



## Getting Started

As you begin your career at UMass Amherst, one of your first steps will be learning and negotiating a new environment. Below, we've organized some answers to key questions that new faculty commonly ask about the greater Amherst area and the University.

### Where should I live?

The University of Massachusetts is located in Amherst, Massachusetts, which is a part of the [Pioneer Valley](#). Although a large number of our faculty live in Amherst itself, others have chosen to live in such nearby towns as Belchertown, Easthampton, Hadley, and Northampton. In deciding where you and your family will live, and whether you will rent or buy, you may wish to consult [UMass Amherst's Commuter Services and Housing Resource Center](#), a searchable database of house, condo, and apartment rentals and sales; [Realtor.com](#), a searchable national database for buyers and sellers of real estate; and the following web pages for individual towns/villages:

[Amherst](#)

[Ashfield](#)

[Belchertown](#)

[Conway](#)

[Deerfield](#)

[Easthampton](#)

[Granby](#)

[Greenfield](#)

[Hadley](#)

[Hatfield](#)

[Holyoke](#)

[Leverett](#)

[Montague](#)

[Northampton](#)

[Pelham](#)

[Shutesbury](#)

[South Deerfield](#)

[South Hadley](#)

[Southampton](#)

[Springfield](#)

[Sunderland](#)

[West Springfield](#)

### How do I get a Massachusetts drivers' license and register my car?

The Pioneer Valley has a very well-developed public transportation system, the [Pioneer Valley Transit Authority](#), which services the UMass Amherst campus and several nearby communities. For those of you who prefer to drive, one of your immediate needs will be securing a Massachusetts driver's license and getting your car registered.

If you've moved from out-of-state, contact a [branch office](#) of the Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles (the closest branch offices are in Hadley, Easthampton, Greenfield, & Springfield) for [instructions on obtaining a Massachusetts driver's license](#). When you visit your local branch office, be sure to bring (1) your Social Security Card or a current U.S. or non-U.S. passport; and (2) your out-of-state license.

[Instructions on registering your car](#) can be found on the State web page. Prior to registering your car in Massachusetts, you'll need to secure a Massachusetts auto insurance policy. Because auto insurance is regulated differently in Massachusetts than in many states, you may find that your



current insurance carrier does not service this area. Local insurance agencies can be found in the paper or online Yellow Pages and the State maintains a [list of insurance carriers](#) that service Massachusetts.

### **How do I establish residency and register to vote in Massachusetts?**

The Secretary of State has a [welcome page](#) for new residents, which offers tips and links on many important issues, including establishing residency in the state, registering to vote, learning about state taxes, etc.

### **How do I enter the University's administrative system?**

There are five key steps that you can take before your arrival and in the early days of your employment at UMass Amherst that will make your transition to the institution much smoother. Below, we outline these important steps, and highlight a few road bumps that you might encounter along the way (and what you can do about them).

## **Step One**

### **The most important thing you can do is attend a New Employee Information Program hosted by the Office of Human Resources.**

- Signing up. Your department will sign you up for one of the sessions. Check with your department to make sure you were signed up for a time that is convenient for you.
- Dates and times. New Employee Orientations are held every Tuesday, year round, and additional sessions are offered throughout August and September. Please contact your department to sign up for a session. Once you've been registered, Human Resources will confirm and send you the location of the session. If more information is needed, visit the [Human Resources website](#) or call 413-545-4549.
- Parking for Human Resources Orientation. If you do not already have temporary parking on campus, you will need to park in a metered lot or the parking garage for the meeting. Please see the campus map for visitor parking information. Parking locations include metered lots at the Visitor's Center, metered spots in the Haggis Mall (the "horseshoe" next to Whitmore), as well as the parking garage. Please note that these locations could be a 10-15 minute walk to the Whitmore building, depending on where you park. Meter parking is \$ .25 per 15 minutes.
- Required Documents for Human Resources. The documents listed below are **REQUIRED** in order for you to be entered into the human resources system. Bring the following to your Human Resources Orientation:
  1. Documents to complete the INS I-9 form. Commonly used documents which fulfill this requirement include:

#### **U.S. Citizens and Residents**



U.S. Passport; or  
Driver's license and social security card or U.S. birth certificate

**International Citizens**

Unexpired passport with I-94 card; and  
I-20 or DS-2019

Also bring: Visa and a list of dates of entry to and exit from the United States.

2. A current social security card.

The Human Resources Office is required to match an employee's name with that on his or her social security card. Thus, all new employees who have a social security number must provide a current social security card. If a current card cannot be provided, a new one must be obtained. A list of local Social Security offices is available at the Human Resources Employee Service Counter at Room 325 of the Whitmore Administration Building or on-line through the Social Security Administration.

3. Voided check or deposit slip.

The University requires all new employees to have automatic payroll direct deposit. The form requires a bank routing number and an account number, which can be found on a voided check or deposit slip. The direct deposit form is available at orientation or the Human Resources Information Counter.

4. Documents to complete health & life insurance forms.

The Commonwealth offers eleven (11) health insurance plans through the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission ("GIC"). If you choose to cover a spouse on your health and/or dental insurance plan, you will need to provide a copy of your marriage certificate. If you choose to provide coverage for dependent children, a birth certificate or adoption certificate will be required for each. Please bring the social security number (if applicable), address, and telephone number(s) for each dependent and insurance beneficiary.

Please note that health insurance is effective the first day of the month following 60 days of benefited employment, and dental insurance is effective the first day of the month following 6 months of benefited employment. If you have coverage through your current place of employment, you may wish to consider temporarily extending it through COBRA until your coverage with UMass Amherst becomes effective.

Newly benefited employees may apply to the GIC in order to purchase health insurance coverage during the waiting period if the cost of the premium (100% of the GIC premium, not the lower employee rate) is less than the medical expenses



that will be covered & incurred during the waiting period. For example, a new employee might elect to do this if he/she or a family member is diagnosed with a severe illness during the waiting period.

A new employee may also wish to purchase an individual policy (e.g., a policy with a high deductible and lower premium) in order to protect themselves and their families in the case of severe illness/injury during the waiting period. Insurance is a state-regulated industry in Massachusetts, and lists of providers are available online.

Additional Suggestions. Please bring the name, address, and telephone number(s) of your emergency contacts. Also consider bringing a cell phone, if you have one, in the event you need to consult with your spouse, partner, accountant, and/or physician.

## Step Two

**Complete and return the paperwork you are given at Human Resources Orientation in a timely manner.**

- Completing your paperwork in a timely manner is extremely important because it is impossible to get into the payroll system without doing so. Being entered into the payroll system also allows you to get a paycheck, an email address, parking sticker, UCard (faculty identification, library access, etc.).
- Completed paperwork should be submitted at the Human Resources Counter in the Whitmore Administration Building, Room 325, which is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Please feel free to contact Kris Moriarty, New Employee Information Coordinator, at 413-545-4549 or [kmori@admin.umass.edu](mailto:kmori@admin.umass.edu) with questions.

## Step Three

**Complete a “NENS” (Non-employee, Non-student) form to obtain your campus I.D., email address, library privileges, etc.**

- Once you’ve completed and returned your paperwork to Human Resources, it may take a few weeks to become “official” in the UMass-Amherst computer system. During this period, completing the NENS form will allow you to get your Faculty ID (“UCard”), activate your email account, activate your SPIRE account, and use the library.
- Access the [NENS form](#) online or ask your department administrator for a copy. Complete the form and be sure to select the “PREEM” NENS category from the list on the back of it.
- Go to the Office of Information Technology (“OIT”) in the Lederle Graduate Research Center Lowrise, Room A113, which is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00



- PM. Bring your NENS form, a picture identification, and supporting documentation (appointment papers, orders, contract, etc.). During your visit to OIT:
- A campus identification number will be assigned to you;
  - An email account will be generated and you will be asked to select a password;
  - You will be given something called the "blue form."
  - Go to the [UCard Office](#) , which is temporarily located in room 314 of the Student Union through July 21 and is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Please note that the office will move back to its regular location in Room 168 of the Whitmore Administration Building beginning July 23. In the UCard Office:
    - Your picture will be taken.
    - You will be given your UCard.
  - Go to the [W.E.B. Du Bois Library](#) (the tallest building on campus) to get registered into the library system. Library hours vary – please check the schedule online. Bring your UCard and a copy of your employment contract to the library (main library).
    - You will be entered into the system.
  - An Important Note for International Faculty: If you are an international citizen, contact the International Programs Office (“IPO”) at 413-545-2843 as soon as your contract is finalized to make sure you are in their system. OIT cannot process your NENS form unless you are entered into the system managed by IPO.

## Step Four

### Take care of a few other things!

- Get your office keys.
  - In order to get keys for your building and/or office, your department will need to complete and submit a “Key Request Form” for you. (It’s best not to assume that someone will automatically do this – be sure to ask.)
  - You’ll be notified when the key is ready to be picked up, which you must do in person (i.e., you can’t send someone to Physical Plant on your behalf). Bring your driver’s license or UCard for identification when you visit Physical Plant
- Get your parking sticker and parking lot assignment.
  - The Parking Office is located at 51 Forestry Way, and is open Monday through Friday from 7:45 AM – 4:45 PM.
  - You must bring your driver’s license and car registration.
  - Prior to visiting the office, you may wish to view the online interactive parking guide (viewed by scrolling down to the bottom of the Parking Office’s homepage) to familiarize yourself with the parking maps on campus. Be prepared; many lots, particularly small or centrally located lots, are full. If this happens, the Parking staff will most likely put you on a waiting list and give you short term status elsewhere.
  - Important notes: If you are not yet in the payroll system, you will be given a month-long temporary parking permit. You can download your parking application form and fill it out in advance. However, do not fill in your preferred



lot number until you go to the Parking Office and find out which lots are available.

## Step Five

**Attend the New Faculty Orientation (sponsored by the Office for Faculty Development) and any orientation your department AND/OR SCHOOL might be holding.**

- The Office of Faculty Development and the Office of the Provost co-sponsor a campus-wide orientation for new faculty in late August/early September. Information on this event is typically distributed by email during the summer. If you're a new pre-tenure faculty member or non-tenure track lecturer who has not been contacted about this event by the third week of August, please email the Office of Faculty Development at [ofd@acad.umass.edu](mailto:ofd@acad.umass.edu).
- In addition to the campus-wide orientation, many departments and some schools/colleges sponsor orientation events for their new faculty. Ask your department chair or departmental administrator if such programming exists.

## An Important Note

**When you get your first paycheck, it will have both a Campus I.D. and an Employee ID number. You need to confirm that your Campus I.D. on the check matches your eight-digit Campus I.D. on the back of your UCard.**

- If these numbers match, you are permanently in the computer system of the University.
- If these numbers do not match, you need to do the following:
  - Contact the OIT Help Desk at 413-545-9400 or A109 Lederle Graduate Center. The Help Desk is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Tell them your Campus I.D. on your paycheck does not match the Campus I.D. on your UCard.
  - The Help Desk will issue a “ticket” which will be sent to an administrator to fix the problem.
  - In some cases, faculty members will receive a call that notifies them that they need to go back to OIT to get their UCard re-issued. This may happen if you have a duplicate record in the database system. To reduce the likelihood of creating duplicate identities, be careful to record your date of birth and Social Security number on the NENS form exactly as you provided them to Human Resources. If you have been to the library prior to this, you should let them know that you will have a new I.D. card next time you are the



### **What if I have questions about my benefits (e.g., health insurance)?**

New incoming faculty with questions about their benefits are encouraged to contact one of the benefits specialists listed below in the Human Resources Office.

- Kelly Pleasant, Benefits Supervisor, 413-545-1478, [kpleasant@admin.umass.edu](mailto:kpleasant@admin.umass.edu)
- Francine Phelps, Benefits Specialist, Employee Service Center, 413-545-6113, [francine@admin.umass.edu](mailto:francine@admin.umass.edu)
- Beth Ives, Insurance Specialist, 413-545-6115, [bives@admin.umass.edu](mailto:bives@admin.umass.edu)

### **What resources and organizations are available to support and promote diversity?**

UMass Amherst has had a long commitment to building a racially and ethnically diverse campus community of faculty, staff, and students. Below are just a few of the many programs, initiatives, and organizations that support and encourage our diverse community. Click the categories to open or close.

#### **For Faculty**

- [Commission on Campus Diversity](#)
- [Community Outreach Program](#)
- [Faculty Senate Status of Diversity Council](#)
- [Faculty Senate Status of Women Council](#)
- [Massachusetts Society of Professors' Statement Concerning Diversity on Campus](#)
- [The Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity](#)
- [The Office of Human Relations](#)

#### **For Students**

- [Office of ALANA Affairs](#)
- [The Committee for the Collegiate Education of Black and Other Minority Students](#)
- [Everywoman's Center](#)
- [Hillel House](#)
- [International Programs Office](#)
- [Multicultural Engineering Program](#)
- [Native American Student Support Services](#)
- [Newman Catholic Center](#)
- [Office of Community Service Learning](#)
- [Office of Jewish Affairs](#)
- [Religious Life on Campus](#)
- [The Stonewall Center: A Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Queer, and Transgender Educational Resource Center](#)



- [United Asia Learning Resource Center](#)
- [Women of Color Leadership Network](#)

### **If I'm an international scholar, where can I get help with any VISA issues I might have?**

The [International Programs Office](#) serves as a resource to all international students and scholars. They offer advice on immigration matters and issue visa documents. They also provide information and guidance on issues such as employment, health insurance, language courses, programs for spouses, and general information about UMass and the Amherst area.

### **What organizations offer faculty a voice in the governance and operation of the University?**

The [Faculty Senate](#) is a representative body that is responsible for faculty participation in university planning and governance. The Senate has numerous standing and ad hoc councils and committees whose members include faculty members, staff, administrators, and undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty membership on councils and committees is open to all faculty members, not only elected Senators, and full Senate meetings are open to the public.

The [Massachusetts Society of Professors](#) ("MSP") is a local union affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association on the state level and with the National Education Association on the national level. The union provides security and stability for faculty and librarians, and assures them a voice in the operation of the University. All faculty and librarians are covered by the contract negotiated between the MSP and the University, and MSP members are available to answer questions about the [benefits of membership](#).

### **How does UMass Amherst support a healthy work/life balance?**

For a list of personal and family resources, including information about tuition waivers, adoption, stopping the "tenure clock," dual-career couples, and more, please visit our [Work/Life page](#).