

PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

The following is a general list International Student Affairs hopes will aid you in planning your departure. If you have additional suggestions you feel would be helpful to incoming or prospective students, please let us know. Your suggestions are welcome!

✓ **OBTAIN A STUDENT VISA**

Make sure to schedule your visa application appointment in advance. For more information on the visa process, please visit:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange.html>

✓ **STUDENTS FROM CANADA AND BERMUDA**

If you are a Canadian citizen, you are exempt from the visa application process. However, you are required to pay the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee. Payment must be made in advance.

Canadians establish F-1 or J-1 status at the port-of-entry with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection Officers. You must present your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) Form, SEVIS fee receipt, evidence of adequate funding and Canadian citizenship at the port-of-entry. You are not issued a visa, but do receive an I-94 card, which is your permission to stay in the U.S. You must comply with all U.S. laws regarding entry into the U.S.

If you are a permanent resident of Canada, you must have a nonimmigrant visa unless you hold a passport from a country that participates in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Citizens of the British Overseas Territories of Bermuda traveling to the U.S. do not require a visa unless they were ineligible for a visa under U.S. immigration law or previously violated the terms of their immigration status in the U.S.

✓ **SEVIS I-901 FEE RECEIPT** - if applicable

If you do not currently have F-1 or J-1 visa status, then you will be required to pay the fee. At this time the fee is \$200 USD for the F-1 student visa and \$180 for the J-1 student visa. Visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm> for more information.

✓ **AIRLINE TICKETS**

Purchase your airline tickets and confirm your flight 48-72 hours before departure.

✓ **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

One important factor to remember when making your travel arrangements is if you will be entering the U.S. in "Initial" F-1 or "Begin new program" J-1 status. You will be allowed to enter up to 30 days before the program start date on your I-20/DS-2019 Form. While you may be aware of students who succeeded in entering the U.S. before the 30-day timeframe, we urge you

NOT to attempt this. If you are refused entry, you may not be held at the airport and forced to return to your country at your own expense.

✓ **INTERNATIONAL “BUDDY” PROGRAM**

Coming to a new place and to a new culture is an exciting experience, but it can be overwhelming as well. Not to worry! International Student Affairs staff are here to assist you. We will help you adjust to a new culture, achieve your educational goals, become familiar with immigration laws and regulations, encourage you to meet your student peers and be active in social events.

To this end, we encourage you to sign up for the International “Buddy” Program as soon as possible. For more information, please visit www.colum.edu/buddyprogram.

✓ **ATTEND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT “MEET & GREET”**

August 30, 2016
Multipurpose Studio, 618 S. Michigan Ave., 4th floor
6-8 p.m.

This is a great opportunity to get to know International Student Affairs, the buddies and all the people that are here to support you during your time at Columbia.

✓ **Attend the international student Welcome Program (ISWP)**

August 31 - September 1, 2016
Media Production Center, 1600 S. State St.
Check-in starts at 8:00 a.m.

The ISWP is a mandatory program specifically designed to guide you in your transition to college in Chicago and to provide the best preparation for success at Columbia. The program includes a college-wide orientation program focused on international students. Workshops will cover topics such as maintain your immigration status, academic expectations, building community, navigating the city of Chicago and more. The program is two days, one day focusing on ISWP and the other on college-wide orientation. **All international students must attend both days.**

✓ **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Hospital and doctor visits are very expensive in the United States. You must have adequate medical health insurance during your time abroad. For this reason, Columbia College Chicago has a mandatory health insurance coverage requirement for F-1 and J-1 students. Before you leave your country, it is a good idea to take care of your health concerns including updating your immunizations, getting new eyeglasses and at least a two-month supply of any necessary medications.

✓ **HOUSING**

Make sure you have made arrangements for housing. For more information on housing, visit the housing section on our website. If you have been offered

an on-campus housing contract, you will be able to move in on August 30, 2016.

If you will be attending the Summer Intensive Program (SIP) you can move into your housing on August 13th, 2016.

✓ **CLOTHES**

Pack clothes appropriate for Chicago weather. Chicago lies on Lake Michigan in the Midwest of the United States—the city's weather is often unpredictable. The hottest temperatures occur during July and August and can reach 95F-100F (35C-37C). The coldest days are usually in January when the temperature can drop to -5F (-20C). You may want to allot extra money to purchase winter coats, gloves, and boots while in the U.S. For more information, please see our website.

✓ **MONEY**

Please do not bring large amounts of cash with you. International Student Affairs will assist you with information about banks in the area and provide a letter of introduction for you to present when opening an account. It is unwise to carry large amounts of cash; keep most of your money in traveler's checks (or other non-cash forms) until you open a bank account.

✓ **IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS**

Do not pack your important documents in a suitcase with your clothes. Put important documents in your hand luggage, which you may take on the airplane as a carry-on.

Examples of documents you should carry with you include the following:

- your passport
- SEVIS I-20 (F-1 students) or SEVIS DS-2019 (J-1 students) Certificate of Eligibility Forms
- traveler's checks
- credit cards
- phone numbers of your family and friends in the U.S. and home country
- International Student Affairs phone number (312-369-7458)
- health documents
- birth and marriage certificates

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