

## Essential Information for International Students Coming From Abroad

### Office of International Students (OIS)

365 Fifth Avenue, Room 7200

New York, NY. 10016

212-817-7490

[intstu@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:intstu@gc.cuny.edu)

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Prospective-Students/International-Students>



### Travel Documents

**Certificate of Eligibility (SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019):** This document is issued to newly admitted international students by the Office of International Students (OIS) at The Graduate Center. International students will use this document to apply for the F-1 or J-1 Visa at the U.S. Consulate and to enter the U.S. in either F-1 or J-1 legal status to begin their program of study at The Graduate Center.

**Passport:** Your passport is issued by your government and is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies your identity and nationality. A passport may be renewed in your home country or through the Embassy of your country in the United States.

**F-1 or J-1 Visa:** You must have a valid F-1 or J-1 student visa in your passport (except citizens of Canada), to enter the United States in wither F-1 or J-1 status to begin a program of study. You may apply for the visa at the U.S. Consulate in your home country.

**I-901 SEVIS Fee Receipt:** After receiving your form I-20 or DS-2019 students must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee online at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901> and print the receipt after making the payment. Students will need to bring this receipt to their visa appointment at the U.S. Consulate and will need to carry it with them when travelling to the United States. Students should keep this receipt for their records as you will need it for all future entries.

**I-94 Record:** The I-94 is the Arrival/Departure Record issued by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) when you enter the United States. It records the date of admission, your legal status in the U.S., and the length of time you are allowed to remain in the U.S. F-1 and J-1 students will receive either F-1 D/S or J-1 D/S on their I-94 record.

# Applying for an F-1 or J-1 Visa at the U.S. Consulate

**Please review the Department of State website for F-1 and J-1 visa application instructions:**

**<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange.html>**

You can apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa to travel to the United States at your designated [U.S. embassy or consulate](#). Make sure you [bring all required documents](#) with you.

## **Steps:**

1. Identify the [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) that is most convenient for you to visit, go to the website of the embassy or consulate and follow the instructions on the site. Locate a U.S. Embassy at: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>
2. Pay the I-901 [SEVIS](#) fee at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>.
3. Obtain acceptable photographs
4. Complete your on-line DS 160 visa application at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
5. Pay your visa fee
6. Schedule an appointment for your visa interview
7. You should make your appointment for your visa interview as soon as possible after receiving your Form I-20 or DS-2019 form
8. When you come for your appointment, a consular official will electronically scan your fingerprints.

**Please note: Canadian citizens are not required to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa at the U.S. Consulate. Canadian Citizens must make the SEVIS fee payment and keep the receipt.**



# Applying for an F-1 or J-1 Visa at the U.S. Consulate

You must bring the following documentation to the interview:

- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 issued at the school where you wish to enroll
- Printed Form DS-160, “Online [Nonimmigrant Visa](#) Application,” confirmation page
- Passport valid for at least six months after you plan to enter the United States
- Two-inch by two-inch photo of yourself (learn more about [photo requirements](#))
- Receipt for your \$160 visa application fee payment
- Receipt for your I-901 SEVIS fee payment
- Proof of financial Support
- Admission letter



The visa interview is your opportunity to tell the consular officer about your plans while in the United States and what you will do when you have completed your studies.

## **You should be prepared to show the following:**

- You have received acceptance to an SEVP-certified school. Your Form I-20 or DS-2019 verifies this.
- You have the financial ability to pay for school costs plus living expenses (the amount shown on Form I-20 or DS-2019) and evidence of support for future years.
- You are prepared for the academic program in which you plan to enroll.
- Your stay in the United States is temporary (i.e., you are not permanently immigrating).
- The interviewing official may be interested in how you intend to use the education you receive in the United States when you return home.

# Applying for an F-1 or J-1 Visa at the U.S. Consulate

## F-1 and J-1 Visa Application Resources:

1. <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html>
2. <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>
3. <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/applying-for-a-visa-to-travel-to-the-united-states>
4. <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
5. <https://www.usembassy.gov/>
6. <https://www.fmjfee.com/>



## Preparing to Come to the United States



**Financial Arrangements:** New York City is one of the most expensive areas in the United States. We recommend that you bring additional funds to cover your initial expenses such as transportation, meals, lodging, textbooks and supplies, and cell phone costs. You may also need funds for initial rent and security deposits. The amount suggested is \$5,000. Since it is not advisable to carry large amounts of money, we suggest that you bring this money in the form of travelers checks. Traveler's checks are immediately negotiable. International bank drafts are acceptable, but funds may take longer to become available. Foreign currency can be exchanged immediately at any of the airports in the New York City area and at most large banks.

**Bank Accounts:** We recommend you open a bank account as soon as you arrive. Using an international bank will facilitate wiring money from your home country. Service charges and interest rates vary. Foreign checks may require 4 - 6 weeks before funds become available at a U.S. bank. Traveler's checks are the best way to make initial deposits. Two pieces of identification are generally required to open an account.

**Financial Aid:** **Students receiving scholarship, fellowship, assistantship, or tuition aid from the University will need to obtain a social security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) before the first payment check can be issued.** The Social Security Administration must check your immigration status before it will issue the social security number or ITIN. **You should register for classes, obtain the required job letter, and obtain the immigration status verification letter as soon as possible.** When you receive your social security card or ITIN, please take it to the financial aid office immediately. If you experience a delay in receiving the social security number which causes you financial hardship, please speak with a financial aid counselor.

**Important Note:** It is typical to receive the first financial aid check in October. You will need to make plans to have sufficient funds available to you to cover your expenses until you receive your first check.

# Preparing to Come to the United States

## Clothing Recommendations:

New York has a varying climate with four distinct seasons:

	<u>Fahrenheit</u>	<u>Celsius</u>
Summer (June – September)	60 to 90 +	15.5 to 32+
Fall (September – November)	30 to 80	-1 to 26.5
Winter (November - March)	0 to 60	-18.0 to 15.5
Spring (March - June)	40 to 80	4.5 to 26.5

Temperatures may vary considerably from year to year. During spring, summer and fall, moderate periods of rainfall occur, and snow falls periodically during the winter months.

Three basic types of clothing are essential in this climate. In winter, heavy jackets or overcoats, warm hats and scarves, and waterproof overshoes or snow boots are needed. During chilly fall and spring days, heavy sweaters and light jackets are worn outdoors. Raincoats and umbrellas are also needed, as there is frequent rainfall. In summer, clothing suitable for hot and humid days will be most comfortable.



# Preparing to Come to the United States



**Temporary Housing Options:** You can stay temporarily at the following locations while you are looking for permanent accommodations in New York City.

- 1. International Student Center:** A youth hostel in Manhattan, open to international students between the ages of 18 and 35, located on the Upper West Side in Manhattan. The International Student Center is housed in a historical brownstone building in a residential neighborhood, near to Central Park. They are half-a-block away from the local "C" and "B" subway trains, two blocks away from the "1" subway train, and easily accessible by bus and taxi too. For information and to make reservations:  
<http://www.nystudentcenter.org/AboutUs.html>
- 2. 92Y Residence:** 92Y Residence is by application only and is available to students, interns and/or fully employed young men and women for periods of 30 days or longer at attractive monthly rates. At 92Y Residence, you get a clean, quiet and secure home atop one of New York City's most exciting cultural hubs. With convenient features like large closets and multiple common areas in which to meet friends, study and relax, a room at 92Y places you steps away from Central Park and Museum Mile, close to convenient public transit options and in a neighborhood with wonderful restaurants, bars and shopping!  
<http://www.92y.org/uptown/92yresidence-student-intern-housing.aspx>
- 3. International House:** International House has eleven (11) furnished guest rooms/suites which are available for short-term stays (20 days or less). They welcome International House alumni, guests of current residents as well as individuals and groups. Guests of International House are welcome and encouraged to use the facilities and services at International House during their stay. These facilities and services include a cafeteria-style dining room, 24-hour security, laundry room, coin-operated copy machine, weekly social and cultural activities, a pub with dancing, vending machines and an indoor basketball court.  
<http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/s/707/internal.aspx?sid=707&gid=1&pgid=285>

## Preparing to Come to the United States



- 4. YMCA New York City Hostels:** The YMCA makes the world's most exciting city available to all. With 6 convenient locations throughout NYC, they offer free WIFI, comfortable guest rooms, fitness centers, pools, and other enjoyable amenities. <https://www.ymcanyc.org/association/guest-rooms>
- 5. Hostel International New York City:** Located on Manhattan's famous Upper West Side, HI NYC is 2 blocks from Central Park and just minutes by subway from everything you want to see and do in the city. We're a short walk from Columbia University, St. John the Divine, and the vibrant neighborhood of Harlem. HI USA is newly renovated with comfortable beds, free WiFi (recently upgraded!) and the largest private green space in New York. They offer free events and programs to help connect you to the well-known and the lesser-known corners of New York, while meeting like-minded travelers from across the country and around the world. <http://hinewyork.org/>
- 6. The Leo House:** Centrally located near main attractions and steps away from the 23rd Street station. Easily navigate NYC while enjoying your stay at The Leo House. Daily housekeeping keeps your rooms clean and comfortable. Complementary breakfast is served Mon-Sat to keep guests happy and well-fed. <https://leohousenyc.com/>
- 7. Hotel Alexander:** Located in the heart of Manhattan's Upper West Side, Hotel Alexander offers students housing with no brokers fees, no security deposits, no phone bills or utility bills. There is no need for your own furniture or linens, making your move-in hassle free. The Hotel Alexander is an off-campus housing alternative, available for a few weeks, a whole semester or even the whole year. [http://www.hotelalexandernyc.com/student\\_housing.html](http://www.hotelalexandernyc.com/student_housing.html)
- 8. International Student Residence:** International Student Residence is located in Williamsburg, (Brooklyn) New York.. They are one block from the subway (metro station), two blocks away from the bus terminal, 30 minutes drive to JFK International Airport, 15 minutes from La Guardia Airport. They are a 30 minutes subway ride to Time Square in Manhattan. They are surrounded by restaurants, bars, cafes, banks, super markets, laundry facilities, pharmacies. Many more services to make your stay in New York easy and convenient. <http://www.internationalstudentresidence.com/>



# Arriving in the U.S.



## Airport Transportation Options:

- **From John F. Kennedy International Airport:** JFK has many transportation options – from AirTrain, public subways, shared shuttle rides, and buses to taxis and limousines. <http://www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk-ground-transportation.html>
- **From LaGuardia Airport:** LaGuardia Airport is accessible a number of ways including public transit, taxi, cars and shared shuttle rides. <http://laguardiaairport.com/getting-to-from/>
- **From Newark International Airport (Newark, New Jersey):** There are many options to get from Newark International Airport to New York City. AirTrain Newark provides easy connections to and from NJ TRANSIT, PATH and Amtrak through one gateway: Newark Liberty International Airport Station. There are numerous public transportation options, buses, taxi, cars and shared van shuttle service. <http://www.panynj.gov/airports/ewr-ground-transportation.html>

## Safety Reminders:

1. Do not allow strangers to help you carry your bags. Only uniformed airport personnel should assist you, if you require assistance.
2. Do not carry excess cash. Only carry enough U.S. Dollars to get you to your destination, for your overnight accommodations, meals and other necessities. We suggest bringing travelers checks, ATM or cashpoint cards, and credit cards (for emergencies), if possible.
3. Keep all of your travel documents, travelers checks, and money with you. Do not put them in your suitcase or other bags that you will not have with you at all times.
4. Do not leave your luggage or bags unattended.

# Welcome To The Graduate Center!

## International Student Check-In

New international students must report to the Office of International Students (OIS) with all of their immigration documents (I-20 form or DS-2019 form, I-94 record, and Passport) to complete the check-in process shortly after they arrive in the United States. This is required by the F and J regulations. Please bring all of your immigration documents to the OIS. The OIS is located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor in Room 7200. Our office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

## International Student Orientation Session

New international Students must attend one of the International Student Orientation Sessions facilitated by the Office of International Students. During the orientation you will learn about the F and J regulations and many of the services available to you at the GC.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION FALL 2017

Welcome to The Graduate Center, CUNY!

Please join the Office of International Students at one of the following international student orientation sessions for new international students.

<b>Tuesday, August 15, 2017</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>Thursday, August 24, 2017</b>
<b>1:00 – 4:00 pm</b>		<b>1:00 – 4:00 pm</b>
<b>The Graduate Center</b>		<b>The Graduate Center</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 9204</b>		<b>9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 9204</b>

We look forward to meeting you!



# Arriving on Campus – One Stop Services



**One Stop Services** has been developed to assist you with your questions, required paperwork, and enrollment procedures. For all new students, One Stop is a single location where multiple university administrative services are available.

Dates for One Stop will be announced soon at: <http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Current-Students/One-Stop-Services>.

## Before One Stop

Be sure to:

- Attend your **doctoral program orientation** for registration advisement. (Your [doctoral program](#) will be in touch with you about the dates and times for this. Be sure that your most recent contact information is on file with your program.)
- Have all **required documents** (e.g., Driver's license, Social Security card, application forms) available.
- Click through the appropriate, important **instructions below**:
- --> [Fellowship Recipients](#) New multi-year fellowship recipients (Graduate Center Fellows, CUNY Science Scholars, Science Fellows, Provost's Enhancement Fellows, Neuroscience Fellows, Mathematics Fellows) and all new one-year Graduate Assistant B or Graduate Assistant D fellowship recipients
- Note: Fellowship recipients should be sure to register for an HR orientation, and fill out all forms in the [HR section of the Fellowship recipients page](#).

<http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Current-Students/One-Stop-Services/Fellowship-Recipients/Human-Resources-Processing>

# Arriving On Campus - Requirements and Procedures



1. **Social Security Number:** Students who will accept any type of on-campus employment will need a social security number for payroll purposes. **You will need to obtain a social security eligibility letter from the Office of International Students (OIS) for your Social Security Application.** To apply for your eligibility letter, **you must be enrolled full-time, complete the check-in procedure at the OIS, and submit a copy of your on-campus employment letter to the OIS.** Instructions for applying for a social security number are available from the Office of International Students. You should apply as soon as possible as it may take several weeks to receive your social security number.
2. **Individual taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN):** Students who are not employed and have a non-service financial aid award are not eligible for a social security number and must apply for an Individual taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). **Students must apply for the ITIN with the assistance of the Office of International Students (OIS). The OIS will review your ITIN application documents, prepare a ITIN document verification letter, and mail your application to the IRS on your behalf.** Instructions for applying for an ITIN number are available from the Office of International Students.
3. **Insurance:**
  - **J-1 exchange visitors are required per the J-1 regulations to purchase health insurance that meets certain minimum coverage requirements.**
  - **J-1 exchange visitors are required to provide proof of health insurance for the period of their exchange visit to the Office of International Students.**
  - The Office of International Students recommends F-1 students to purchase and maintain health and accident insurance. This is essential due to the high costs of obtaining medical and hospital care in the United States.
  - For further details about health insurance coverage and options for both F-1 and J-1 students :  
[https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/OIS/J-1-INTERNATIONAL-STUDENT-HEALTH-INSURANCE-INFORMATION-2017\\_1.pdf?ext=.pdf](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/OIS/J-1-INTERNATIONAL-STUDENT-HEALTH-INSURANCE-INFORMATION-2017_1.pdf?ext=.pdf)
4. **Immunization Requirements:** New York State law requires all students to submit proof of immunity to Measles, Mumps, and Rubella and a signed Meningococcal Meningitis Response Form to the Wellness Center. **You will NOT be able to register without proof of immunization.**  
<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Student-Life/Health-Wellness/Health-Services/Immunization-Requirements>

# Finding Permanent Housing



CUNY student housing & residence life is a growing community for CUNY students. Residential students benefit greatly from living on-campus with increased opportunities for peer engagement and student involvement.

## **CUNY STUDENT HOUSING & RESIDENCE LIFE**

555 W. 57<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, NY 10019

Phone: 646-664-8800

Email: [ResLife@cuny.edu](mailto:ResLife@cuny.edu)

<https://www.facebook.com/CUNYHousing>

## **Shahreen Laskar**

*Coordinator of Student & Residence Life*

Phone: 646-664-8836

Email: [Shahreen.Laskar@cuny.edu](mailto:Shahreen.Laskar@cuny.edu)

**Graduate Center Apartments:** Located at 165 East 118th Street, the eight-story Graduate Center Apartments complex offers bright, modern, airy, and affordable housing, as well as providing an easy commute to the Graduate Center for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and members of the faculty. The complex shares the plaza of CUNY's new East Harlem Campus with Hunter College's School of Social Work. Information about licensing a Graduate Center Apartment at 165 East 118th Street in Manhattan can be found at <http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Student-Life/Housing>

[www.gc.cuny.edu](http://www.gc.cuny.edu)

## Finding Permanent Housing



**CUNY EHS Off-Campus Housing:** In addition to housing that CUNY offers at its campuses, EHS offers safe and convenient housing services. EHS is a top resource for CUNY students searching for student housing. New and renovated EHS residences [offer](#) cable TV, internet access, new furnishings, phone service, air conditioning, 24/7 security, lounges and kitchens. Not to mention the exciting student life experience living in New York City. Living within a community of students from all over the country and the world, you will meet amazing people, as well as have the ability to network. To explore all the EHS residences available to CUNY students:

<https://www.studenthousing.org/and/cuny>

**International House New York:** I-House NY offers you a home away from home in New York City, a place where more than 700 graduate students and trainees from over than 100 countries connect, inspire and collaborate. International House is comprised of two adjacent buildings known as I-House South and I-House North. Along with the private residential areas of the House there are many common areas for studying, socializing, eating, dancing, learning about fellow residents, and getting involved in community life. <http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/s/707/internal-wide.aspx?sid=707&gid=1&pgid=1194>

**Popular NYC Apartment Locator Sites:** These sites allow you to search for “No Fee” apartments. You do not need to pay an expensive fee to a broker if you find a no fee apartment.

<http://streeteasy.com/rentals>

<https://www.nybits.com/>

<https://newyork.craigslist.org/>

<https://www.nakedapartments.com/>

<https://www.zumper.com/>

<https://www.listingsproject.com/>

<https://www.renthop.com/>

<https://www.padmapper.com/>

<https://renthackr.com/>

<https://urbanedge.apartments/>

## Watch Out For Housing Scams



Finding an apartment in New York City can be difficult. As you consider issues like size, cost, and location of the rental, also consider this: that rental listing could be a scam. Scammers often advertise rentals that don't exist or aren't available to trick people into sending money before they find out the truth.

While searching for your new apartment, please be careful of NYC rental scams:

[https://www.brickunderground.com/NYC\\_real\\_estate\\_scams\\_101](https://www.brickunderground.com/NYC_real_estate_scams_101)

<http://streeteasy.com/blog/nyc-rental-scams/>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/consumer-alert-governor-cuomo-targets-apartment-rental-scammers>

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0079-rental-listing-scams#report>

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts>

<http://hotpads.com/blog/apartment-scam-2014-sara-gates/>

If you find yourself the target of a rental scam, report it to a local law enforcement agency and [to the FTC](#). Contact the website where the ad was posted, too.

# Get Connected – Cellphone Service

Cell phone service in the United States is purchased with either a monthly contract or prepaid calling cards.

With a contract you usually purchase a cellphone from the wireless company at a lower price with the promise that you will stay with their service to a certain period of time, often as long as 2 years. If you wish to withdraw early, you will be required to pay a high fee for ending the contract early.

For prepaid service, you purchase a phone at full price with the freedom of leaving the service at any time. Instead of receiving bills, you pay for the service at the beginning of each month. The phones for prepaid services are usually more expensive than those that come with service contracts.





# Get Connected – Cellphone Service



## **Verizon International Student Program:**

<https://www.verizonwireless.com/solutions-and-services/international-student/>

## **Sprint International Student Program:**

<https://www.sprint.com/landings/international-student/index.html?ECID=vanity:internationalstudent>

## **AT&T International Student Program:**

<https://www.att.com/offers/discount-program/international-students.html>

## **T-Mobile International Student Plan:**

[https://prepaid-phones.t-mobile.com/prepaid-monthly-plans?icid=WMM\\_TM\\_Q316PRPDST\\_D9DOX7YRZ5603](https://prepaid-phones.t-mobile.com/prepaid-monthly-plans?icid=WMM_TM_Q316PRPDST_D9DOX7YRZ5603)

**CampusSIMs:** campusSIMs provides international students with U.S. SIM cards for their unlocked GSM mobile phones. You can receive your U.S. phone number prior to your arrival to the U.S. by downloading the campusSIMs app from the App Store or Google Play Store. <https://campussims.com/>

**Office of International Students**  
The Graduate Center  
365 Fifth Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 7200  
Phone: 212-817-7490  
E-mail: [intstu@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:intstu@gc.cuny.edu)

We look forward to meeting you.

