advising appointment.

Brandon: So, for academic advising and course registration, for undergraduate students, you will be meeting virtually with an academic advisor to help you plan and register for your spring semester schedule. You will receive an email with information about the date, time and specific link to use for your virtual appointment and it will be taking place either in December or in January. And then graduate and professional students, you'll need to communicate with your department about scheduling your academic advising appointment and they will assist you with your course registration.

Brandon: Next, I want to provide an overview of the orientation schedule. Monday, January 18th, this is the date that if you'll be studying on-campus in the spring 2021 semester, you should be arriving in Iowa City. And this would be the latest date that you should be arriving. If you have a residence hall contract, they will be open for new international students. I included some details how there is a early arrival fee if you'll be arriving starting on January 18th and then the residence hall contract date begins January
23rd, but again, you are eligible and able to move in early starting on January 18th for students with residents hall contracts.

Brandon: Next, I'll share more of an overview of the schedule. So, starting on Tuesday, January 19th, we will have a welcome, you'll also be meeting with your small group and we'll be discussing immigration regulations. And then on Wednesday, January 20th, we'll also have a small group meeting and a second part to the immigration regulations. Thursday, January 21st some undergraduate students will be meeting with their academic advisors and we'll have a small group meeting and cultural adjustment session and then on Friday, January 22nd we'll have a small group meeting. So, all these are live sessions that will be happening that you'd be expected to participate in and attend.

Brandon: Small group meetings, each of you will be assigned to an orientation small group. Small groups will meet each day, Tuesday through Friday, during the orientation week and groups are led by experience current students and then the groups will cover special topics and have a lot of fun, social activities, so this will be an opportunity for you to connect virtually with each other. And again, learn more about campus, ask questions, it's a great way to help you transition to the University of Iowa. Your orientation schedule will be available in iHawk. You can see the web address, you should already be using and accessing iHawk already with the pre-arrival checklist, but this will be an option that will be available before orientation, that will have more details about the orientation schedule.

Brandon: And then again, we'll have an orientation ICON site. This ICON site will be sending an email in the future to you, to your email and you'll need to accept that invitation. Again, this site will have all the information that you need to know to help you transition and be successful here at the University of Iowa. We'll have recorded videos and other resources to view about different campus resources and this will be something that will be available to you during your studies here, throughout your time if you need to refer back to the different resources.

Brandon: Some considerations for successful participation. It's important to complete all action items in the orientation tile and MyUI for undergraduate students only. And then follow your personal orientation schedule, attend all live and small group sessions. Participate in your small group meetings and ask questions. And then review the resources and watch recorded orientation sessions in that orientation ICON site.

Brandon: Some additional information. We do have an orientation overview webpage that has very helpful information, you can see the web address, international.uiowa.edu/new-students to access more information about the orientation. We will also be sending email communication with more details about all these different steps to help you be successful with your participation in orientation.

Brandon: And I also just wanted to highlight the pre-arrival resources that can also be found in the new students webpages.

Brandon: And finally I would like to remind everybody that if you have any questions or issues accessing anything to please send an email to our ISSS orientation team at isss-orientation@uiowa.edu. And we
really look forward to supporting your transition as you start your journey as a Hawkeye and always here to answer questions and support you. Thank you for allowing me to share more about orientation and I hope you’re excited to participate in orientation in January.

Brandon: Next, I will turn it over to the next speaker.

Melissa: So, my name is Melissa Meisterheim and I'll be talking about the English proficiency requirement and the ESL support program. If someone could advance to the next slide, that would be great, thank you.

Melissa: So why is there a requirement? The requirement is there to assure that students whose first language is not English know English well enough to study without being hindered by language issues and sometimes even students with strong English language proficiency can face challenges in the classroom, so it’s there to help support that and being successful.

Melissa: So, what is the requirement? 100 on the iBT or 600 on the PBT, per base TOEFL. Those are the requirements. However, because the University offers ESL credit classes, students who submit a somewhat lower score can begin their coursework. Next slide, please.

Melissa: The condition for starting the coursework would be that students take the on-campus English proficiency evaluation, prior to their first registration. And so after that, students must enroll in any English classes. If they’re indicated by the English proficiency exam, or EP. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, the reasons for the testing, we want to make sure that students will be able to compete successfully in a degree program. We want to identify areas of language proficiency weakness and provide students the opportunity to enroll in ESL classes for credit that can count towards graduation. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, the English proficiency evaluation consists of three components for graduate students and four components for undergraduates. So, for graduate students the test includes 40 item reading comprehension and vocabulary tests, the 30-minute writing sample and a 10-minute oral interview. For undergraduates, it's the same but there's also a listening component as well. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, after taking the EPE, there are several possibilities with the results. One is that students aren't required to take any work with ESL. Another possibility is that they can enroll or enrollment is required in one or more ESL credit classes, like I mentioned, this would be for degree credit. There's also a possibility of enrollment in one or more ESL transitional course and then those lead into ESL credit classes. Next slide, please.

Melissa: ESL credit program offers five different classes for degree students. For graduate students, this is really only for reading, writing for graduate students, grammar and oral skills. For undergraduates, the fifth course would be the listening and note-taking skills and then writing for undergraduate students. Next slide, please.
Melissa: So, how do ESL classes help students? They help ensure that students achieve academic success who provide a foundation and language support during the first year and beyond. That they allow students to adjust to studying in English, as well as provide a small, comfortable environment to ask about the US classroom culture and they help with language questions related to other classes. Next slide, please.

Melissa: Now, this section is for graduate students. And this is regarding teaching assistantships. Next slide.

Melissa: So, has your department offered you a teaching assistantship? If so, then you’ll want to keep listening for a little bit. Next slide, please.

Melissa: There’s a state mandate, so based on the Iowa Code, the UI’s Office of the Provost, has a university-wide policy referring to the ability of all instructors of being able to communicate appropriately in the language of instruction, including teaching assistants whose first language is not English. Next slide.

Melissa: So, the policy is that any TA whose first language is not English must be tested and certified as ready to teach in a UI classroom. And the testing assures overall language effectiveness in the classroom. Next slide.

Melissa: So, there are two tests. The first in the sequence is the English Spoken Proficiency Assessment, ESPA. This is an oral proficiency test. Currently, it’s being offered online through Zoom for students and it's rated independently and by at least two ESL instructors. Now, students who present an official and valid TOFL with a subscore of 26 in speaking and 25 in listening are exempted from the ESPA, but they must take the ELPT and the ELPT, I’ll describe in a minute. And all of this information is listed on our website below. Next slide, please.

Melissa: The second of the two tests is the ELPT, English Language Performance Test. Students give a 10-minute presentation to an audience on a topic of their discipline. The audience asks questions during and after the presentation. The presentation is rated independently by three ESL faculty. Only language is evaluated not teaching ability.

Melissa: Students who score a 60 on the ESPA, the first test, are exempt from taking the ELPT and are fully certified. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, the levels of certification reflected duties TAs have at UI. This can range from grading, to the full responsibility for teaching a course. Most commonly, TAs lead discussion sections or run laboratory sections. There’s a wide variety. Next slide, please.

Melissa: For those who do not pass, coursework in ESL for prospective TAs is available and then those students can be retested. So, the teaching assistant preparation in English program offers three different classes: fluency building and culture, pronunciation and presentation skills. This last courses is available
for students who have passed the ESPA, who have not reached the certification level needed on the ELPT. Next slide, please.

Melissa: The TAPE program offers a few other components, one is the orientation program. This is for those who are ready to go into the classroom their first semester in a course teaching. And then there’s the follow-up program and this is a visit to the first time TAs class during the first semester of teaching. And this is just to provide support. This information again is on TAPE website through ESL programs. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, everyone at the University of Iowa wants to help you be successful, have a good educational experience and graduate, and ESL programs is part of that, and we wish you the best. Next slide, please.

Melissa: So, now I will turn it over to the Q&A function.

Q&A

Andrea: Thank you so much to all of our presenters and I appreciate all of the detailed information and I’m sure the students who are listening to the webinar are appreciating that as well. However, they do have some follow-up questions for most of the presenters, so I will try to go through them. We have quite a few. So, let’s start with the graduate student questions and first is that if the student doesn’t have an assistantship yet but they will need to get one as soon as possible. When do those assistantships become available and where can they go to find an assistantship and is this still a good time to obtain an assistantship?

Lisa: Yes. So, first you should check with your department because there may be TA positions or research assistant positions available in your department. If your department doesn’t have any, there’s a website on the graduate college homepage, which I’m posting to the chat right now and this lists current openings for graduate assistantships, so you’ll want to constantly check back to that page and see what’s available there. You might also, as you get to know, you know, in your first semester as you get to know other graduate students in your program, talk to them about what assistantships they have or they know about because there’s a variety of assistantships across campus that some of them are advertised on this site, some of them are just kind of word of mouth. So, ask around, use your department first. Use this website from the graduate college as your second bet and then thirdly, just ask other graduate students and faculty in your departments about what they know and you should be able to find them. They mostly start the beginning of the semester, so now is the perfect time to be looking but they do pop up occasionally throughout the semester. So, if you don’t get one right away, you might be able to find one later on in the semester, though that’s not as common.

Andrea: Excellent, thank you so much and there’s another question from, actually a couple more. Due to COVID-19, has the availability of graduate assistantship gone down in the coming semesters?
Lisa: Well, we still have everyone who's teaching TA sections, discussion sections, labs, those are still happening, they may be happening online instead of face-to-face, but the teachings still happening on-campus. So, those assistantships seem to be just fine and most of the departments, we’re still open and running, so the format of assistantship might be different, you might be working from home or online instead of being in an office, but in most places, there may be a few less in certain areas of campus that are totally student centered but for the most part, things are up and running just the same as they were but it might be in a different format than it would have been a year ago.

Andrea: Thank you so much, Lisa. I appreciate that. And there is one more question that I would like to ask on behalf of the graduate students and that is about the communication. So, when would be the appropriate time for students to contact the graduates college instead of the department and connected to that question is another one. So, what should student do if they're not hearing from their graduate advisor and communication has broken down, what would you advise them? Thank you.

Lisa: Yeah, so you know, for most questions, your first resource is your either the director of graduate studies in your department or your program coordinator who works with graduate students closely. They know all kinds of things about your department and about campus but there are some things that the graduate college can help with. For instance, if you are having trouble communicating with your department, you can come to us and we can work on your behalf to communicate with your department or figure out what's going on. The academic affairs office in the graduate college is where you want to go if you're having any sort of personality issues or other issues with your department or your advisor and they can help sort of mediate that. The graduate success office is where you want to go if you're interested in exploring different careers, if you want to think about external fellowships, if you want help learning how to, you know, talk with your advisor or choose an advisor, we can help with those things. So, basically kind-of working with both the graduate college, think about the graduate college is like bigger picture, things that happen across the university or that need to happen sort-of outside of your department and think of your department as the place to go if you need help navigating coursework or how to do things within your department kind-of questions. And almost no matter what, if you go to one place and it's not the right, they'll help you find the right person. We're really good at helping people figure out where they need to be and connecting them with resources. I guess like particularly if you're having issues with an academic advisor, like if they're not communicating well with you or you have some kind of personal issues with them. Again, that's why the director of graduate studies is a person appointed it in your department that is kind of the go-to for anyone's advisees, so you can go to that person and ask them. If that person is your advisor or that person isn't able to help you, then the academic affairs obviously graduate college will be happy to help.

Andrea: Thank you so much, Lisa and I apologize I stepped in too soon. All right, and then we have some questions regarding orientations, so I hope that either Kate or Brandon would be able to help in with answering but specifically the question was whether there are some, is it possible that some of the sessions in the ISSS orientation will conflict at times with On Iowa! orientation events, and what should students do?

Kate: Brandon, I can try to answer this and you can help in if I overstep. On Iowa!’s spring welcome
events are optional events for students and the Hawkeye virtual welcomes as we mentioned in our slides on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, January 24th through 26th should not interfere with any of your international student orientation and then we’ll also be doing some social events throughout the first week of classes, which again should not interfere. I will again reiterate that the On Iowa! spring welcome events for undergraduate students is a optional event that students are welcome to join but the international orientation is a priority at that point.

Brandon: Yeah, thank you Kate for sharing that. I'll just add I know this wasn’t the exact question but yeah. So for On Iowa!, there shouldn’t be any problem, any type of overlap like Kate had shared. There is a possibility for graduate students who are required to take the ESPA or ELPT, there could be some overlap and we will make this clear in our communications with everybody but the priority will be to take the ESPA or ELPT testing because that’s a requirement for any graduate assistantship and so that will be something that would take priority but again we are recording really all the orientation sessions except for the small group meetings, we will not be recording those, so you’d still be able to view the information on the orientation ICON site.

Andrea: Thank you so much to both of you. The next question was whether there was any physical interaction expected, such as visiting an office that might be part of the ISSS orientation and does the student need to be showing any documents to anyone during the orientation and I suppose that might be both for the ISSS one or the regular orientation, perhaps Lisa that can also chime in on this one. Whether there is any physical component, interaction component in the orientation at all.

Andrea: Thank you, Andrea, I can start out by sharing for this for internationals student orientation, there will not be any physical requirement to come to an office or you know, attend any type of session, it will all virtual. We actually will be asking you to share some of your immigration documentation with us. We have an e-form in iHawk that you would complete, it’s an orientation document check and so you’d be uploading copies of you know, if you’re, studying in the US, like copies of your visa, your passport, your immigration document. Just so we could review those but that would be something that you wouldn’t need to come into the office for, we can do everything virtually.

Andrea: Okay, anyone else that can chime in, whether they’re expecting any physical interaction with students during the orientation, we don’t have to but I thought I would approach both Lisa and Kate and see if they have any inside on that.

Lisa: This is Lisa. I think in the fall, even a few small departments did have face-to-face orientations when they had just very small groups of students coming in, just so they can actually meet faculty and things like that. So, your department would let you know if that’s the case, I think most of them were online, but whatever your department wants to do, you know, because we have some amount of in-person classes and we have a lot of rooms that can be socially distanced. It is possible that if you’re in a smaller department, they may want to meet you face-to-face, but of course, if you’re uncomfortable with that or there’s some reason why that’s not possible, you can definitely talk to your department and find something that works for everybody.
**Kate:** And this is Kate with undergraduate orientation and there is no expectation for any in-person events with orientation services.

**Andrea:** Thank you all very much for answering the question. I appreciate that. Next, move on to some of the testing questions that we have here. First one is from an undergraduate student where they are asking whether they need to take a chemistry placement test if they have mechanical engineering as major.

**Kate:** Hi, this is Kate again with undergraduate orientation. I'll start by saying that if you have questions about which placement exams to take, I would encourage you to visit newstudents.uiowa.edu and I'm going to put that in the link. Here we go. There is a list of placement tests and then also majors to help you determine which tests to take. As far as engineering specifically yes, you do need to take the chemistry test. So, I would encourage you to do that as soon as possible. Yet again, if you have additional questions about which placement exams to take, please visit the link that I posted in the chat.

**Andrea:** Again, thank you so much. The next question was so if student has an assistantship they are concerned that if they don't do well on their ELPT testing, will this effect their assistantship eligibility?

**Melissa:** I can speak to that a little bit. So, assistantships are, I would say, talk to your department about options if you don't get the certification level that you need or particular assistantship. Departments will work with you. I don't know whether anybody else has anything to add to that.

**Lisa:** Yeah, in some departments they can make your research assistant for that semester until you get certification level you want, others may be able to work with you but it's really department based. So and but they have your best interest and they want to help you so, I think being honest with them and working with them is the best way and they can see what they can do to help you out in that situation.

**Andrea:** Thank you so much. Then, the next question was related and specifically somebody is asking about the date for EP test for graduate students. Melissa, will you be able to answer that question?

**Melissa:** Yes, the EPE will be offered, because the EPE is being offered online and it takes a little bit of an orientation to understand the technical side of the test, we're going to have a practice EPE, I believe it's on January 13th. And then the actual EPE will be on January 14th and it's the same for graduate students and undergraduates. And like I said, it's not a face-to-face test, it will be all virtual.

**Andrea:** Thank you so much, Melissa. Perhaps, you can jot down those dates in the chat function for all to just see again. Thank you. We had some questions that are related to the self-quarantine and one of them is saying that do we have any specific, is there mandatory self-isolation, first of all, upon arriving to Iowa, and if it is there is a mandatory self-isolation, for how long? And because that will help the students to plan when to arrive. And the following question to that was whether we are as the university's providing any self-quarantine places or if the students can do it in their own room,
depending on where they’re going to be living on-campus or off-campus. Would there be something, Brandon you can help answer, perhaps for the students? Briefly?

**Brandon:** Yes, hi this is Brandon with the ISSS again. This is a great question. So, University of Iowa does follow the Centers for Disease Control and Intervention in the US and they have updated their guidance on this for travel internationally, for anyone traveling internationally and they do not have a requirement for self-isolation. In the past, they did have a 14-day requirement. However, we do advise to take extra steps beyond normal just to normally advise just to be, for social distancing, just to again for your well-being as well as for others and we do have some information, we actually have a very helpful webpage, that’s COVID-19 FAQs and so there is more information about this but we do have and the University also has information to, in general about COVID-19, but there’s different resources talking about, you know, symptoms and what to do if you encounter any type of symptoms, but we you know, again, we’re available to help you transition and so if you do have any questions or concerns about this, we can definitely talk to you more, but it is advisable to still you know, take some extra steps just to be cautious and conscientious, especially if you you’re traveling and could potentially be more at risk to encounter in encountering the virus. And I also mentioned that we will have a pre-arrival webinar that will be coming up that we’ll talking more about COVID-19, that would be good to learn more to.

**Andrea:** Thank you so much, Brandon and I appreciate that and also mentioning that webinar is going to do this as part of the reminders that are coming up right now. And this is all that we can answer for the questions for today, we are already almost done with the webinar but I have posted a brief request for all participants to please go ahead and complete a brief survey for us to provide your feedback on today's topic and we appreciate that. If you don’t have time to do it right away, we have a link on our website as well. The next slide, please.

**Andrea:** So, this is just a quick reminder about some contact information for our orientation team as well as the webpage that Brandon mentioned during his part of the presentation, so these are just again reminders about those contacts and resources. And finally, this is the reminder about the remaining, the last webinar that Brandon mentioned. On January 8th, please join us for a covering some important information about how the University of Iowa is providing campus safety measures and different resources for you as new students, regarding your health and other safety.

**Andrea:** So again, thank you so much for joining us today and we appreciate your participation and we appreciate your feedback to our brief survey. And I want to also thank all of our presenters for providing all of the important feedback and information on the orientation for all our students. Thank you and take care. Bye.