

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



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Dear International Student,

International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS) would like to take this opportunity to wish you a warm welcome to Drexel University and to wish you good luck in your academic career. We especially look forward to meeting you at International Student Orientation. Attendance of this event is mandatory. ISSS will be partners in your education, assisting you in achieving your personal and academic goals at Drexel. We will advise you on immigration regulations, cross-cultural adjustment issues and your academic success. Additionally, we plan special educational and cultural programs including cultural events, immigration seminars and informal gatherings to help you get acclimated to your new life at Drexel.

We are here to help you once you arrive at Drexel. Please know that all of us at ISSS have the expertise and experience to ensure that your time at Drexel is enjoyable and successful.

Included in this handbook you will find information on the following:

- Pre-arrival visa preparation
- Arriving at Drexel University
- Orientation
- Housing
- Helpful information regarding finances, immunizations and employment

Welcome to Drexel University.

Sincerely,

Angela Jeon-Huh
Assistant Dean
International Students & Scholars Services

BEFORE LEAVING YOUR COUNTRY

IMMIGRATION STATUS

F-1 Student status

The F-1 Visa (academic student) allows you to enter the United States as a full-time student at an accredited university. You must be enrolled in a program or course of study that culminates in a degree, diploma or certificate. This visa status allows you to remain in the U.S. until the completion of studies date listed on your I-20/DS-2019. To maintain full-time status, undergraduates must register for at least 12 credits each quarter/semester, and graduate students must register for at least 9 credits each quarter/semester. You are allowed to: 1) work part-time on the Drexel campus only and 2) do co-op, an internship or practicum, with permission from ISSS and your co-op advisor.

J-1 Exchange Visitor status

You must be a full-time student under this visa status. You are permitted to work either on-campus or off-campus **with permission from your J-1 sponsor**. You can bring your spouse and children to live with you in the U.S. as long as you provide proof of sufficient financial resources. J-2 spouses can work while in the United States, but need to obtain permission from ISSS and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Undergraduate and graduate students with J-1 status may be eligible for academic training during and/or after completion of studies. For more information, speak with a representative of the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. embassy or consulate in your country before you leave.

Please note: Immigration regulations may change with little or no advanced notification. ISSS staff can answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding such changes.

School Transfer

If you are already studying at a university in the U.S. on an F-1 or J-1 visa and you are planning to transfer to Drexel, you must transfer your SEVIS records to Drexel. If you do not clearly understand the transfer procedure, contact an international student advisor in ISSS for more information. You must report to ISSS **immediately** upon your arrival at Drexel, bringing your passport and transfer I-20/DS-2019 form. Transfers must be reported to USCIS within the first 15 days of a new quarter/semester.

Please note: As a transfer student, you have to begin classes during the **next available term**; you cannot have a break in between institutions.

VISA APPLICATION

Please consult with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for complete details on visa processing: <http://usembassy.state.gov> and http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html. Please read the enclosed I-20/DS-2019 form carefully and make sure you understand your visa obligations before you sign the form. Next, you will need to arrange for your entry into the U.S. by obtaining the appropriate visa from the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest to where you live.

DO NOT APPLY FOR A B-1/B-2 (TOURIST) VISA. B-1/-2 VISA HOLDERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO STUDY IN THE U.S.

You cannot apply for your student visa more than 120 days before the program start date listed on your I-20. Before applying for your student visa, you must pay the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS) fee. SEVIS is a U.S. government database that tracks the immigration concerns of students and exchange visitors. You must pay the \$200 SEVIS fee and include the receipt with your visa application. You can pay the fee by mail or online. Your fee payment must be accompanied by form 901, which you can download from www.FMJfee.com. Please be aware that this fee will not be refunded if your visa application is denied.

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda

You do not need to apply for a visa, but you must present an I-20/DS-2019 form and proof of financial support at the port of entry to the United States. Be careful to present the documents listed above at the border to avoid being given a B-1/B-2 tourist status, which does not allow full-time study or employment. Residents of Canada (not Canadian citizens) must apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa. If you arrive in the U.S. with a visa notated with another university's name but wish to attend Drexel University, you may be denied admission to the U.S. **Be sure to get a visa that lists Drexel University.**

Mandatory SEVIS fee

You must pay the SEVIS fee, and include the payment receipt with your visa application. You can print the SEVIS payment confirmation from www.fmjfee.com and you can pay the fee by mail or on-line. Your fee payment must be accompanied by Form I-901, which you can download from <http://www.FMJfee.com> or by phone at 1-800-870-3676 (inside the U.S. only).

GOING TO THE EMBASSY

What to bring with you to the embassy

Take your **entire** I-20/DS-2019, passport, the same proof of financial support that you provided for your I-20/DS-2019 form, SEVIS fee payment receipt, and any additional documentation that is required in your country for a U.S. visa. If you will receive a J-1, be sure to also provide proof that you are part of an approved exchange program. Make sure to read all of the information on page 2 and sign the bottom of page 1 of your I-20/DS-2019.

When you apply for a visa, you must prove your intent to return to your country. These are some examples of intent: close family ties in home country, organizational memberships- including religious or social groups, business or real estate owned by you or your family, and proof that you intend to return to your home country and continue your professional career. It is also important for you to prepare your study plan so that the visa officer knows that you are a serious student.

Please note: The visa only allows you to enter the country. However, the forms I-20 and DS-2019 allow you to stay. If you lose your form, contact your international student advisor immediately.

ARRIVAL

ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

When you arrive at a port of entry in the United States, you will be required to present your form I-20/DS-2019, along with your passport and financial documents. **Do not check these documents with your baggage.** The officer will stamp the I-94 Arrival/Departure record that you will have completed prior to landing. **This is an extremely important document that you need to maintain.** Please note that immigration officers no longer stamp I-20/DS-2019 documents.

The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of the school or program. It indicates the date when your permission to remain in the U.S. expires. It must be kept in your passport at all times. Your I-20/DS-2019 is the permanent record of your permission to enter and remain in the country and must be kept in your possession as long as you are a student.

Please note: Immigration laws allow you to enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the program start date listed on your I-20/DS-2019. We encourage you to arrange your travel schedules so that you can **arrive at least one week before classes begin.** This will give you time to find suitable housing, open a bank account and become acquainted with the campus, local neighborhoods and the city. Also, it's important to come early to attend the **mandatory** international student orientation that is given each term.

TRANSPORTATION FROM THE PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT TO DREXEL

Drexel University offers a complimentary airport pickup service to all of its international students and scholars from the Philadelphia International Airport. Once your travel arrangements are made, please contact ISSS to inform us of your arrival date/time, and we will do our best to arrive in a timely manner to receive you. If for any reason you do not use our complimentary pickup service, below are instructions on how to arrive at each of our Philadelphia campuses.

By train

Take the airport Regional Rail train offered through SEPTA. The train has one stop in each terminal, including International arrivals. Trains leave for downtown Philadelphia every 30 minutes and the ticket is approximately US \$7.

- **University City Campus:** Get off at 30th Street Station. From 30th Street Station you can walk or take a taxi to the University City campus. The taxi fare will be about **US \$5-10** including the tip. It may be easier to take a taxi than to walk especially if you have heavy luggage.
- **Center City Campus:** Get off at Suburban Station. From Suburban Station, you can walk or take a taxi to the Center City campus. The taxi fare will range from **US \$5-10**, including the tip. It may be easier to take a taxi than to walk especially if you have heavy luggage.
- **Queen Lane Campus:** Get off at 30th Street Station. At 30th Street Station, you will have to change to the Chestnut Hill West train line and get off at the Queen Lane station. This will be the second stop after the train leaves 30th Street Station. From the Queen Lane Station, walk to Queen Lane Street and turn left at the College of Medicine.

For additional information on airport train timetable, [SEPTA schedule](#).

By taxi

Taxis can be picked up in Zone 5 at the Commercial Transportation Roadway by the baggage claim area.

By limousine/van service

There are many limousine/van services leaving from the airport terminals that will take you throughout Philadelphia. These can be arranged by visiting the ground transportation information desk near the baggage claim area.

HOUSING

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATIONS

If you arrive to Philadelphia before the move-in date for your on-campus housing or plan on looking for off-campus housing when you arrive, you may need to find temporary accommodations. There are several reasonably priced hotels and temporary housing facilities close to Drexel.

International House

3701 Chestnut Street

(+1) 215.387.5125

ihousephilly.org/student-housing

International House is located close to University City Main Campus and often gives new Drexel students a lower rate. Inquire about this when you make your reservation. Temporary housing is not always available, so call before you arrive in Philadelphia.

There are also many hotels in Philadelphia, located near our campuses and the airport. Below is a list of search engines to help you find the most appropriate and affordable hotel for you.

hotwire.com

kayak.com

orbitz.com

expedia.com

HOUSING

Drexel University Housing offers on-campus housing in one of our ten residence halls. Undergraduate students are required to live in university approved housing for their first and second years. First-year undergraduate students are required to live in a University Housing residence hall; second year students will have a variety of options to choose from. Transfer undergraduates may live on campus or off campus in the surrounding Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Please note: Drexel **does not guarantee** on-campus housing for graduate students.

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Do not assume that a room will automatically be reserved for you.

All Drexel residence halls are coed, which means that men and women live in the same building. However, men and women cannot live in the same room or suite. Drexel residence halls offer single (priority) and double occupancy rooms, suites and apartments (with kitchens), which house 4 to 6 people. Friends will often live on the same floor or share an apartment or suite. Drexel residence hall rooms are furnished with 2 beds, 2 desks, 2 chairs, 2 lamps, and 2 closets with drawers. There is a full kitchen on every floor, and small refrigerators and microwaves are allowed in rooms. **You will need to supply your own sheets, towels, cookware, and utensils.**

For more information about **on-campus housing** and forms visit drexel.edu/dbs/universityHousing

College of Medicine students

Arrangements have been made for you to live at Stiles Alumni Hall for your first year. Stiles Hall is located on the Center City campus at 325 N. 15th St. in Philadelphia.

For more information for Center City campus on-campus housing visit drexel.edu/dbs/universityHousing/undergraduate-housing/residence-halls/stilesHall/

Please note: Drexel offers a free shuttle service between the University City campus and Center City campus and Queen Lane campus.

For information about the shuttle schedule visit drexel.edu/facilities/transportation/busServiceSchedules

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Leases and Contracts: Most housing is rented on a contract or lease basis, meaning you agree to live in the unit for a stated period of time, usually 12 months. Some landlords will allow month-to-month renting. When you sign a lease you are legally responsible for all rent payments, whether you live there or not. When you rent an apartment, a deposit (often called a security deposit) equal to at least one month's rent is almost always required, in addition to the first month's rent. Be prepared to have money available for this. Usually, your deposit is returned to you as long as you have given your landlord sufficient notice and have not damaged the apartment. Read the lease or contract carefully and understand all of its rules and obligations before signing it. Keep a signed copy of the lease for your records.

For more information please visit the Off-Campus Housing website at offcampushousing.drexel.edu

For information on **off-campus housing** options, go to offcampushousing.drexel.edu

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

International Students and Scholars Services will hold a mandatory orientation for all new undergraduate and graduate international students before classes begin each term. You will meet other international students, office staff, faculty advisers and administrators and become acquainted with Drexel and the city. Orientation will also introduce you to immigration regulations, cross-cultural adjustment issues and academic expectations of students. It will familiarize you with important

University departments and procedures as well. Please refer at the website at: drexel.edu/orientation for orientation dates and registration.

Please note: Orientation information is vital to your studies at Drexel. Attendance is mandatory.

All new students and scholars must report to International Students and Scholars Services immediately upon arrival to validate their immigration record. Because ISSS is responsible for maintaining F-1 and J-1 visa files for all students and scholars, you must bring the following items with you:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 or J-1 Visa
- I-94 departure card
- Processed immigration documents (I-20/DS-2019)
- Local U.S. mailing address
- Emergency contact information

If you are transferring from another school, also bring your I-20/DS-2019 from that school. This information helps ISSS respond to inquiries from the USCIS regarding your compliance with immigration policies. Additionally, these photocopies help to replace lost important immigration documents.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

If you are an **undergraduate** student, your academic advising will take place in your college.

If you are a **graduate student**, you must look at the Graduate Admissions Office website and find your designated advisor. It is mandatory to speak with your academic advisor before registering for classes.

For more information/details visit their websites at:

- Undergraduate Admissions: drexel.edu/undergrad
- Office of Graduate Studies: drexel.edu/graduatestudies/services/advisors.html

HEALTH INSURANCE

All **undergraduate international students** must purchase the university sponsored plan. This plan meets all of the requirements for students on J-1 Visas, and all recommendations for international students on F-1 Visas. The policy covers students in our local area as well as worldwide. The plan must be purchased immediately upon entrance into our university and must be purchased for the full academic year.

Graduate Students are required to have health insurance coverage. However, they can purchase the Drexel plan or show proof of other insurance coverage. Please be aware that health insurance purchased in your country to cover you while a student in the U.S. **may not be accepted** by Drexel's insurance office. For more information please see the Health Insurance Policy for International Students at drexel.edu/studentaffairs/support_health_services/health_insurance_immunizations/health_insurance_international.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Drexel University requires all incoming full-time undergraduate and graduate students and all international students to complete the immunization schedule, which can be found at drexel.edu/studentaffairs/support_health_services/health_insurance_immunizations/immunization_international.

There is a University processing fee which must be paid by all students regardless of where the student receives vaccinations, the exact amount for the fee can also be found on the website.

All international students must have their **PPD test** (Tuberculosis skin test) in the United States upon their arrival to Drexel. Students may go to the Student Health Center (3201 Arch Street) to have this test performed. The immunization must be completed by the deadline* listed on the Health Insurance and Immunization website. If the deadline is not met, a hold will be placed on the students' accounts, and they will not be able to access DrexelOne for their class schedule.

***Note that there are different immunization deadlines for international students and domestic students.**

For more information about Health Insurance and Immunization, visit drexel.edu/studentaffairs/hii.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment in the United States is very strictly controlled and limited. Permission to be employed is available only in very certain circumstances. **While part-time on-campus/Drexel employment is permissible**, there are a limited number of jobs available on campus. **You should not plan on earning enough money while working on campus to even partially pay for your expenses.** If the funds for the I-20 purposes are not available to you, the University cannot assist you in obtaining alternative funding.

ISSS offers a variety of workshops throughout the academic year regarding F-1 and J-1 off-campus employment. You are strongly encouraged to attend them. For more information, visit the ISSS website at drexel.edu/iss

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

There are many international student organizations that are active on campus. Individual groups meet, hold special events and offer friendship and support to fellow international students from their native countries. Currently, there are student groups that represent almost every ethnic group at Drexel. For more information and to view a complete list of student organizations visit the Office of Campus Activities (OCA) website at drexel.edu/oca.

DREXEL CENTRAL

Drexel Central is a one-stop location for students and families to receive answers to all billing, financial aid and registration inquiries. Drexel Central houses all of the services offered through the Bursar, Financial Aid/Student Resource Center and University Registrar in one comprehensive department.

For more information visit drexel.edu/drexelcentral.

Find additional financing resources for international students at drexel.edu/drexelcentral/financialaid/financing/international-resources.

BANKING AND FINANCES

As you prepare to come to the U.S. to study, please keep in mind a few facts. Always be prepared for additional expenses. **Do not count on receiving financial aid, scholarships or assistantships once you are here.** Educational loans are not available for international students unless you have a U.S. citizen who will co-sign for the loan. **We suggest that you bring with you a minimum of US \$1,500-2,000** (in addition to tuition and living expenses for the year) to cover items such as the first month's rent and required housing deposits, temporary accommodations, household expenses, insurance payments and other necessities.

Social security number

If you have been awarded a scholarship or an assistantship that includes a stipend, you will not be able to receive your first stipend check until you document that you have been awarded a social security number. You cannot apply for a social security number until you have been in the U.S. for at least 10 days. It takes approximately 2-3 weeks to receive a social security number after you submit the application. For more information applying for a social security number, visit ssa.gov/phila.

Currency restrictions and transfer of funds to the United States

Before finalizing your plans to study in the U.S., you should become familiar with your government's regulations regarding currency restrictions and the transfer of funds out of the country. Some governments restrict the amount of money that can be taken out of the country. Others may restrict funds until a letter from the University has been received confirming enrollment (this letter can be obtained through Drexel Central). Also, find out before leaving home if any letters are required from Drexel University that will facilitate the authorization of the transfer of funds.

Western Union

Drexel University has partnered with Western Union Business Solutions to facilitate the receipt of student fees by the university from international students. This payment option allows you to pay the university your student account balance in the currency of your choice and provides a simple and secure method for initiating payments electronically. We encourage all international students to choose this cost-effective method of payment to the university. For more information on billing and tuition payments contact Drexel Central by calling 877-373-9355, or visit drexel.edu/drexelcentral/billing.

Banking

There are several banks that are close to each of the Drexel campuses where you can open accounts and exchange money. To open an account, you will need to bring your passport and I-20 or DS-2019. If you choose to open an account after school starts, a Drexel University I.D. and/or social security number is preferred. For a list of local banks contact the ISSS office at isss@drexel.edu.

Often-overlooked expenses

- Overnight temporary lodging when you first arrive
- Tips for taxis and servers in restaurants
- Eating meals in restaurants until you get your own apartment or are on a Drexel meal plan
- Clothing for the different types of weather in Philadelphia especially the winter – It can get as cold as 10°F (-12°C) in January and February. You may need to purchase warm clothing once you arrive, such as: a winter coat, gloves, scarves, waterproof boots, raincoat, and warm blankets for your bed.
- Personal and household items – Even if you rent a furnished apartment, you will have to buy linens, towels, kitchen utensils, etc. These items can be purchased easily at a reasonable price in Philadelphia and we suggest you buy them once you are here.
- State and local sales taxes of 8% added to the price of many items, except clothing and food (excluding food purchased at restaurants).
- Security deposit and first and last months' rent when renting an off-campus apartment, which may be equal to up to 3 months rent total



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

International Students and Scholars Services

Student Affairs

New International Student Checklist

Please look to our Dates and Deadlines tab for specific dates

All new F1/J1 international students and scholars must report to ISSS in order to activate SEVIS/Immigration records within 30 days of arrival in the U.S.A. Please report to the ISSS office to activate your immigration record and bring your passport, visa admission stamp), and copy of the I-94 admission record number.

Week 2 of first term

To print out a copy of your I-94 card go to: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

For more information please visit the Travel section on our website: www.drexel.edu/iss.

Orientation for new students (Winter 2013-2014)

International Student Orientation: January 15, 2014, MacAlister Room 2019, 1-2pm

Students that transfer credits from a School outside the United States will be required to attend the International Student Orientation.

Look to Dates and Deadlines tab

Officially become a dragon by getting your Dragon Card

Dragon Card office is located in Room 124 Creese Student Center. Phone: 215-895 6095

Ongoing

Activate Your Drexel Accounts through the Computer Accounts Management Systems

Go To: <http://www.drexel.edu/irt/accounts/setup/newStudent>

Offices throughout Drexel University will only contact you through your Drexel email account.

Ongoing

Health Insurance

All undergraduate international students are automatically placed into the Drexel Blue Plan. If you have embassy sponsored coverage, or would like to upgrade to the Gold Plan please visit Creese 201. Please visit www.aetnastudenthealth.com to complete this requirement. Any questions please e-mail healthimmu@drexel.edu

Week 2 of first term

Immuization Requirements

All students must complete the immunization form within one month of arrival to Drexel. A PPD Screening must be completed within the United States. Please visit our Immunization Clinics or the Health Center (3201 Arch St.) to receive this vaccine. Questions? Please e-mail healthimmu@drexel.edu

Week 2 of first term

Class Scheduling

Undergraduate Students: Classes for the fall term will be scheduled for you and more information about scheduling classes will be given to you during your UNIV 101 class.

Ongoing

Meet with International Tax Administrator

If you receive any kind of scholarship, assistantship, or fellowship, or if you have an on-campus job, you will need to meet with the Tax Specialist to determine the tax rate that you are subjected to. The office is located at 3201 Arch Street.

Ongoing

For more information contact us at:
International Students and Scholars Services

E-mail: iss@drexel.edu
Website: www.drexel.edu/iss

Mailing Address:

3210 Chestnut Street
210 Creese Student Center
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.895.2502 | fax. 215.895.6617



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