Especially for International Students

- Document Certification
- Ameren
- Driving in Illinois
- Offenses that may lead to Deportation or Exclusion from the U.S.
- Selected translations of commonly used court documents in Champaign County
- ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number)
While you are in the United States you may need to obtain "certified true copies" of various original documents. Student Legal Service provides this service. You will need to fill out the Schedule an Appointment/Online Intake form, submit it, and then come into the office with your "original" document to arrange for an appointment for certification.

**Do NOT bring in a photocopy as copies you make cannot be certified.**

For more information see our brochure Notaries Public (pdf). This is a downloadable brochure and can guide you on whether you simply need your signature notarized (witnessed by a notary public) or certified by a licensed Student Legal Service attorney. Both notarization and certification are available services in the office.

Examples of documents that you may need to have certified as true copies:

- Passport pages
- University of Illinois Academic transcripts (we recommend as an alternative that you obtain multiple original transcripts from the Office of the Registrar, 901 W Illinois St., Urbana, registrar.illinois.edu/transcripts/)
- I-20, DS-2019, or other U.S. government documents
- Academic transcripts from other universities
- Birth record/certificate
- Marriage licenses

Remember, you must bring in the ORIGINAL document to get a certified copy.
In order to turn on your electricity with Ameren you may be required to produce a certified true copy of your Passport and ID because you do not have a U.S. Social Security number or a verifiable credit history.

Student Legal Service can make certified true copies of your original documents and FAX them to Ameren for you. Most of the time this is a same-day service.

To do this you must use our Schedule an Appointment/Online Intake form. Once you are there in the first paragraph click on Certification of IDs for Ameren and fill out the form and submit it to the office. You will be required to bring your original identification documents to the office for us to copy, certify and fax to Ameren.

This can be done without a scheduling an appointment on a walk-in basis.

Please Note: IF YOU COME TO THE OFFICE AFTER 3:00 P.M. THE FAX IS LIKELY TO BE SENT THE FOLLOWING DAY. Do not wait until Ameren decides to turn off your electricity.
COMMON QUESTIONS

Is my home country license valid while I am a student at the University of Illinois? Is my international driver’s license valid while I am a student at the University of Illinois?

- Your home country license or international license is valid for purposes of driving in Illinois so long as you are enrolled as a student at the University of Illinois. Your home country/International license must not have "expired" for it to be valid. The Illinois law permitting this can be found by use of google using 625 ILCS5/6-102.

- Your home country/international license is valid in Illinois but there are 49 other states in the United States and each state tends to have different rules regarding use of various licenses.

- While driving you must have the home country/international driver’s license in your possession. While you are NOT required to carry your passport while driving many police departments will ask you to produce your passport as a way of being assured that you are a nonresident lawfully in the United States.

- If you are stopped and receive a ticket/citation for not having a valid license please do not panic. Come into Student Legal Service and bring your home country/international license with you to the appointment and we will contact the state to resolve the ticket. To schedule an appointment, fill out our Schedule an Appointment/Online Intake form. Follow the instructions.

- It is advisable to have your home country license translated into English and have the translation certified if the license is not written in English. Carry this translation with you when driving along with the actual license.

- Your spouse and children who live with you while you are an enrolled student may lawfully drive in Illinois on their personal home country/international driver’s licenses. Your enrollment covers them but they must still have their own license.
How do I get an Illinois driver's license? A temporary visitor's license?

To obtain a full Illinois driver's license you will need to take several steps at Drivers' Services:

- Produce a current social security card and number
- Proof of date and place of birth
- Current resident address and zip code (a piece of mail or lease should be sufficient)
- The fee for application
- Pass the computer-based "written" test – download the Illinois Rules of the Road (pdf) to study. You can also download the Rules of the Road Workbook (pdf).
- Pass the driving/road test, which you request in person at the driver's license facility. You must be able to show proof of insurance on the vehicle you use for the driver's test. Weather and number of other people waiting to take the driving test may affect whether you will be able to take the test that day.
- If you are between age 18 and 21 you must have proof of completion of 6 hours of driver's education if you are seeking your first license. If you are over age 21 proof of driver's education is not required.
To obtain a temporary visitor's license you need to take several steps:

- You must be **ineligible** to lawfully obtain a Social Security card and number.
- You must have proof that you have resided in Illinois for at least one full year. A lease signed by you and the landlord, or a residence hall contract along with your Visa should be sufficient.
- A university transcript of enrollment/grades may also be additional evidence of residency.
- You must produce a valid, unexpired passport.
- Pay any fees set by the Illinois Secretary of State.
- If you are under 21 years of age you must have proof of 6 hours of driver's education.

The Illinois Secretary of State is NOT the same thing as the U.S. Secretary of State/Consulate that deals with passports and entry and exit from the United States. The Illinois Secretary of State cannot deport or exclude you from the United States.

The Champaign branch of the Illinois Secretary of State, commonly called DMV or Driver's Services, is closed until further notice. The four closest offices in other cities are located [here](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com). The main website is [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).
COMMON TRAFFIC TICKETS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The three most common traffic tickets for international students while in Illinois are:

1. no valid license
2. speeding
3. no insurance

What to Do?
ANSWER: Always schedule an appointment with Student Legal Service.

Driving without a valid license.
Bring proof of valid home country / international or temporary visitor's license to your appointment. In most cases this ticket will be dismissed.

Speeding tickets.
Many international students violate the posted speed limits because of confusion over miles per hour (MPH) versus kilometers per hour (KM/H).
The United States is one of the only countries in the world that still uses the mile as a unit of measurement. The fact that you are from a country that uses the Metric system and that you are unfamiliar with the foot, yard, mile system used in Illinois is not a defense to a charge of speeding. Ignorance of the law of measurement will not get you out of paying the ticket but we may be able to keep the ticket off of your driving record.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed Type</th>
<th>Kilometers per Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 mph</td>
<td>16.1 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mph</td>
<td>24.1 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School bus zones – 20 mph</td>
<td>32.2 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus area streets – 25 mph</td>
<td>40.2 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many residential streets – 30 mph</td>
<td>48.3 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 mph</td>
<td>56.3 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 mph</td>
<td>64.4 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 mph</td>
<td>72.4 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 mph</td>
<td>80.5 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many rural roads – 55 mph</td>
<td>88.5 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 mph</td>
<td>95.6 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some interstate highways – 65 mph</td>
<td>104.6 km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many interstate highways – 70 mph</td>
<td>112.7 km/h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driving at speeds more than 26 miles per hour above the posted speed limit may result in a sentence that includes JAIL as well as expensive fines and court costs. Speed limits are posted in MPH in Illinois not in KM/H. The posted sign will say for example; **Speed limit 70**, which assumes you know it is miles per hour.

**Operating an uninsured vehicle.**

You must have valid insurance when driving any motor vehicle in Illinois including one a roommate allowed you to borrow.

If you are stopped by the police you must produce proof of insurance. If you had insurance but not in the automobile at the time you were stopped, your ticket will be dismissed at court when you show proof.

If you did not have valid insurance you will be required to purchase such insurance. Ask your insurance agent about minimum insurance that complies with Illinois law.

There is also detailed information about driving in the United States on our [Brochures/Presentations/Ads](#) page. There is a power point designed for use by international student drivers titled **Driving Related Issues (pdf)**. You may download this material which will assist you in a wide variety of issues related to driving.
Many international students are keenly aware of the fact that there are certain violations of the law that can result in being "deported" from the United States or upon leaving the U.S. for a break can lead to being "excluded" or denied entry to complete studies at the University of Illinois. It is very rare that either domestic or international students commit serious criminal offenses while on or off campus.

**U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (I.C.E.)**

100% of international students dealt with U.S. Customs in order to enter the United States. I.C.E. is the common acronym for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. This agency deals with the two issues international students are most often concerned about when they come to Student Legal Service about a legal violation. *Will I be deported? Will I be excluded from returning?*

Formal actions by I.C.E. to deport University of Illinois international students are extremely rare, as most students do not violate the criminal law, and when they do, it is generally for non-deportable offenses.

On the other hand, it seems that when a student returns home and seeks re-entry into the U.S., there is greater scrutiny by the U.S. consulate who seem to have quick access to U.S. police and court records, probably through access to a U.S. Homeland security database, which can lead to questioning and potential exclusion from entry to the U.S. to complete your studies at the University of Illinois.
Deportable Offenses:

- Generally, offenses that carry a potential jail sentence greater than one year.
- Aggravated felony convictions such as drug/firearms trafficking.
- Murder.
- Rape.
- Fraud.
- Various forms of larceny (theft) where the potential sentence is a year or more.
- More than one conviction arising from separate incidents for offenses that have a potential of up to one year in jail. The sentence of jail does not have to be served in order for the matters to create deportability.
- Many violent felonies too numerous to list.
Offenses that do NOT usually result in Deportation:

- Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drug (D.U.I.).
- Driving under suspended license.
- Traffic tickets such as speeding, stop signs, lane usage, invalid license, etc.
- First offense shoplifting (theft) where potential sentence is less than one year in jail.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia where the potential sentence is less than one year in jail.
- Underage drinking or possession of alcohol as a "city offense" or as a misdemeanor State of Illinois offense.
- Trespass, disorderly conduct, resisting/obstructing police officer in making an arrest.
Exclusion offenses:

- Any offense that could cause you to be deported if you were already in the U.S.
- **Offenses involving "moral turpitude"** which means, generally, the act is inherently wrong as defined by the statute where elements include things such as fraud, intent to harm persons or things, larceny, etc. Examples: Arson, Burglary, Armed Robbery, Sexual Assault, Domestic Battery, etc.
- **Conviction** for an offense does not mean that there must be a formal trial and a finding of guilt.

  a. A finding or pronouncement by a judge or jury of guilt is a "conviction" for purpose of exclusion by the U.S. consulate if the offense involves moral turpitude.
  b. A negotiated guilty plea is a conviction.
  c. A grant of "Court Supervision" where there is an admission of facts sufficient to find guilt is a conviction.
  d. Imposition of a penalty is also an element of "conviction".

Not all convictions result in exclusion!
- **Failure to appear/arrest warrant.** One of the common situations that international students deal with during questioning by U.S. Consular officials is "failure to appear" at court resulting in an arrest warrant being issued. If you failed to appear in a U.S. court on a traffic or minor criminal matter the court often issues a warrant for your arrest. This document is shared with various governmental agencies. The consulate may require you to produce a police report or answer questions about the activity that caused the arrest warrant to issue. Student Legal Service may be able to assist you in obtaining these records and may be able to transmit them to you while you are detained or awaiting clearance to enter the U.S.

- **Expungement.** Illinois permits many offenses to be Expunged from your record. This is true where there is an "arrest" but no formal charge and most commonly in cases where you were sentenced to "Court Supervision". Generally you must wait two years after completing the terms and conditions of your sentence to bring the Expungement procedure in Illinois. U.S. Homeland Security databases are not affected by Expungement, and the U.S. Secretary of State and/or Consulate are not required to recognize Illinois "Expungement of Conviction" rules for deciding to exclude your return to the U.S.

- Merely being arrested or detained or under police investigation does not make you automatically unable to enter or re-enter the U.S.
International students often have English as a second language. Most international students are competent in the English language, however, the language of law and the U.S. legal system can be confusing and downright baffling for native speakers of the English language and even more so for those who were not raised with English as their primary language.

There is truth to the expression that, "Lawyers write the law so only lawyers can understand it". To assist students in having greater understanding of documents that they may be required to use in court in Champaign County, the Student Legal Service has had the following basic documents translated from English into various languages.

The documents are:

- Jury Waiver
- Your Rights in Traffic Court
- Misdemeanor Plea Admonitions

Each form is available in English and can be downloaded. Each form is also available in Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, and Korean, and can be downloaded. Other languages will be added as translations become available.
These translations are designed to familiarize you with the content of the form that you may need to sign in court. Only the Spanish translations are court accepted translations. The other language translations are solely to familiarize you with the language of the documents.

The forms do not substitute for legal representation or the use of a "translator" appointed by the Judge if you lack sufficient skills in English to fully understand the nature and consequences of the proceeding. DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR A TRANSLATOR if you do not understand what is going on in court.

WARNING! CAUTION! BEWARE! BE CAREFUL ABOUT TRANSLATIONS! Translation of documents, poems, literature is a difficult art. Each translator selects a word or words that capture the meaning within the context of the document. No two translations of a document are likely to be the same.

This is particularly true with legal documents where certain legal concepts are culturally specific to U.S. Law. The concept of "presumption of innocence" and "the right to a jury trial" are not universal legal concepts.

When reading these translations you should be consulting with an attorney at Student Legal Service or with a private licensed attorney.
DOCUMENT TRANSLATIONS BY LANGUAGE

Arabic
- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)

Chinese
- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)

English
- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)

French
- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)
Japanese

- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)

Korean

- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)

Spanish

- Jury Waiver (pdf)
- Your Rights in Traffic Court (pdf)
- Misdemeanor Admonitions (pdf)
An ITIN is an identification number issued by the IRS to individuals who are not eligible to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN). This number serves as an identification number to file taxes and get a tax refund from income withheld by the IRS, but can also be used to open bank accounts and apply for loans.

**An ITIN is not a substitute for an SSN and cannot be used to obtain a driver’s license, work authorization, or Social Security benefits. You may not have both an ITIN and an SSN.**

To apply for an ITIN, you need:

1. Completed Form W-7
2. Original tax return(s)
3. Original identification documents or certified copies from the issuing agency (for example, copies of your passport must be certified by your consulate or embassy) or at selected IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers
   
   a. Original passport
   OR
   
   b. Two unexpired documents supporting the identification information provided in the Form W-7, including at least one photo identification and an identification from your country of origin.

More information and locations of IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers in Illinois that can authenticate copies of your Passport/identification documents can be found [here](#).

You can also visit the IRS website to learn more and find other IRS Designated Offices in other states [here](#).
Student Legal Service
324 Illini Union, M/C 384
1401 W. Green St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Contact Us By E-Mail

Legal Information Disclaimer

M-F 8:30-12:00 and 1:00-4:30
Closed Noon-1:00pm
Phone: (217) 333-9053
fax: (217) 333-0474

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICE
324 Illini Union
Office Hours: 8:30-Noon & 1-4:30pm, M-F
www.odos.illinois.edu/sls

A Program of the Office of the Dean of Students