

WELCOME

Welcome to the United States, Albuquerque, and the University of New Mexico! We are glad you have chosen to come to our University, and we hope to get to know you better over the course of your stay. This guide is intended to be used as a reference while you prepare to come to the United States. It will be especially helpful in the first few weeks of your stay. Detailed information on most of the topics below will be presented at the International Scholar Orientation you will attend upon your arrival. You may also refer to the Global Education Office website: <http://geo.unm.edu/> or email us at geo@unm.edu if you have any questions.

ALBUQUERQUE AND THE SOUTHWEST

Albuquerque and the southwestern US have a unique geography and culture. The land is sparse, the mountains are large, and the skies seem to go on forever. On the west side of Albuquerque, from Petroglyph National Monument, you can see the Rio Grande river meander through a tree-lined valley. The rugged Sandia Mountains, the southernmost mountains of the Rocky Mountain chain, tower over the eastern part of the city. A ride up the Sandia Peak Tram, the world's longest single-span tramway, puts you on top of a mountain where the views are stunning. To the west, silhouettes of volcanoes against fiery red sunsets are often dramatic and spectacular. Albuquerque is a city full of exciting attractions and events, from Old Town, where Albuquerque was founded in 1706, to the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the largest open hot air balloon event in the world. We encourage you to find out more about the US, the Southwest, and Albuquerque via the web and other printed resources. More information about Albuquerque can be found at: www.cabq.gov. Bienvenidos! Welcome to Albuquerque, New Mexico!

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

No matter how well you prepare for a trip abroad, adjusting to a new culture can be both an exciting and challenging experience. The early stimulation of sights, sounds and people can be invigorating, but a short time later you may experience homesickness, sadness and depression as you are introduced to new cultural rules and behaviors, experience the challenges of communicating in a second language and the stresses of beginning a new job in a new environment. These initial experiences can be overwhelming at times. You may experience some moments when it seems impossible to make sense of your environment, when you cannot predict the actions of others, or when your own habitual actions seem to produce an unanticipated response in others. You may even fear that you made the wrong decision to come to the US and may consider returning home. Don't worry. These feelings are all part of the natural process of cultural adjustment and will soon pass as you become familiar with your new environment, make new friends and become more confident in your ability to live and work successfully in US society.

PREPARING TO COME TO UNM

❖ IMMIGRATION & VISA ISSUES

Critical immigration procedures are discussed in the scholar welcome letter you received. Read this information carefully to know the correct procedures for your particular situation. For a list of American embassies, consulates and their web sites, refer to: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

❖ WEATHER & WHAT TO BRING

At an altitude of 1,500 meters, Albuquerque receives over 300 days of sunshine per year and has a dry climate. The average annual rainfall is 20cm. The average summer daytime temperatures can range from 28°C to 35°C. The evening temperature drops down to between 14°C and 18°C. During the winter the coldest daytime temperatures can range from 11°C to 5°C, with evenings down to minus 5°C. Come prepared for both hot and cold weather. Clothes should be chosen for comfort and quality durability. Dress on UNM campus is often informal. In terms of medical needs, you will want to bring prescriptions for any regular medications (as well as several months' worth of these medications), proof of immunizations, as well as eyeglasses as these are expensive in the US, may not be covered by insurance, and may be difficult to get when you first arrive. We hope that you will bring any national regalia or traditional costumes you may have for the annual International Festival and other special occasions. In

addition to clothes, books, and other essentials, consider bringing the following items for your stay in the US: photos, addresses of friends & family, phone numbers of US contacts, compact items that will help your apartment or house feel like home. Check with the airline that you are using regarding luggage weight restrictions and security measures.

❖ DOCUMENTS

It is advisable to copy all of your important documents before you come to the US and leave the copies with family or friends at home in case you need someone to send these to you. Important documents include: passport, visa, DS-2019, financial information, transcripts, credit card information, and international and home country driver's licenses. Remember, you must bring the originals of these documents with you to the US. You also want to bring certified copies of your birth certificate and any national identification card.

❖ MONEY

You should arrive with \$2000 to \$3000 in US currency to cover initial costs. These funds will be used for your arrival expenses such as taxi, meals, supplies, apartment deposits, and other personal needs. For your protection it is best to carry any large sums of money in the form of traveler's checks (NOT CASH); be sure to sign your name to each one. You should also carry a small amount of money in US dollars. If you bring a bank draft or a foreign check to open an account, you may not be able to draw upon it for 2 to 3 weeks; so do not rely upon these funds for immediate cash. After you have established an account, you may wire money directly from your home bank to your Albuquerque bank. Since wiring fees are expensive, consider wiring only large sums. Wiring money usually takes three to five business days. In addition, exchanging foreign currency is difficult and can be expensive and time consuming, so you should not plan to bring foreign currency with you for use in the US.

❖ HEALTH INSURANCE: THINK ABOUT THIS NOW!

Health insurance is required by law for everyone in the US on a J visa. Health insurance is a necessity in the US because the cost of routine and emergency health care is extremely expensive. Also, international scholars are not eligible for public benefits such as health coverage for those with low income. Accepting any benefits would make you subject to exclusion from the US. Routine dental work and eye examinations are not covered by most US health insurance plans; therefore, you should take care of any dental or eye problems before you leave your home country. Your cheapest health insurance option may be in your home country, so investigate before you buy. Those who are paid staff or faculty are typically eligible for benefits and insurance through the university's Benefits Office. Those who are not receiving benefits through the university are eligible to enroll in any health insurance plan that meets the minimum requirements listed below. The GEO office has provided a list of non-UNM health Insurance plans that meet the minimum requirements. Scholars may view these online at: http://geo.unm.edu/all_handouts/health_information_scholars.pdf

You may purchase health insurance from **any** company that meets the minimum health insurance coverage requirements. The minimum coverage must provide the following benefits: \$100,000 per person per accident or illness; \$25,000 for repatriation of remains; and \$50,000 for expenses associated with medical evacuation. Regardless of which company provides your health insurance, you should be sure that you know exactly what your insurance covers and how to access it from Albuquerque.

❖ MEDICAL RECORDS

Be sure to bring copies (translated into English) of your medical records and those of any accompanying family members. A record of your children's immunizations is also required before they will be allowed to enroll in public schools in the US. School and daycare immunization requirements are available at: <http://www.health.state.nm.us/immunize>

MANDATORY SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

Immediately after your arrival in the Albuquerque area, please call our office at 277-4032 to sign up for our mandatory scholar orientation. Scholar Orientation is generally scheduled one day per week. In compliance with the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) regulations, we are required to copy your documents and to notify immigration of your arrival at the university. **Failure to attend orientation could result in the cancellation of**

your permission to stay in the US. When you come to our office for orientation, please bring your passport, DS-2019 form, I-94 card printout, and proof of insurance.

GETTING TO CAMPUS

The University of New Mexico is located about five miles from the airport. You should plan to take a taxi from the airport to the University or your temporary accommodations. A taxi to the University will cost approximately \$12 plus a tip of about \$2 for the driver. The trip from the airport to the University should take about 10 minutes. If you arrive late in the evening and you have not made other arrangements, you will need to stay at a nearby hotel. Some departments may be able to assist you with airport pick-up or temporary housing accommodations. Please check with your department.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

We have included a list of local accommodations close to the UNM campus:

Hotels	Address	Telephone:	Daily Rates Per Room
Hilton Garden Inn Albuquerque Airport (high budget)	2601 Yale Boulevard SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	(505) 765-1000	\$89-\$149 per night
Best Western Airport Inn (mid-budget)	2400 Yale Blvd. SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	(505) 242-7022	\$69.99 per night
Ramada Airport (mid-budget)	2300 Yale Blvd. SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	(505) 243-2244	\$54.00-\$59.00 per night
Econo-Lodge (low-budget)	2321 Central Ave. NW Albuquerque, NM 87104	(505) 243-8475	Single \$49.00 Double \$54.00 per night
Route 66 Hostel (low-budget)	1012 Central Ave, SW Albuquerque, NM 87102	(505) 247-1813	\$21.40 dorm room: Single Private room/shared bath: Single: \$26.75 Double: \$32.80
Super 8 Motel (low-budget)	2500 University Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87107	(505) 888-4884	\$47.46-\$58.76

**Taxes not included in quoted rates.*

PERMANENT HOUSING

The search for off-campus housing can be a source of anxiety for new international scholars. We suggest arriving two or more weeks before beginning work so that you have ample time to get settled before becoming totally involved in your new job. Remember if you are coming from overseas, you cannot arrive more than 30 days before the start date on your DS-2019. Luckily, most scholars have no difficulty finding a place to live in Albuquerque. Housing is reasonably priced in comparison with other US cities and is readily available. In general, there is plenty of off-campus housing near the UNM campus but it's wise to arrive early to find the best housing. It is important to note that most rental leases start on the first of each month, most commonly the first of June, July, August, and September. Many scholars choose to live in the areas surrounding the University because public transportation is inconvenient, and parking on campus is extremely difficult to obtain. If you are coming with school-aged children, you may want to ask at international scholar orientation about neighborhood public schools that have good quality programs before you find a place to live.

❖ DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOUSING

Room in Private Home: One room, usually with a shared bathroom and a shared kitchen, located in a private home or a large house with many such rooms. These rooms are usually furnished. Prices depend on the type of home and relationship to owner/residents.

Efficiencies/Studios: A small one or two room combination of living room, kitchenette, and bathroom. Price range for studios: \$450 - \$500 a month.

1, 2, 3+ Bedroom Apartments: An apartment including one or more bedrooms, a living-dining area, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Price range for one-bedroom apartments: typically \$450 - \$600; for two or three-bedroom apartments: \$600-\$850 a month.

Houses: A one or two family style home with a kitchen, bathroom, and living room/family room. Houses range from \$1,000-\$2,500 per month.

❖ **RESOURCES TO USE FOR FINDING HOUSING**

Helpful sources for finding rooms are the classified section of the local newspapers such as *The Albuquerque Journal* at: <http://www.abqjournal.com/>, and *The Alibi* (a free weekly paper, entertainment, and restaurant listing) at: <http://www.alibi.com/>. The Sunday edition of the *Albuquerque Journal* has the most comprehensive listings. For additional information about finding apartments and houses in Albuquerque, you may want to search this website: <http://albuquerque.citysearch.com/>. Once in this website, search “housing.” You can also look for rooms or apartments on the website Craigslist: <http://albuquerque.craigslist.org/>. This site allows community members to post free advertisements for anything from room, apartment, and housing rentals to furniture sales and community events. An on-campus service to find housing off-campus is the Student Activities Center. You can contact this service through their website at: <http://www.unm.edu/~sac/> or by phone at (505) 277-4706. The Student Activities Center website contains a search feature to help you sort through current apartment and housing listings available in Albuquerque. The *Daily Lobo*, UNM’s campus newspaper, has listings of houses and apartments available for rent.

❖ **RENTING**

Rental costs depend on location, size, condition and whether utilities (gas, water, and electricity) and furniture are included in the fee. Although you cannot and should not rent housing before you visit the actual location, informing yourself before you arrive, and arriving early will make the housing search a much smoother and less stressful experience.

❖ **UTILITIES & PAYING BILLS**

Bills in the US are commonly paid by personal checks available through your US bank. In most cases, automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account may be arranged. Listed below are some major utility providers: Energy bills can be very high in the winter.

Electric	PNM	(505) 246-5700
Gas	New Mexico Gas Compnay	(505) 697-3335
Telephone (local land line)	Qwest	1 (800) 244-1111

The initial connection for setting up gas and electric in your home will be:

- \$7.00 (plus tax) for Electric
- There will also be a deposit fee. This fee ranges in cost depending on the property address.
- \$63 for gas, if it is not already on OR \$30 for gas, if it is already on
- There will also be a deposit fee. This fee ranges in cost depending on an individual’s credit history.

Gas and electric services will usually be set up the following business day, but allow up to 24 hours. Both services can be set up over the telephone and do not require that you go in person to their offices.

To obtain a local telephone line, you must call the number listed above Monday through Friday 7:00 am- 7:00 pm and follow the instructions given. If you do not have a permanent social security number, you will need to fax copies of two types of photo identification. The fax number will be given to you when you speak with a sales representative. This telephone line will be for local calls only, if you need to call long distance, you may purchase long distance service through AT&T, Sprint, MCI, or another company. The most cost effective means of making long distance phone calls is to purchase a telephone calling card. These are available at most grocery stores, shopping centers, super-centers, shopping malls, and convenient stores. Purchasing a mobile telephone or “cell-phone” may be another cost-effective option.

TRANSPORTATION

The city of Albuquerque is spread out, and many parts of larger Albuquerque are not within walking distance. There are plenty of restaurants, grocery stores, and convenience stores that are an easy walk from campus. For other places farther away, scholars can use the Albuquerque public bus system.

❖ LOCAL BUSES

The least expensive means of transportation in Albuquerque is the local bus transportation provided by the City of Albuquerque (ABQ RIDE), although buses may not be convenient for use during “off” hours or for destinations far from campus. Schedules for the various routes throughout the city may be obtained at their web site: <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/>. You may also call the customer service number at (505) 243-RIDE or (505) 243-7433 and ask specific questions such as, “How do I get from UNM to the social security office?”

Bus fare for adults is \$1. You can buy a monthly bus pass for \$30. UNM staff, faculty, and students can obtain a free bus pass from the University. GEO will explain the process at orientation. Exact fare is required on all buses and the drivers do not carry change. Sometimes it is necessary to take two buses in order to reach a destination. If this is the case, you can use your original bus ticket as a transfer, as long as you use it within the time limit for transfer indicated on the ticket.

❖ PURCHASING A CAR

Owning a car in the US can be expensive. Keep in mind ownership costs (purchase price, taxes, depreciation, finance charges, registration, insurance, license fees, parking, etc.) and the operating costs (gas, oil, engine maintenance, tires, etc.). If you’d like to research this option, *Consumer Reports* and *Car Magazine* are good resources. You may also refer to <http://www.carseverything.com> or <http://www.nada.com>. Automobile insurance rates for people who are new to the US are usually inflated until a driving history has been established. Be aware that parking on campus is very difficult and costly to obtain.

If you do decide to buy a car and drive to campus, parking permits can be obtained online if available at: <http://pats.unm.edu/>. The permits are based on availability and can be purchased as early as March 31st for the fall semester.

❖ OTHER

Local taxi service, bicycles, long distance bus service, trains, and air travel are all transportation options in the US that can be discussed during orientation. Ask an International Advisor for more information.

SHOPPING

Supermarkets are usually open from 7am to 11pm. Some are even open 24 hours. Most other stores and markets are open Monday through Saturday from around 9 am to 5 or 6 pm (those open on Sundays usually are open for fewer hours). Supermarkets offer all types of food and cooking/household supplies -- including fruit, vegetables, meats, dairy, cleaning products, stationary, and health and beauty products. The best place to buy your groceries is at a supermarket, or a local fruit and vegetable market. Convenience stores also have some food and are open late hours, but their products are more expensive. There are also some markets specializing in international foods in Albuquerque (mostly Asian or Mexican), but you should plan to bring herbs and spices special to your home country with you as permitted by US customs.

Discount stores contain nearly everything you will need other than food, like clothes, appliances, books, music, tools, sports equipment, and health and beauty products (some even have food). These stores are open 7 days a week, and are usually open late. Examples of these discount stores are Wal-Mart, Target, and K-Mart.

Shopping malls are typically open from 10 am to 9:30 pm every day except Sunday, when they usually are open from noon until 5 pm. Shopping malls have mostly clothes and home furnishings. The department stores within them (Sears, Dillard’s, Macy’s, etc.) may also have appliances and home entertainment systems.

The State of New Mexico charges a sales tax on all purchases except food. Other states and cities also charge sales tax on purchases, but there is no uniform nationwide sales tax.

❖ BUYING USED ITEMS

You can save money by buying used items, such as clothing, furniture, and other household goods. Thrift stores (for example: Salvation Army, Goodwill or Thrift Town) are excellent places to shop. Look for garage sales as well, where people sell things they no longer need or want in their yard. You can also find used items by looking

through the classified advertisements in the *Albuquerque Journal*, *The Tribune*, or the *Alibi*, a free newspaper published each week and available in coffee shops and stores around Albuquerque. Craigslist (<http://albuquerque.craigslist.org/>) also offers a number of used items from furniture to bikes and household items. The University of New Mexico also has many bulletin boards around campus, where scholars and staff advertise items for sale.

TAX OBLIGATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

All international scholars and their dependents must complete at least one tax form for each calendar year in which they are present in the US, even if they have no income from a US source. GEO makes available the necessary forms and instruction booklets to help scholars comply with these regulations *beginning in mid-February* of each year (tax forms must be sent to the government *by April 15* of each year) and also offers volunteer tax assistance during this time. However, the staff of GEO cannot provide tax advice outside the tax season. The tax filing process will be relatively simple for scholars who had NO US source income. However, the tax filing process will be complex for those individuals with US source income. These individuals will need to plan on spending many hours and even days trying to complete the necessary tax forms. Therefore, we advise you to start completing the forms well in advance of the tax deadline.

INFORMATION FOR SCHOLARS COMING WITH SPOUSES OR FAMILIES

Adjusting to life in the US presents different challenges for scholars who are accompanied by family members, including increased living costs. Most dependents of J-1 scholars will enter the US on J-2 visas. If you will be traveling to Albuquerque with children, you will want to contact Albuquerque Public Schools at (505) 842-3742 to get more information about enrolling your child in public school. Since the school your child attends depends on where you live, you may want to find out about schools before you decide where you will live.

Dependents of J-1 scholars who are in the U.S. in J-2 status are eligible to study and to apply to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for work authorization. This authorization is considered a privilege by USCIS and is NOT automatically guaranteed. J-2 work authorizations are obtained through a mail-in application to the USCIS that takes **3-6 months to process**. A J-2 dependent may not begin to work until s/he receives the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL EVENTS

For scholars who are coming to UNM, there is an International Couples & Scholars Organization, ICASO. This organization encourages couples and scholars to make friends with others from around the world. ICASO provides a support network by planning fun activities and events. The activities vary from potluck dinner parties, to cooking demonstrations, to trips outside of Albuquerque. GEO also sponsors an International Social Hour each week and several different out-of-town trips each semester. For more information about these events, ask about signing up for the GEO or ICASO list-serve. If you would like to receive information and reminders about the activities of this group send an email to icaso.unm@gmail.com and ask to be added to the listserv.

CHECK LIST FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

Below is a list of things that you will need to take care of when you arrive. Please read this information **THOROUGHLY AND CAREFULLY!**

ATTEND INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR ORIENTATION International Scholar Orientation is required. **Immediately** after your arrival in the Albuquerque area, please call our office at 505-277-4032 to sign up for our scholar orientation. In compliance with the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) regulations, we are required to copy your documents and to notify immigration of your arrival at the university. **Failure to attend orientation could result in the cancellation of your permission to stay in the US.** At the orientation, our advisors will go over the information in this handout with you, provide other crucial information, and answer any questions you may have.

FIND HOUSING Information is available from the following sources:

- UNM Off-Campus Housing: listings available at <http://och.unm.edu>. The lists are updated every Friday.
- Drive/walk around nearby neighborhoods, look for signs such as "For Rent" and "Apartment Available"

- Advertisements in campus and local newspapers, such the *Daily LOBO*, or the *Albuquerque Journal* (especially the Sunday Edition), or on websites such as *Craigslist*.

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT Most people have a checking account for routine monthly bills; checks are not widely used for everyday purchases. A credit card, a bank debit card, and/or cash will be more convenient for most purchases. Fees will vary for bank and credit card services. Some local banks which scholars use are:

- Nusenda Credit Union, Student Union Building (SUB) Room 301, (505) 889-7755
- Bank of America, 4401 Central (Corner of Central and Washington), (505) 282-2531
- Wells Fargo Bank, 3022 Central (Corner of Central and Richmond), (505) 255-4372

REPORT TO YOUR DEPARTMENT Your department will provide you with information about your workspace, your email account, computer, and any departmental procedures. If you will be paid by the university, your department will also be able to inform you about any benefits you may have as a part of your employment and will ask you to complete some employment forms which verify your eligibility to work in the US and provide tax withholding information. If you are eligible for any benefits you should also attend the HR benefits orientation.

PURCHASE HEALTH INSURANCE for yourself (and your dependents, if applicable). Health insurance is required by law for everyone in the US on a J visa. Those who are paid staff or faculty are typically eligible for benefits and insurance through the university's Benefits Office. There is an open enrollment period for this coverage, scholars are eligible to enroll after the open enrollment has ended if they arrived in the US within the past 45 days. Those who are not receiving benefits through the university are eligible to apply for a Health Insurance Plan. Scholars may enroll and make payment on-line. Go to: http://geo.unm.edu/all_handouts/health_information_scholars.pdf to review non UNM health insurance plans you can purchase. To get a pro-rated monthly insurance quote, you can contact these companies directly. Speak with an advisor if you need to verify your eligibility and requirements for a health insurance plan.

GET YOUR LOBO CARD (staff identification card). This card will allow you to use some campus facilities (your access to facilities depends upon your appointment). Your department will need to give you a letter to take to the LOBO ID Office at the Student Union Building (SUB), Plaza Level near Zimmerman entrance, Rm. 1077 stating that you are being hosted by the department as a visiting scholar. You will need to have your temporary ID number or Social Security number to do this. If you do not have a temporary ID number, GEO can give one to you. If you are not on UNM payroll and you want to use the recreational facilities at Johnson Center, you must present the letter from your department to the front desk and pay an access fee each semester. Within 48 hours you will be allowed access to the Center. You may also purchase an access card for your dependents so that they may use the Johnson Center facilities. You must renew this access each semester. In order to use the libraries at UNM, your department must provide you with a letter, which you take to the circulation desk at Zimmerman Library in order to activate your card for use at the libraries.

OBTAIN A UNM EMAIL ADDRESS Although you may have an outside email account, scholars who plan to stay for longer than six months will also need to have a UNM email address so that we can communicate critical information to you. Your department will need to enter your information into the university system to set up a UNM email account. Once your information is entered into the system you will need to wait 48 hours and then log on to: netid.unm.edu. Follow the prompts to set up your account. The account will be set up on the next business day. Be sure to **report your UNM email address to GEO** as soon as you have it.

APPLY FOR A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) A social security number is a type of national identification number. This is a confidential number and should only be used for official business (opening a bank account, payroll, government offices such as the Motor Vehicles Department or USCIS). You should never send this number via email or provide it simply because it has been requested. There are very few circumstances in which this number will be required. If you will be paid, you must have this number. You may apply in person for a permanent Social Security number at the Social Security Office: 4300 Cutler, NE near the corner of Indian School and Washington. They are open between 9am and 4pm, Monday through Friday. To apply, you must have your passport, DS-2019, I-94 card (found in your passport), and UNM appointment letter; these items will be copied and returned to you immediately. You will also need to provide a US address where your new card can be sent (it will take at least 3 weeks to arrive, so the address should be valid for at least two months into the future). The Social Security Administration recommends that you wait 10 days from your date of entry to the US to apply for this number, so that immigration has a chance to

enter you in the system. You can call the national Social Security Administration to check on the issuance of your card at 800-772-1213. If you do not receive the card within one month, and the national 800 number does not have a record of your card, return to the Social Security Office to inquire. There is no fee for this service. NOTE: When you receive your Social Security card, you must inform:

- Payroll – 1700 Lomas NE, 1st floor (near corner of Lomas and University Blvd.)
- Your department
- Your bank

J2 spouses may be eligible for a SSN if they have employment authorization from DHS; refer to the handout “Information for Spouses and Families of International Students and Scholars at UNM.”

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES – BUS- Scholars who do not live within walking distance of the university may want to purchase a weekly or monthly bus pass for ABQ RIDE. Free bus passes are available to UNM staff, faculty and students at the Student Union Building by showing an ID and presenting a print-out of your directory page. Without a pass, exact change is always required and no change is available on the bus. The customer service number is (505) 243-7433 or (505) 243-RIDE. Maps and other information are available on the website <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/>.

DRIVER’S LICENSE AND STATE ID Many non-immigrants and their dependents may wish to obtain a US driver license or state ID card. In addition to providing visitors to the US the opportunity to drive, state-issued photo identification is a helpful alternative to the passport for instances when personal identification is required. Examples include opening a bank account, paying via personal check and going to bars and restaurants where alcohol is served. Detailed information on how to apply for a state ID or drivers’ license will be available in your orientation packet. If you plan to be here for more than 6 months and you will be driving regularly, you should obtain a NM driver’s license.

UNM PAYROLL If you are being paid by the University you will need to complete all UNM employment paperwork including an I-9 form, a demographic form and a Federal IRS W-4 form for tax withholding. These forms are not written with international scholars in mind, so follow the instructions given by the payroll office carefully. Once you receive your (SSN) you need to inform the offices listed above. After you have applied for the SSN, contact Suzanne Young in the Payroll office at: syoung@unm.edu with your email address. She will email you a password to access the WINDSTAR on-line Tax Compliance system. As soon as you receive your social security card, you will then need to complete the information in the on-line system including entry of your SSN. Once you have completed the on-line information, please print, sign, and take the required forms and documents to the Payroll Department MCS05 3160 (608 Buena Vista) with your social security card. If there is a tax treaty between your country and the US, the system will allow you to print out and complete an 8233 tax treaty form that will allow you to benefit from any tax treaty between your country and the US (Scholars from Germany, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Thailand and the U.K.) should talk with an GEO advisor before accepting the benefits of the tax treaty). *NOTE: this form will need to be completed each year.* (If you do not complete the 8233 upon initial employment, but wish to benefit from a tax treaty, you may claim the benefit at the time you file your annual, federal tax forms.) Until you complete the on-line form you will be taxed the maximum allowable amount! If Social Security and Medicare taxes were withheld from your pay incorrectly, Payroll will refund the money to you in your next paycheck. Please contact Payroll if you do not get reimbursed. **Before you leave Albuquerque, be sure that the Payroll Department has a correct contact address where they can send tax forms/reports at the end of the calendar year so you can get your money refunded!**

ASSISTANCE FROM GEO:

The Global Education Office (GEO) is here to support you during your stay in the US. In addition to providing immigration information and services, our office plans events and programs of interest for international students and scholars at UNM. We require your UNM email account so that we can contact you directly by email for critical immigration and other information. Official mail directed to you from the international advisors will come from iadvisor@unm.edu. For more information about other events and services log on to our website at: <http://geo.unm.edu/>. Contact the office via email at geo@unm.edu or subscribe to our listserve for international students and scholars.