

# COMING TO COLUMBIA:

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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We of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) on the Morningside campus and the International Affairs Office (IAO) on the Medical Center campus join with the faculty and staff in welcoming you to the University. Studying or working in a foreign country is both an exciting and a challenging experience. We offer this on-line guide *Coming to Columbia: Essential Information for New International Students* to help you meet the challenge and enjoy the excitement of this very dynamic environment.

For many of you, this will be your first time in New York City. You will experience the unexpected, both because this is a different culture and because this is one of the largest and fastest-moving cities in the world. The staff of the ISSO, for those on the Morningside campus, and the IAO, for those on the Medical Center campus, are available to help you with immigration issues as well as everyday matters and problems. We work with more than six thousand students and scholars from more than one hundred forty countries and are aware that adjustment to a new environment is neither easy nor the same for each person. We hope you will feel free to visit our offices and get to know us.

*Coming to Columbia* is designed to give you information that will be helpful from the time you receive a Certificate of Eligibility for either F-1 or J-1 student status through your first few weeks in New York as you settle in. It contains information about New York and Columbia you will need for planning before you leave your home country as well as what you need to know soon after your arrival.

Again, welcome to Columbia. We invite you to enjoy the richness of New York City and extend to you our best wishes for a successful scholarly experience.

## About the ISSO

The ISSO serves the international students and scholars on the Morningside campus, including doctoral students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and students enrolled in the School of Public Health. Our office is located at 524 Riverside Drive in International

House North, between West 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and Tiemann Place. We are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Mondays through Fridays, except Wednesday mornings when we open at 10:30 a.m. following a weekly staff meeting. The office is closed on weekends and University holidays. If you wish to contact us, please refer to the information below:

Courier Address: 524 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10027

Mailing Address: 2960 Broadway, MC 5724  
New York, NY 10027

Telephone: 212 854-3587

Facsimile: 212 854-3966

Website: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso>

Email: [isso@columbia.edu](mailto:isso@columbia.edu)

### Walk-In Advisory Service

The ISSO offers full advisory services during its normal operating hours. International students and scholars with questions or requests concerning visas, immigration, travel, employment, or other matters relating to their stay at Columbia are welcome to walk in to speak to a Program Officer. Program Officers and other staff members may also be reached by telephone and email for general inquiries and are available for appointments on an individual basis.

### The ISSO Website and On-Line Calendar of Events

The ISSO maintains a detailed and extensive site on the World Wide Web at [www.columbia.edu/cu/isso](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso). Students and scholars interested in gaining more information about visa and immigration regulations, Columbia's international community, and other related matters are encouraged to view our website. Also included on the website is the ISSO's On-Line Calendar of Events, offering detailed information about ISSO programs, workshops, visa and immigration deadlines, and social and cultural events throughout the New York City area.

### ISSOnews email broadcasts

Throughout the academic year, the ISSO provides regular email broadcast messages to international students. These messages, referred to as *ISSOnews*, are

automatically distributed to currently-enrolled students registered as international students (i.e. not U.S. citizens or permanent residents) at Columbia. You are responsible for reading the *ISSOnews*, as it is our primary vehicle for distributing timely and important information concerning visa, immigration, and related matters. The messages also remind you of informational sessions taking place, perhaps a change in location, and also some social programs or cultural events at Columbia and in NYC that may be of interest to you.

You will be able to receive the *ISSOnews* once you register for classes and obtain a University email account (e.g., an email account which takes the format (abc123@columbia.edu). Email accounts are maintained by Academic Information Services (AcIS), and require a University Network ID (UNI), both of which can be obtained at <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/accounts/create/current.html>.

If you use a private email address (e.g., John@hotmail.com) or a departmental email address (e.g., Jenny@law.columbia.edu), you must arrange to have your email forwarded automatically from your University email account to your private or departmental account. *ISSOnews* is sent to University email accounts *only*, so please be sure to arrange to have your email forwarded. See <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/email/delivery/forward.html> for instructions on email forwarding.

Because the ISSO listserv is “populated” through a central university system, and not by the ISSO database, occasionally some students may be mistakenly classified in the University Registrar’s student registration system as a non-international student. If you have registered for the semester and you have NOT received an *ISSOnews* message, please contact or email the ISSO so we may check and amend your record, if necessary.

## About the IAO

The International Affairs Office (IAO) serves the immigration-related needs of students and scholars at the Columbia University Medical Center (with the exception of students in the Mailman School of Public Health and GSAS, who are clients of the ISSO). Staff members of the IAO assist prospective and enrolled international students and scholars with initial and continuing visa documentation. Throughout the year the IAO sponsors informative programs and workshops. The IAO broadcasts monthly announcements updating students on immigration issues and inviting them to join programs, workshops and activities. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of social, cultural, and other activities offered by the ISSO.

Office and Courier Address: 650 West 168th St., Room 1-126B  
NY, NY 10032

Mailing Address: 630 West 168th Street, Box 27  
New York, NY 10032.

Telephone: 212 305-5455  
Facsimile: 212 305-5208

Walk-in hours are Monday to Friday, 11am-5pm at in the Black Building, room 1-126B.

# Visa and Immigration Basics

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## Immigration Definitions for Students

It is very important that you become familiar with the following terms, as they are used repeatedly in *Coming to Columbia* and other information from the International Students and Scholars Office. It is essential that you understand these definitions, not just as you prepare to come, but throughout your stay in the United States.

**Certificate of Visa Eligibility** - Students who (1) have been admitted to the University, (2) need a student visa to enter the United States to study at Columbia (except Canadian citizens who do not require a passport or visa), and (3) have documented their ability to finance their education, will receive a Certificate of Visa Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019). This document certifies eligibility for an entry visa obtained at a U.S. consulate abroad, and must be shown to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official at the time of entry into the U.S. in order to enter in student status. Also known as a Visa Certificate, the I-20 or DS-2019 are processed and issued through SEVIS.

**SEVIS** - SEVIS is an acronym for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a data collection and monitoring system that creates an interface between institutions of higher education, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consulates and embassies abroad, and ports of entry. Schools are required to make regular electronic updates in SEVIS throughout each semester on the records of their enrolled students in F-1 and J-1 status—and their dependents—and their researchers and faculty in J-1 status. This includes, but is not limited to enrollment status, changes in address, changes in level of study, employment recommendations, and school transfers.

**Form I-94** - This small white card is a record of your legal entry into the U.S. and immigration status. You complete it on a flight to the U.S. or at a border crossing, and it is then processed at a port of entry. An immigration inspector usually staples it into your passport. Form I-94 notes name, date of birth, country of citizenship, and the date and port of your arrival in the U.S. It also indicates how long you can stay in the United States. The notation D/S signifies "duration of status" and refers to the completion date on the certificate of visa eligibility (I-20 or

DS-2019). The Form I-94 is also a record of your arrivals and departures. Each time you leave the country you surrender your I-94. Only in the case of short trips to Canada, Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean do you keep this form. The I-94 is an important form; we recommend that you make a photocopy of both sides of the form to keep separately in case you need to replace it.

**Form I-20** - The Certificate of Visa Eligibility for Nonimmigrant F-1 Student Status is commonly known as the I-20. This is the document issued by a school through the internet-based Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for presentation at a [U.S. consulate](#) abroad to apply for an F-1 Student visa; it must also be presented to an immigration official upon entry into the U.S. When traveling outside the U.S., those in F-1 status must carry either an initial or recertified I-20 and financial documentation if they intend to return to the U.S. to continue their studies or practical training. The I-20 and its corresponding electronic updates in SEVIS are a permanent record of one's activities as a student in the U.S. It is your responsibility to keep all I-20's issued to you throughout your student status, no matter how long you stay in the U.S. or how many times you travel abroad. The initial I-20 used when you enter the country and stamped by the DHS is a very important immigration document. Make a copy of both sides to keep with your records. If you were not issued an I-20, or if you lose it, please come to the ISSO or the IAO. Under most circumstances, we can provide you with a replacement form within five working days.

**Form DS-2019** - The Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant J-1 Exchange Visitor Status is commonly known as the Form DS-2019 (formerly Form IAP-66). This is the document issued by the program sponsor—the university, government agency or other organization sponsoring the visit—through the internet-based Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for presentation at a [U.S. consulate](#) abroad to apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. It must also be presented to an immigration official upon entry into the U.S. It is your responsibility to keep all DS-2019's issued to you throughout your student status, no matter how long you stay in the U.S. or how many times you travel abroad. The initial DS-2019 used when you enter the country and stamped by the DHS is a very important immigration document. Make a copy of both sides to keep with your records. If you were not issued a DS-2019, or if you lose it, please come to the ISSO or the IAO. Under most

circumstances, we can provide you with a replacement form within five working days.

**Immigration Status** - This is often confused with "visa" but your immigration status, e.g., F-1, B-2, J-1, etc., is determined at the time of your entry into the U.S. by an immigration official and is noted on the Form I-94. You may have many visa stamps in your passport but, upon entry into the U.S., an immigration inspector will admit you in only one immigration status which is noted on the I-94 card (see above). Be sure the correct status is written on your I-94 card. Unlike your entry visa, your immigration status may be changed in the U.S. Refer to the U.S. Department of State web site at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> for more information.

Several important differences between the F-1 and J-1 immigration status are described at the end of this section.

**Passport** - Students in F-1 or J-1 immigration status must keep their passports valid at least six months into the future at all times. You may obtain extensions of your passport through the nearest consulate or embassy of your country. The ISSO or the IAO will provide you with any appropriate documents your government may require.

**Entry Visa** - Your entry visa is issued by a [United States Consulate](#) abroad and affixed into your passport. The only purpose of an entry visa is to apply for admission to the United States at the port of entry. The entry visa itself may expire while you are in the U.S., but your permission to stay in the U.S. remains valid. All international students - with the exception of Canadian nationals - requesting F or J immigration status are required to have a valid F-1 or J-1 entry visa stamp in their passport at the time of entry into the U.S. Your visa specifies the type of immigration status you will hold (F-1, J-1, etc.), the date until which you may enter the U.S., and the number of entries you may make before you must apply for a new entry visa stamp. The length of validity of each visa type is determined by an agreement between your home country and the U.S. government and is not necessarily tied to the length of your program of study. Please refer to the State Department's [Visa Reciprocity](#) information on their website for more details.

**NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH F-1 ENTRY VISAS MAY BE ISSUED UP TO 120 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF A PROGRAM'S REPORT DATE, YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE U.S. MORE THAN 30 DAYS IN AVANCE OF THE REPORT DATE.**

F-1 or J-1 entry visas cannot be obtained within the U.S. Application for a new stamp generally must be made in person at a U.S. consulate or embassy outside the U.S. The validity period of your visa does not determine the length of time you may remain in the U.S. after you enter. Your length of stay is determined by the expected completion date of your program as indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019. You are admitted to the U.S. for "duration of status" in F and J. This is notated as "D/S" on your I-94 card. Refer to the [Duration & Extension of Stay in the U.S](#) section of the U.S. Department of State's website for more information.

### **Differences Between F-1 and J-1 Status**

There are two types of entry visas issued to nonimmigrant students who intend to study full-time at Columbia University—the F-1 Student visa and the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. A student's accompanying spouse and children are given an F-2 or J-2 visa.

**Source of Funding** - J-1 Exchange Visitor status is available to those students who are supported substantially by funding other than personal or family funds. Such funding may include that which comes from the U.S. government or the student's home government, an international organization, or the University. Students who are supported by personal or family funds are ineligible for J-1 immigration status, and must come to the U.S. to study in F-1 immigration status.

**Foreign Residence Requirement** - Students in J-1 immigration status and their J-2 dependents may be subject to a "foreign residence requirement". J-1 students who receive direct or indirect U.S. or home government funding, or who are studying in fields for which personnel are considered in short supply in their home countries (most developing nations have "Country Skills" lists of varying lengths), are ineligible to apply for a change to another nonimmigrant status (except A or G) or permanent residency in the U.S. until they have satisfied the "two year home country physical presence requirement". To see if your country is on the Skills List

and which fields of study are included, consult the [Exchange Visitor Skills List](#) in PDF format.

Only those in J-1 status with government funding or whose skills are on the Country Skills List are subject to the foreign residence requirement, which means that upon completion of the program of study they must reside in their countries of last legal permanent residence for two years before they are eligible to apply for entry into the U.S. on an immigrant visa or on specialized work visas (H or L). There is no foreign residence requirement for F-1 student status. Refer to the Department of State's web site for additional information on the [Exchange Visitor Program](#).

**Medical Insurance** - Students in J-1 status and their J-2 dependents are required to have comprehensive medical coverage in order to fulfill U.S. government regulations governing the J Exchange Visitor status. Currently the medical insurance offered by Columbia University (plus insurance provided by the IAO for the Medical Center students) covers all requirements for those in J immigration status. If you purchase insurance other than the insurance offered through the University for your dependents or yourself, it may cost as much as \$3,000 per year in excess of the usual living expenses.

**Work Permission** - Students in either F-1 or J-1 immigration status may work part time (up to 20 hours per week) on campus with permission from the ISSO or the IAO. For both statuses, permission to work off campus based on economic need may be requested only after the first full academic year of student status, and only under extraordinary circumstances of unforeseen need. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorizes F-1 students to work off campus, whereas J-1 students submit an application for work permission to their visa sponsor, i.e. the agency or school that issued the DS-2019 form.

**Practical or Academic Training** - Students in F-1 and J-1 immigration status are eligible to engage in differing lengths of practical or academic training during their studies and at the completion of their academic programs.

Practical training, a privilege of F-1 immigration status if you are eligible, is employment in one's field of study. Those in F-1 immigration classification may be eligible for "curricular" practical training (which is authorized by the

ISSO or IAO) during their programs, in addition to one year of "optional" practical training that may take place during or after one's program of study. Permission to engage in practical training may be granted only after you have been in valid student status for one academic year, except in a graduate program that requires it from the first term. The ISSO and the IAO recommend optional practical training and the USCIS authorizes it. Refer to the [Practical Training Overview](#) for complete information on both curricular and optional practical training.

Academic training, a privilege of J-1 immigration status if you are eligible, is employment which is *integral*, not just related, to one's field of study. One is eligible to apply for permission to engage in academic training after one academic term in valid student status. A total of 18 months of academic training is possible during or following completion of a program of study, with the exception of some postdoctoral research positions that may qualify for up to 36 months. An application for academic training is made to the J-1 student's Exchange Visitor program sponsor. Refer to [Academic Training Authorization for Those in J-1 Exchange Visitor Immigration Status](#) for complete information.

**Dependent Employment** - Immigration regulations allow no circumstances under which the spouse (F-2) of an F-1 student can apply for work permission while in the U.S. The spouse (J-2) of a J-1 Exchange Visitor, however, may apply to USCIS for permission to be employed, if he or she can demonstrate a need for supplemental support for self or children. The spouse cannot obtain work permission in order to support the J-1 student. [Form I-765](#), required to apply for J-2 work permission, may be filed electronically. The form may also be obtained from the ISSO or the IAO.

## Message for Canadian Students

In terms of immigration regulations, the only difference between Canadians and other international students coming to the United States is that Canadian citizens are not required to have a passport for entry from Canada and do not require application to a U.S. consulate for an entry visa.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that other regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Canadians are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining status. It is especially important for Canadian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as visitors.

Canadian citizens do not need a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada. Those entering the U.S. to study should request F-1 status (or J-1 status) at the border and must always show the Form I-20 (or DS-2019) and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector. Otherwise, the student will be admitted in Tourist (B-2) status and will not be able to take advantage of the special benefits allowed those in Student Status, such as employment or practical training. More importantly, it is a violation of B-2 status to study in the United States. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current F-1 (or J-1) status. Canadian citizens not entering the U.S. directly from Canada need a valid passport but no entry visa.

Other than applying for a visa, it is important that you read about and abide by all other provisions relating to F-1 and J-1 status.

## How to Obtain F-1 Student Status

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The information to follow is provided to help you get to Columbia in appropriate immigration status in compliance with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations.

U.S. government regulations require you to attend the school that issues the visa certificate you use to make an initial entrance to the United States in F-1 status. Since you plan to enroll at Columbia, please use our Form I-20. It may be very difficult to transfer to Columbia if you enter the country using documents issued by another school unless you have attended the other school full time for at least one academic session.

### If You are Outside the U.S.

[Canadian Citizens](#) - Canadian citizens do not require a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada, but do require an I-20 and must follow certain procedures.

### How to Apply for an Initial F-1 Entry Visa

Carefully read and follow these procedures.

**Step 1: Make an appointment at a [U.S. Consulate](#)** to apply for an F-1 Student entry visa. You will require the I-20 form from Columbia University at the time of your appointment. **DO NOT MAKE AN APPOINTMENT UNTIL** you have received the I-20 or are sure that you will have the I-20 in time for the appointment. The ISSO issues I-20's in the order that complete applications are received, and is unable to rush yours because you made an appointment too early. Check the following websites for more information on visa appointments.

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors\\_wait.php](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php) for information about current wait times for the appointment and for visa issuance. NOTE that the processing wait times do not include extra time that may be required for security clearances.

Refer to [Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry](#) for more information regarding security clearances.

<http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassi>

[es\\_1214.html](#) to locate the nearest U.S. Consulate and its instructions for applying for a visa (including links to required forms). Make a list of documentation required for the interview. Note procedures for paying the visa application fee and any visa issuance fees, if applicable.

**Step 2: Check your form I-20 for completeness and correctness!**

Your I-20 indicates that we have created a record for you in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), a national database for international students and scholars. Your unique assigned SEVIS ID number is in the upper right corner of page 1. Check to see that all information is correct and that your expected completion date is in the future.

If you have informed us that your dependents (husband, wife, or children under the age of 21) will come with you to the U.S., each of them will receive their own "dependent" I-20 needed for applying for their F-2 visas and entering the U.S. in F-2 status. If your family name is different from your dependents, be prepared to show documents that prove your relationship.

**Step 3: Make sure your passport is valid.**

When you apply for a visa or enter the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future. Some countries are exempt from this requirement and have their passports automatically extended for 6 months which means that you can use your passport up until the written expiration date. This rule applies to subsequent entries to the U.S. while traveling as a student. The list of countries exempt from this rule can be found at <http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0941104x1.pdf>.

**Step 4: Pay the SEVIS fee (\$100) and print the receipt.**

Go to the web site <http://www.fmjfee.com> and follow the instructions. You will need the I-20 available because the SEVIS number is required. Print copies of the receipt - you will need one with you for the visa interview and you should keep one for your own records. You can only access the receipt at the time of payment so be sure your printer is working before paying the fee.

If you have been a student in the U.S. and are transferring schools or beginning a program at a new

level of study, it is possible you may not have to pay the SEVIS fee. Refer to information posted at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/faq3.htm>.

**Step 5: Complete all required Department of State application forms**

[DS-156](#). Everyone applying for a non-immigrant visa must complete this form. COMPLETE THIS ELECTRONIC FORM ON-LINE and take a printed copy with you to the interview.

[DS-158](#): Contact Information and Work History. For all F and J applicants.

[DS-157](#): Supplemental Non-Immigrant Visa Application Form. Required for male applicants between the ages of 16 and 45.

**Step 6: Refer to step one and follow instructions for paying any visa fees required in advance of your appointment.** Procedures may vary from country to country, and even post to post within the same country. Note that application and issuance fees are based on reciprocity and generally reflect your country's policies in granting visa privileges to visiting U.S. students.

**Step 7: Bring a passport-size photo less than six months old.** Check [Nonimmigrant Visa Photograph Requirements](#) for details.

**Step 8: READ! Prepare for your interview** appointment by learning what to expect.

You will be applying for an F-1 student visa, a non-immigrant classification. According to U.S. immigration law, "Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a non-immigrant status." This means you need to establish that you have no intention of staying in the U.S. permanently, but are coming here for a temporary purpose, i.e. to pursue your educational objective. While the consular officers are aware that it may be difficult for students to demonstrate strong professional and economic ties to their home countries, you should still bear this in mind as you prepare for your interview.

In advance of your interview, please read the following:

[Obtaining a U.S. Visa](#): Published by Department of State

[Applying for a Student or Exchange Visitor Visa](#):

Published by Education USA, a division of DOS

[See You in the USA](#): An eJournal published by DOS.

Note article "On the Other Side of the Visa Window", by U.S. visa officer in Cairo

[Ten Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa](#)

published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, in consultation with the U.S. State Department. Although published in 1997, these general points provide good guidance and still are relevant today.

**Step 9: Checklist of what to take with you to your visa interview:**

- A passport valid for at least six months
- Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11)
- School admission letter
- Completed visa applications (DS-156, DS-158, and, if applicable, DS-157) Remember to complete the DS-156 electronically and take a printed copy with you. Consulates have advised that the electronic version will speed up the process.
- A photograph in the prescribed format (see Step 7)
- A receipt for the visa application fee
- A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.
- Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
- Any information that demonstrates your intention to return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

**Step 10. After the visa is processed, make sure you got what you requested!** Check your passport to be sure you obtained an F-1 visa, and that any dependents obtained an F-2 visa. **Also, be certain that the I-20 was returned to you, as you must have the original with you when you arrive in the United States. Sometimes, the document is returned to you in a sealed envelope,**

**which must be presented to the immigration inspector when you arrive.**

**Canadian Citizens:** Canadian citizens currently do not require a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada, but DO require an I-20. However, we recommend that you use a passport to enter the U.S. as it may be required for other purposes in the U.S., such as completing a form for employment on campus, or applying for a Social Security number. If you enter the U.S. from a country other than Canada, you are required to present a passport at the port of entry. Beginning December 31, 2006, all Canadian citizens entering the U.S. by air or sea will be required to show a passport to enter the United States. Effective December 31, 2007, a passport will be required for ALL entries to the U.S., including land borders.

To enter the U.S. in F-1 student status, Canadians DO require an I-20 and proof of payment of the SEVIS fee. To pay the SEVIS fee, go to <http://www.fmjfee.com> and follow the instructions. Be sure to make a copy of the receipt for your own records.

At the port of entry, Canadian students must present the Form I-20 and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector to be admitted into the U.S. in F-1 status. You will be given an I-94 Admission/Departure card to complete. Be sure to look at your I-94 card before you leave the inspection area to ensure that it has the notation "F-1, D/S" written on it. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current F-1 status. If not, you are considered to be in Visitor (B-2) status, a status which does not permit study in the U.S.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Students from Canada are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining status. It is especially important for Canadian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as visitors.

## If You are Already in the U.S.

**Currently in a status other than F-1** - Students who do not plan to leave the U.S. before beginning studies at Columbia, and are currently in an immigration status other than F1 are required to change status by application to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Changing your status in the U.S. may not be possible, so please consult an ISSO adviser or IAO adviser for more information. You may also review the detailed information in Application for Change to F-1 Student Status.

Note that because your intention at the time of admission to the U.S. is an issue with a change of status application, a change of status from B-1 or B-2 visitor status may be very difficult unless the B-1/B-2 entry visa was issued with the notation "prospective student" on it. Most problematic is that an individual in B-1 or B-2 status is prohibited from enrolling in classes until the change of status to F-1 has been approved, and there is no way of knowing how long this will take. The same prohibition against beginning a course of study until the change of status has been approved by the immigration applies to individuals in F-2 status.

**Currently in F-1 Status at Another Institution and transferring to Columbia** - Students enrolled in another U.S. school under F-1 immigration status who are planning to enroll at Columbia University must complete a process in which the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is notified of this change. The transfer procedure begins with your current school "releasing" your SEVIS record to Columbia and qualifying for a Columbia I-20, and is NOT complete until you report to the ISSO or the IAO within 15 days of the program start date on your I-20. The first step is to get Columbia's I-20 in a timely manner. Please refer to our F-1 transfer procedures below for exact details.

**Continuing Students in F-1 Status at Columbia University** - If you are completing one program at Columbia and are planning to pursue another degree or program at the University, DHS must be notified. The ISSO needs to issue you a new I-20 for the new program within 60 days of your completion date on your current I-20 or within 60 days of completion of your program, whichever is earlier. Contact the ISSO about qualifying for and obtaining a new I-20.

## If You Will Be Accompanied By Dependents

If your dependents - spouse or unmarried children under 21 years of age - will accompany you to the U.S. or join you shortly after your arrival, you will need to provide the ISSO or the IAO with additional documentation showing your sufficient funding to meet your dependents' expenses and copies of their passport ID pages. An I-20 will then be issued for each of your dependents which they will use to apply for the F-2 visa. You may request an I-20 for your dependents at any time during your stay at Columbia.

## Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa Alternative

Another visa classification for full-time study is the J-1 Exchange Visitor status. J-1 students come to the U.S. under a contract agreement that is formally known as the Exchange Visitor Program. Students who are personally financing their studies are not eligible for J-1 status. Funding for J-1 students usually is from a government or international organization. University funding may also qualify. Please refer to and read carefully the section on Immigration Status under student immigration definitions for a summary of some of the differences between F-1 and J-1 immigration status so that you can make an informed choice.

## Transfer Procedures by Students in F-1 Status to Columbia University

If you are currently in F-1 status from another U.S. institution and intend to begin your studies at Columbia University, you are considered a "Transfer Student" by the ISSO for the purposes of issuing an I-20. A transfer of the supervision of your F-1 status from your old or current school to Columbia University is required by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). You will be considered a transfer student if one of the following applies to you:

- You are in the middle of a degree program and are leaving that program to begin at Columbia.

- You are in the 3-2 engineering program.
- You will have completed a degree program at your current institution and will begin a new degree program at Columbia.
- You are currently authorized for OPT from another school and will begin a new degree program at Columbia.

*Students doing a joint degree program between Columbia and an institution overseas are not considered transfer students by DHS.*

There are three steps required to complete the transfer process.

### **Step 1. Request Transfer and Submit Documents to ISSO**

Once you have learned of your admission to Columbia and have accepted the offer, you will need complete the on-line [Application for Visa Certificate](#) and submit the required documentation as explained in the on-line AVC instructions. You will also need to notify your current international student advisor of your intention to transfer to Columbia.

Download the [Transfer-in form](#) and complete Section 1. You should bring this with you when you meet with your international student advisor. When you meet with the advisor, you will determine the release date of your SEVIS record so they can do the transfer-out procedure. The release date is the date that your SEVIS record will become available to the ISSO. The ISSO will not be able to issue your I-20 until the release date has passed. The transfer-out procedure must be requested within 60 days of completing your program at your current school though the actual release date may be later. F-1 regulations allow a student to work in the summer between schools on the campus that maintains supervision of the SEVIS record so you may want to take this into consideration when choosing your release date. You should also consider any plans to travel outside the U.S. (i.e. if you have a release date of August 15 and are planning to re-enter the U.S. on August 20, this will not be enough time to get your I-20 to you before you return).

Your international student advisor will complete Section 2 of the transfer-in form and return it to Columbia.

### **Step 2. Wait for your I-20 and Prepare for Arrival in New York**

The ISSO will create your I-20 and send it to you. If you are traveling or moving during the break before coming to Columbia, remember to update the ISSO with your current address so the I-20 is sent to the correct location.

If you plan to travel outside the U.S. after completing your studies at your previous institution but before starting your program at Columbia, you must use Columbia's I-20 to re-enter the U.S. If you have a valid, unexpired F-1 visa in your passport, you do not need to apply for a new visa. You may use the visa you have, even though the previous school's name is on it. If your visa has expired, you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa at the consulate; however, you are not required to pay the SEVIS fee. For confirmation that you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee, visit [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)

If you are not planning to leave the U.S. before arriving at Columbia, you will simply receive the I-20 and report to the ISSO upon arrival.

### **Step 3. Complete the Transfer Process**

Upon arriving in New York, you must report to the ISSO to complete the transfer process. We recommend that you come to complete the transfer as soon as you arrive in New York. You are required to report to the ISSO no later than 15 days past the start date on your I-20. If you fail to report within this time frame, you will be in violation of your F-1 status. When you come to report to the ISSO, you should bring your passport, I-94 card, and I-20 from Columbia.

You are required to register for full-time studies at Columbia in the first available term after leaving your previous school or the first term after the summer vacation period.

No "semester off" between schools is allowed by the DHS except for the summer.

# How to Obtain J-1 Exchange Visitor Status for Students

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The information to follow is provided to help you get to Columbia in appropriate immigration status in compliance with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations.

Please note that there are two major offices that handle the immigration documents for students at Columbia University. All students studying at the Morningside campus are served by the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). Some students at the Columbia University Medical Center are served by the ISSO and some by the International Affairs Office (IAO). You will be informed of which office will manage your paperwork after you have been admitted to the University.

## What is J-1 Exchange Visitor Status?

The Exchange Visitor Program is administered by the United States Department of State and has certain requirements that do not apply to other visa statuses. There are many categories of Exchange Visitors (EVs). The student category is one. In order to qualify for J-1 status in the student category, over half of your funding for your academic program must come from sources other than personal or family funds. Common sources of funding for EVs include funding from a government, international organization, or university. The ISSO and the IAO reserve discretion in issuing the DS-2019 required to apply for the J-1 visa.

Most students come to the United States to study in F-1 Student status. Your documents will automatically be processed for F-1 status unless you specifically request J-1 status. Some of the differences between F-1 and J-1 status are discussed in the section on immigration status under Immigration Definitions. Please read this section carefully so you can make an informed decision as to which status you wish to obtain.

## Obtain DS-2019 from ISSO or IAO

All students requesting J-1 status will be issued a DS-2019 from the ISSO or the IAO. The DS-2019 is a document that details your course of study and verifies that you have documented eligibility to obtain J-1 status. The DS-2019 is used to apply for the J-1 visa at the U.S. consulate and must be received prior to applying for the visa. You must complete the on-line Application for Visa

Certificate (The link will be given to you after you have been admitted to the University) and submit the required supporting documents to receive the DS-2019. When completing the AVC, you must indicate in the remarks section that you wish to obtain J-1 status.

## If You are Outside the U.S.

[Canadian Citizens](#) - Canadian citizens do not require a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada, but do require an DS-2019 and must follow certain procedures.

## How to Apply for an Initial J-1 Entry Visa

Carefully read and follow these procedures.

**Step 1: Make an appointment at a [U.S. Consulate](#)** to apply for an J-1 Student entry visa. You will require the DS-2019 form from Columbia University at the time of your appointment. **DO NOT MAKE AN APPOINTMENT UNTIL** you have received the DS-2019 or are sure that you will have the DS-2019 in time for the appointment. The ISSO issues DS-2019's in the order that complete applications are received, and is unable to rush yours because you made an appointment too early. Check the following websites for more information on visa appointments.

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors\\_wait.php](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php) for information about current wait times for the appointment and for visa issuance. NOTE that the processing wait times do not include extra time that may be required for security clearances.

Refer to [Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry](#) for more information regarding security clearances.

[http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies\\_1214.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html) to locate the nearest U.S. Consulate and its instructions for applying for a visa (including links to required forms). Make a list of documentation required for the interview. Note procedures for paying the visa application fee and any visa issuance fees, if applicable.

## Step 2: Check your form DS-2019 for completeness and correctness!

Your DS-2019 indicates that we have created a record for you in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information

System), a national database for international students and scholars. Your unique assigned SEVIS ID number is in the upper right corner of page 1. Check to see that all information is correct and that your expected completion date is in the future.

If you have informed us that your dependents (husband, wife, or children under the age of 21) will come with you to the U.S., each of them will receive their own "dependent" DS-2019 needed for applying for their J-2 visas and entering the U.S. in J-2 status. If your family name is different from your dependents, be prepared to show documents that prove your relationship.

### **Step 3: Make sure your passport is valid.**

When you apply for a visa or enter the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future. Some countries are exempt from this requirement and have their passports automatically extended for 6 months which means that you can use your passport up until the written expiration date. This rule applies to subsequent entries to the U.S. while traveling as a student. The list of countries exempt from this rule can be found at

<http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0941104x1.pdf>.

### **Step 4: Pay the SEVIS fee (\$100) and print the receipt.**

Go to the web site <http://www.fmjfee.com> and follow the instructions. You will need the DS-2019 available because the SEVIS number is required. Print copies of the receipt -you will need one with you for the visa interview and you should keep one for your own records. You can only access the receipt at the time of payment so be sure your printer is working before paying the fee.

If you have been a student in the U.S. and are transferring schools or beginning a program at a new level of study, it is possible you may not have to pay the SEVIS fee. Refer to information posted at

<http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/faq3.htm>.

### **Step 5: Complete all required Department of State application forms**

[DS-156](#). Everyone applying for a non-immigrant visa must complete this form. COMPLETE THIS ELECTRONIC FORM ON-LINE and take a printed copy with you to the interview.

[DS-158](#): Contact Information and Work History. For all F and J applicants.

[DS-157](#): Supplemental Non-Immigrant Visa Application Form. Required for male applicants between the ages of 16 and 45.

**Step 6: Refer to step one and follow instructions for paying any visa fees required in advance of your appointment.** Procedures may vary from country to country, and even post to post within the same country. Note that application and issuance fees are based on reciprocity and generally reflect your country's policies in granting visa privileges to visiting U.S. students.

**Step 7: Bring a passport-size photo less than six months old.** Check [Nonimmigrant Visa Photograph Requirements](#) for details.

**Step 8: READ! Prepare for your interview** appointment by learning what to expect.

You will be applying for an J-1 student visa, a non-immigrant classification. According to U.S. immigration law, "Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a non-immigrant status." This means you need to establish that you have no intention of staying in the U.S. permanently, but are coming here for a temporary purpose, i.e. to pursue your educational objective. While the consular officers are aware that it may be difficult for students to demonstrate strong professional and economic ties to their home countries, you should still bear this in mind as you prepare for your interview.

In advance of your interview, please read the following:

[Obtaining a U.S. Visa](#): Published by Department of State

[Applying for a Student or Exchange Visitor Visa](#): Published by Education USA, a division of DOS

[See You in the USA](#): An eJournal published by DOS. Note article "On the Other Side of the Visa Window", by U.S. visa officer in Cairo

[Ten Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa](#)

published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, in consultation with the U.S. State Department. Although published in 1997, these general points provide good guidance and still are relevant today.

**Step 9: Checklist of what to take with you to your visa interview:**

- \_\_\_ A passport valid for at least six months
- \_\_\_ Form DS-2019
- \_\_\_ School admission letter
- \_\_\_ Completed visa applications (DS-156, DS-158, and, if applicable, DS-157) Remember to complete the DS-156 electronically and take a printed copy with you. Consulates have advised that the electronic version will speed up the process.
- \_\_\_ A photograph in the prescribed format (see Step 7)
- \_\_\_ A receipt for the visa application fee
- \_\_\_ A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.
- \_\_\_ Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
- \_\_\_ Any information that demonstrates your intention to return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

**Step 10. After the visa is processed, make sure you got what you requested!** Check your passport to be sure you obtained a J-1 visa, and that any dependents obtained a J-2 visa. **Also, be certain that the DS-2019 was returned to you, as you must have the original with you when you arrive in the United States. Sometimes, the document is returned to you in a sealed envelope, which must be presented to the immigration inspector when you arrive.**

**Canadian Citizens:** Canadian citizens do not currently require a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada, but DO require a DS-2019. However, we recommend that you use a passport to enter the U.S. as it may be required for other purposes in the U.S., such as completing a form for employment on campus, or

applying a Social Security Number. If you enter the U.S. from a country other than Canada, you are required to present a passport at the port of entry. Beginning December 31, 2006, all Canadian citizens entering the U.S. by air or sea will be required to show a passport to enter the United States. Effective December 31, 2007, a passport will be required for ALL entries to the U.S., including land borders.

Canadians DO require a DS-2019 form and proof of payment of the SEVIS fee to enter the U.S. in J-1 student status. To pay the SEVIS fee, go to <http://www.fmjfee.com> and follow the instructions. Be sure to make a copy of the receipt for your own records.

At the port of entry, Canadian students must present the Form DS-2019 and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector to be admitted into the U.S. in J-1 status. You will be given an I-94 Admission/Departure card to complete. Be sure to look at your I-94 card before you leave the inspection area to ensure that it has the notation "J-1, D/S" written on it. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current J-1 status. If not, you are considered to be in Visitor (B-2) status, a status which does not permit study in the U.S.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Students from Canada are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining status. It is especially important for Canadian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as visitors.

## If You are Already in the U.S.

### Currently in J-1 Status at Another Institution

An EV in the Student category may transfer from one program sponsor to another only if the EV will continue the same educational objective for which he or she first entered the U.S. The Responsible Officer (RO) of the program from which you are transferring must determine the following:

- the transfer is consistent with the goals of your current EV program
- you are currently maintaining valid J-1 status

For details on how to transfer your J-1 status to Columbia, see Transfer of J-1 Supervision.

### **Currently in a status other than J-1**

Students who do not plan to leave the U.S. before beginning studies at Columbia and are currently in an immigration status other than J-1 are required to change status by application to DHS. Applying for a change of status may not be possible or recommended. Please consult an ISSO or IAO advisor for more information.

Because your intention at the time of admission to the U.S. is an issue with a change of status application, a change of status from B-1 or B-2 visitor status may be very difficult unless the B-1/B-2 entry visa was issued with the notation "prospective student" on it. Most problematic is that an individual in B-1 or B-2 status is prohibited from enrolling in classes until the change of status to J-1 has been approved, and there is no way of knowing how long this will take.

### **Requesting J-2 Status for Dependents**

If your dependents - spouse or unmarried children under 21 years of age - will accompany you to the U.S. or join you after your arrival, you will need to provide the ISSO or the IAO with additional documentation showing sufficient funding to meet your dependents' expenses and copies of their passports. A DS-2019 will then be issued for each of your dependents which they will use to apply for the J-2 visa. You may request a DS-2019 for your dependents at any time during your stay at Columbia.

## **Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry**

There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study in the United States. Heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001 have resulted in delays in visa issuance abroad—regardless of whether you are applying

for first or subsequent student visas in the F or J classification.

Security checks, interview requirements, and transfer of data in SEVIS are causing extended delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas at

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> and its link to individual consular posts at

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies\\_1214.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html) may be good sources of current information.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also has a useful Information Sheet entitled "Arrival at a US Port of Entry... What a Student or Exchange Visitor can Expect" highlighting the necessary steps and procedures you will face. It may be accessed at

[http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/factsheet/100104ent\\_st\\_dnt\\_fs.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_st_dnt_fs.htm).

### **VISA INTERVIEW REQUIREMENT**

On May 21, 2003, the Department of State announced a new policy that will require almost all non-immigrant visa applicants to be interviewed before a visa is issued, with very few exceptions. This represents a big change in procedures for many consular posts, and is likely to slow down the process significantly.

### **SEVIS REQUIREMENTS**

The I-20 form for F-1 visa applicants and the DS-2019 form for J-1 visa applicants are processed and issued through the internet-based Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS). Visa officers are required to verify your record—and that of any dependents—in the SEVIS system before a visa can be approved. There have been some SEVIS data transfer problems and delays between the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. If the visa official is unable to access your record in SEVIS and you have a SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, please contact the ISSO by email, phone or fax to alert us to the problem so we can follow up on it.

### **TECHNOLOGIES ALERT LIST AND SENSITIVE AREAS OF STUDY**

Students, faculty and researchers who are considered to be studying, researching or teaching "sensitive areas" as

determined by the U.S. government may also be required to undergo security clearances before a visa can be issued. There is a document called the "Technology Alert List" that visa officers consult for this purpose. China, India, Israel, Pakistan and Russia have received special mention by the U.S. State Department in the context of this list because these countries are considered to possess nuclear capability that is of concern to U.S. national security. However, even if you are not a citizen of one of the countries listed above, your field of study (especially if it is in the sciences, technology or engineering) might require your visa application to undergo a security clearance REGARDLESS of the country you are from. Such clearances can add weeks to the amount of time needed for visa approval. There are sixteen broad subject areas listed on the Technology Alert List, with detailed specializations within each broad area. Further information can be found at <http://www.foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0940031X1.pdf>.

If your field of research is in the sciences or engineering and it is not on the technology alert list, you should request a letter from your employer or academic advisor that explains your research topic in laymen's terms. This may help avoid the security clearance.

#### **FORM DS-157: SUPPLEMENTAL NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION**

This Department of State form supplements the [DS-156](#) application for a non-immigrant visa. It is required of all males (except those with diplomatic status) between the ages of 16 and 45, and may be requested of any visa applicant, regardless of age, gender, or nationality. (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/state006020.html>) In addition to completion of this form, the DOS continues to require a further security check for men from countries with large Muslim populations.

#### **NAME CHECK BY DOS AND DHS**

The 'name check lookup' is conducted by the State Department at the time of visa application and by the Department of Homeland Security at the port of entry—irrespective of whether the visitor holds a valid visa. This name check has recently resulted in unexpected and severe problems for non-immigrants—some arising from previous overstay(s), others from discovery of a record of

illegal activity in the United States, and others because of mistaken name matches with listings in the database.

#### **SPECIAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN FOREIGN NATIONALS**

Since September 11, 2002, certain non-immigrants are required to be fingerprinted and photographed at U.S. ports of entry and to make physical appearances to the local United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office at specified intervals during their stay in the United States.

Currently, the published registration rule applies without exception to nationals or citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Sudan. This list is subject to change at any time, and registration may be required of any non-immigrants of any nationality who are deemed by a consular officer or inspections officer to require closer monitoring.

If you undergo Special Registration when you arrive, failure to comply with ongoing requirements has severe consequences. Requirements are described at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/specialregistration/WalkawayMaterial.pdf>.

## **Arrival at a U.S. Port of Entry**

#### **WHAT TO HAVE WITH YOU**

Carry your ORIGINAL documents on your person or in a carry-on bag rather than packed in your luggage. You will have to present them to the immigration inspector upon your arrival, and you won't have access to your luggage until *after* you go through immigration inspection.

Your documents may include:

- valid, unexpired, passport (for at least six months into the future) with a valid, unexpired entry visa
- your I-20 or DS-2019 visa certificate, signed by the school official and by you
- original supporting financial documents, such as personal bank statements, a financial aid award or an offer letter from your department

- marriage license, school transcripts, medical records if applicable

On the plane, a flight attendant will distribute the I-94 Arrival /Departure form to non-immigrants. You should complete the white form, NOT the green form that is for tourists from certain countries who are eligible for a 90-day visit without a visa.

## IMMIGRATION INSPECTION

Upon arrival, you will go first to immigration inspection. The immigration inspector will need to see the appropriate visa page in your passport and the appropriate supporting documents.

**F-1:** Present your passport with an F-1 entry visa with Columbia University noted on it (if it is your initial entry in F-1 status), form I-20 that has been signed by both a Columbia University Designated School Official (DSO) and you, and the I-94 form that you completed on the plane. You should have funding documents available if requested. The inspector will keep part of the I-94 Arrival/Departure form, and return the bottom portion to you. In addition to the date and place of entry, the inspector will add a written notation that says "admitted as F-1 for D/S". D/S signifies *duration of status*. If all is in order, you should NOT be admitted until a specific *date*, but rather for D/S. Your form I-20 should also get stamped in red ink.

**J-1:** Same as above, except you should have a signed form DS-2019 and a J-1 entry visa issued for attendance at Columbia University. You should be admitted with a notation on the white I-94 card that says "admitted as J-1 for D/S". Your form DS-2019 should also be stamped in red ink.

**Canadian citizens:** Although Canadians do not require a passport for admission to the U.S., it is advisable to bring one for other purposes. For example, it is a required document for a Social Security number application. Although exempt from the visa requirement, Canadian students must present form I-20 to be admitted in F-1 status, or form DS-2019 for J-1 status, and must obtain an I-94 card as described above. It is essential that you be issued an appropriate I-94 card. If this does not occur, you will be considered a tourist, will not be able to enroll

in classes and will not be able to change to student status while here in the United States.

**Dependents:** If you are coming with your spouse and/or children, then the same attentiveness to how their admission is processed applies. Dependents of F-1 students should enter as "F-2 for D/S" and dependents of J-1 students as "J-2 for D/S".

## DOCUMENT PROCESSING – UPDATE OF SEVIS RECORD

In addition to processing the I-94 card, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will access the SEVIS student record that corresponds to your unique SEVIS ID number and update the record with information on your entry. Columbia university is notified electronically of your arrival through your SEVIS record.

### BE PREPARED!

It is to your advantage to know what to expect and to be mindful of what occurs at the port of entry. Immigration inspectors see many people in the course of a day, and one must allow for human error. Some inspectors may be less familiar with student documents than others. Having your documents processed properly at the time you arrive is extremely important. **The I-94 card does not appear significant, but is the most important immigration document you will possess.** It is the only document with a record of the *status* in which you were admitted to the United States, the date on which you entered, and at which port of entry. It is difficult and expensive to replace, and you are advised to make a photocopy of it and keep it in a safe place. Often, the immigration officer will staple it into your passport. Be aware that if you don't get a red immigration stamp on your I-20 or DS-2019, it may present difficulties when applying for a Social Security number (SSN) or a NY State driver's license.

## Dependents

### Dependents of F-1 students

In the language of immigration regulations, the individual in F-1 status is the “principal alien”. Your dependents – spouse or unmarried, minor (under age 21) children – come to the United States in a derivative status, F-2. That means their primary purpose for being in the United States is to accompany you. Their F-2 status is completely dependent on your valid F-1 status.

Each F-2 dependent will receive his or her own SEVIS-generated I-20 form, with a unique SEVIS ID number. However, it is the F-1 principal who signs the I-20.

The F-1 student has to provide documentation showing the availability of funds in excess of their own cost of living expenses to obtain a dependent I-20. Currently, it is \$800 per month for a spouse, and \$400/month per child. In addition, each dependent must provide a copy of his or her passport.

Federal regulations do not allow individuals in F-2 status to be employed in the United States, or to enroll in courses of study. At the post-secondary level, an F-2 who wants to work needs to find an employer to sponsor him or her in an employment-based status, such as H-1B. An F-2 who wants to enroll in a course of study would need to be admitted to a full-time course of study and change to F-1 status.

The International Students and Scholars Office runs an International Spouse Network through which spouses of students and scholars can meet others in similar situations. See *Family Matters* for more information

### Dependents of J-1 Students

In the language of immigration regulations, the individual in J-1 exchange visitor status is the “principal alien”. Your dependents – spouse or unmarried, minor (under age 21) – come to the United States in a derivative status, J-2. That means their primary purpose for being in the United States is to accompany you. Their J-2 status is completely dependent on your valid J-1 status.

Each J-2 dependent will receive his or her own SEVIS-generated form DS-2019, with a unique SEVIS ID number. However, it is the J-1 principal who signs the DS-2019.

The J-1 student has to provide documentation showing the availability of funds in excess of their own cost of living expenses to obtain a dependent DS-2019. Currently, it is \$800 per month for a spouse, and \$400/month per child. In addition, each dependent must provide a copy of his or her passport.

Federal regulations allow individuals in J-2 status to apply for employment authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), as long as the J-1 is self-supporting.

Currently, individuals in J-2 status are permitted to be enrolled as students, either part-time or fulltime, but that provision may change in the future.

The International Students and Scholars Office runs an International Spouse Network through which spouses of students and scholars can meet others in similar situations. See *Family Matters* for more information.

For the differences between F-1 and J-1 status, refer to Definitions at the beginning of *Coming to Columbia*.

## Domestic Partners

For F-1s and J-1s, the dependent statuses of F-2 and J-2 are reserved for spouses, and/or children who are single and under the age of 21. This presents difficulties for those in relationships without marriage.

In July, 2001 the State Department sent a cable to consulates putting forth new guidance stating that B-2 (visitor) visas may be appropriate for cohabiting (unmarried) partners, whether of the same or opposite sex.

The cable explains that only a relationship that is recognized under law as granting all the rights of marriage can be the basis for a dependent visa such as F-2, J-2, H-4, etc.

However, an unmarried partner whose primary purpose in coming to the U.S. is to accompany his partner can be

issued a B-2 as long as he or she does not intend to work, and is otherwise eligible for a visa.

Though B-2 visits are usually for short periods of time, it is permissible for the accompanying partner to intend to accompany the principal for the duration of a study program in the U.S. The accompanying partner must intend to depart at the conclusion of the principal's authorized stay in the U.S. In such cases there is a fixed end point, and therefore the B-2 applicant meets the requirement of temporary intent, even though she intends to stay longer than 6 months or a year.

This cable pre-dates September 11 and the ensuing security measures and added scrutiny that visa applications have received since then, and the ISSO has no knowledge of how this guidance is being applied. The text of the cable can be viewed at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/state118790.html>.

## Supplementary Information for Students Fully Funded by Columbia University

Most students come to study at Columbia University in F-1 status. There is another non-immigrant student classification that is limited to students who are *not* supported strictly by personal or family funds. Students who will be funded by Columbia University are eligible for to come to the United States in J-1 Exchange Visitor classification. J-1 students come to the U.S. under a contract agreement that is formally known as the Exchange Visitor Program. Funding for J-1 students usually is from a government or international organization, but University funding may also qualify. Please refer to and read carefully the section on Immigration Status under Definitions for a summary of some of the differences between F-1 and J-1 immigration status so that you can make an informed choice.

### Arrival on Campus: Reporting to the ISSO

#### SEVIS Registration Requirement

Shortly after your arrival in New York, you must report to the ISSO with your documents. The ISSO must update your SEVIS record with a NY-area address (even if it's temporary) and change your status from "initial" to "active". This is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and must take place within 30 days of your program start date, or your SEVIS record will automatically be "terminated" and you will be out of status.

**Background** - All prospective students coming to study in F-1 or J-1 status have been issued the relevant documentation through a database referred to as SEVIS, an acronym for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. This was designed by the government as both a data collection and a tracking system that creates an interface between institutions of higher education, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consulates and embassies abroad, and ports of entry. Schools are required to make regular electronic updates in SEVIS throughout the academic year on the records of their enrolled students in F-1 and J-1 status—and their dependents. Information to be updated includes,

but is not limited to, enrollment status, changes in address, changes in level of study, employment recommendations, and school transfers.

When you arrive at a US port of entry, the immigration inspector will update your SEVIS record with information about your arrival. The school (or agency, in the case of some J-1 students) that issued your document will receive an electronic notification of your arrival. Your status in SEVIS is "initial", but must be changed to "active" within 30 days of the program start date in order for your SEVIS record to remain valid.

#### SEVIS Address Requirement

Upon your *initial* arrival in the U.S. to study at Columbia, you must notify the ISSO of your local address in person or on-line at [https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US\\_address\\_report/US\\_address\\_form.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US_address_report/US_address_form.html)). You will need to have a Columbia University Network ID (UNI) to gain access to the site. Thereafter, you must notify ISSO of any change in address within 10 days of moving by completing the [Change of Address Form](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address_change.html) ([https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address\\_change.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address_change.html)) online. The ISSO and IAO are responsible for updating your address electronically in your SEVIS record.

## Maintaining Lawful Student Status

Under United States immigration law, it is your personal responsibility to maintain lawful F-1 or J-1 student status. Begin by reading the instructions on page 2 of your I-20 or DS-2019. By following those instructions, as well as the guidelines listed below, you should be able to maintain lawful F-1 or J-1 student status with little difficulty.

You must maintain lawful student status if you wish to enjoy the benefits associated with it, such as on-campus employment, practical training, and the ability to re-enter the United States when you travel. If you have any questions, please come to the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) or the Immigration Affairs Office (IAO). We will be happy to answer your questions and discuss your concerns. Students whose immigration documents were processed by the Immigration Affairs Office (IAO) at the Medical Center should contact the IAO for information and assistance.

## Guidelines for Maintaining Student Status

If you follow the guidelines listed below, you should be able to maintain student status.

**1. Keep an unexpired passport valid for at least 6 months into the future.** Contact your country's consulate in NY or embassy in Washington DC for instructions if you need to extend your passport while in the U.S. Refer to [Immigration Definitions](#) for more information.

**2. Notify the ISSO of your address when you arrive and any time you change addresses.** Upon your *initial* arrival in the U.S. to study at Columbia, you must notify the ISSO of your local address in person or on-line at ([https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US\\_address\\_report/US\\_address\\_form.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US_address_report/US_address_form.html)). You will need to have a Columbia University Network ID (UNI) to gain access to the site. Thereafter, you must notify ISSO of any change in address within 10 days of moving by completing the [Change of Address Form](#) ([https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address\\_change.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address_change.html)) online. The ISSO and IAO are responsible for updating your address electronically in your SEVIS record.

**3. Maintain full-time enrollment and normal, full-time progress toward your degree or certificate.** You are expected to maintain full-time registration and make normal progress toward your degree. Note that the definition of "full-time" may differ from school to school and that **immigration regulations may require a more restricted definition of "full-time" than that followed by your school.** As a result, you should refer to the guide below and consult with the ISSO as well as your academic adviser to determine whether or not you are a "full-time" student.

The rate of normal progress is the rate at which the average full-time student in your school or department advances toward the degree or certificate objective. Working to finish an "incomplete" course or project does **not** fall within the definition of making "normal progress".

- **Undergraduate Programs:**  
12 or more credits each semester during the academic year.
- **Graduate School of Arts and Sciences:**  
1 residence unit (RU) each semester until residence unit requirements have been met (ordinarily 2 RU for master's degree programs and 4 to 6 RU for doctoral programs). Thereafter you are required to register for either full-time Extended Residence (ER) or full-time Matriculation and Facilities (M&F), depending upon departmental requirements.  
*Exception:* if you are in a Liberal Arts MA program, you will follow a credit-based system rather than the residence unit system. As such, you are expected to take at least 12 or more credits each semester to satisfy the "full-time" requirement.
- **School of Law, Graduate Programs:**  
10 or more credits each semester during the academic year. If you are in the JSD program, have met all program requirements, and wish to remain in the United States while completing your dissertation, you must register each semester for "0 points of JSD Research" to maintain your student status.
- **School of Engineering and Applied Science, graduate programs:**  
12 or more credits each semester.
- **School of Social Work:**  
10.5 or more credits each semester.
- **Special Non-Degree Students (all schools):**  
12 or more credits each semester.
- **All other programs:**  
12 or more credits each semester.

If you are enrolled in a program which lasts more than one academic year, you are ordinarily permitted an annual vacation period, during which time you are not required to register for courses. Only one vacation period per year is permitted and for most programs, this takes place during the **summer semester**. However, please note the following exceptions to this rule:

- **Graduate School of Business, MBA Program:**  
If you began in the Fall semester, you are expected to register for 12 or more credits each semester to maintain full-time status, but you are allowed to take the summer following your first academic year as a vacation period. If you began in the Spring semester, you are expected to register for 12 or more credits each semester, including the summer semester, until you have completed your program.
- **American Language Program:**  
If you are in the American Language Program, you must register for two consecutive semesters before you are eligible for a vacation period. If you register full time in summer in order to take the following fall or spring semester as a "vacation" semester, you must first obtain permission in writing from your school, register full-time, and then obtain permission from the ISSO to have summer be part of the academic year registration. If you do not do this, the ISSO will not report your summer registration to the Department of Homeland Security and you will be in violation of your student status if you do not register during the academic year.

**4. Obtain PRIOR authorization from the ISSO (if eligible) BEFORE dropping below a full course of study.** There are very limited exceptions to the full-time requirement, so you must consult the ISSO in advance of any drop below full-time, or you will be in violation of your status.

**5. Do not accept any employment, either on- or off-campus, without written permission from the International Students and Scholars Office and, if necessary, authorization from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).**

Working without proper authorization is considered by the DHS as the most serious violation of its regulations. If you refer to your form I-94 card, you will see the statement, "Warning: a nonimmigrant who accepts unauthorized employment is subject to deportation." It is most important, therefore, that you consult with the ISSO

before you accept an offer of employment or begin to work. We will advise you whether it is possible for you to work and assist you with the appropriate procedures. It is illegal to begin to work while waiting for authorization; you must have the appropriate authorization first. Students in status are allowed to work on-campus for the University for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the academic year (unlimited during vacation periods) but **MUST** complete an I-9 form at the ISSO.

**6. Make timely transfers of your supervision if you enroll at Columbia after attending another school in the United States.** DHS regulations specify that you must use the Visa Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) issued by the school you are attending (or plan to attend) when entering the U.S. Consequently, make sure that you use Columbia's Certificate of Eligibility. You are required to report to the ISSO shortly after your arrival and no later than the beginning of the semester. For more information, see [Transfer of F-1 supervision](#) or [Transfer of J-1 supervision](#).

**7. Obtain extensions, as needed, of your permission to stay in the U.S. before your Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019) expires.**

If you have valid academic or health reasons for requiring more time to complete your program than that which is authorized on the Columbia I-20 or DS-2019, you must request a program extension through the ISSO. Come to the ISSO as soon as you know that you will need an extension and at least 30 days before the completion date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019 in order to have enough time to obtain any necessary documents. See our instructions on [F-1 Extension of Stay \(Current Program\)](#) or [J-1 student extension of stay \(current program\)](#) for this purpose, or contact the ISSO for more information.

If you require an extension because you will be starting a new program at Columbia (for example, if you are moving from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree program), you must apply for a new I-20 or DS-2019 to begin a new program within 60 days of the completion of the first program. See our instructions on [F-1 Extension of Stay to Begin a New Program](#) or [J-1 Extension of Stay to Begin a New Program](#), or contact the ISSO for more information.

**8. Once you have completed your studies and any practical training that is authorized, you must leave**

the U.S. or change to another immigration status within the appropriate time allowed.

This means that you are allowed to stay for the period of time to complete a program of study plus academic or practical training and a grace period. Those in F-1 status have a 60 day grace period in which to depart the US or change to another status. Students in J-1 status have a 30 day grace period.

**9. Carry a copy of your I-94 card with you at all times.**

When traveling outside the New York City area, you should bring the original I-94 card, I-20 or DS-2019, and passport with you.

**10. If applicable, comply with all Special Registration Procedures for Certain Foreign Nationals.**

Since September 11, 2002, certain non-immigrants are required to be fingerprinted and photographed at U.S. ports of entry and to make physical appearances to the local United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office at specified intervals during their stay in the United States. Special Registrants are also subject to departure procedures from ports of entry specifically designated for departure control, and must report and changes of employer by filing [Form AR-11sr](#) and sending it to USCIS.

Currently, the published registration rule applies without exception to nationals or citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Sudan. This list is subject to change at any time, and registration may be required of any non-immigrants of any nationality who are deemed by a consular officer or inspections officer to require closer monitoring.

If you undergo Special Registration when you arrive, failure to comply with ongoing requirements has severe consequences. Requirements are described at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/specialregistration/WalkawayMaterial.pdf>.

**11. For those in J-1 status, you must have medical insurance at all times.**

Regulations require those in J status to have very comprehensive medical insurance covering the student and all dependents. If you are not sure whether a certain insurance plan covers all necessary items, come by the ISSO or the IAO for more information.

## Returning to the United States in Valid Student Status after Travel Abroad

When leaving the U.S. temporarily during your program of study at Columbia, you will need to have the necessary documents to both permit entry to another country as well as to permit re-entry to the U.S. in the appropriate student status. For travel to a country other than the home country, students should check with the consulates of the country they wish to visit for specific entry requirements. A list of consulates in Manhattan can be found at <http://www.citidex.com/252.htm>.

### Re-entry to the United States

In order to re-enter the U.S. after a temporary absence of 5 months or less, a student *must* have the following documents:

**1. a passport** that will be valid for at least 6 months into the future on the day you return from your trip abroad. (except Canadians returning from Canada)

**2. unexpired F-1 or J-1 entry visa** in your passport, valid for further entries. (Note that Canadian citizens do not have a visa requirement). Others should check the expiration date, and the number of entries allowed on their visa. An “M” under entries means “multiple”, i.e. there is no limit to the number of entries during the period of its validity. If your visa is expired or the entries allowed have already been used, you will need to apply for a new entry visa abroad—it cannot be renewed in the U.S. An exception to the requirement for an unexpired visa exists for travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean as described below under *Special Considerations*. If your visa is expired or the number of allowable entries have already been used, refer to Obtaining a New Entry Visa below.

**3. a valid, unexpired, and recertified I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1).** A recertification signature for travel signifies to an immigration inspector that you are maintaining your status. Only staff at the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) or Immigration Affairs Office (IAO) are authorized by the DHS to sign these documents. (note for J-1's: If your DS-2019 was issued by a different Exchange Visitor Program sponsor, such as IIE, you must obtain the travel signature from that sponsor program). The recertification signature is valid for a year, although

some students may feel more comfortable getting a signature each semester in which they are traveling.

In order for your I-20 or DS-2019 to be recertified, the ISSO must ascertain that you have maintained full-time student status and have financial resources to cover all expenses for one year for both you and any accompanying dependents. First-year students will already have provided financial documentation for the current year, but others may need to update their funding documents. Request recertification of your I-20 or DS-2019 from the ISSO at least five business days before you plan to leave.

#### **Additionally, you are advised**

**4. to travel with current financial documentation.** An immigration inspector may want to verify your ability to fund your stay

**5. to carry a copy of your registration history,** easily printed out from Student Services On-Line (accessed from "Students" on Columbia's home page).

## **Obtaining a New Entry Visa**

You must have a valid F-1 or J-1 entry visa in your passport to enter the U.S. after a trip abroad. (Possible exceptions apply under Special Considerations, below). If your entry visa is no longer valid, you must take your passport, I-20, DS-2019, and current financial documentation to a [U.S. consulate](#) or to apply for a new one. It is best to apply for a visa in your home country. Plan for processing delays if you apply at a third country.

If you have ever overstayed your immigration status in the U.S., you may not be allowed to apply for an entry visa in any country except in your country of citizenship or permanent residence. If you have overstayed since issuance of your last entry visa, your entry visa is no longer valid and you are required to obtain a new one in your country of citizenship or residence. You should travel back to the U.S. with all your documentation, including financial documents, as it is possible that the immigration inspector will want to review it at the port of entry. Issuance of a visa may take longer than it did when you obtained one previously, so try to find out as much about the processing time and making an appointment in advance of your departure from the U.S.

## **Potential Delays in Visa Issuance**

There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study in the United States. Heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001 have resulted in delays in visa issuance abroad—regardless of whether you are applying for first or subsequent student visas. Security checks for those whose field of research or study is deemed to be "sensitive", interview requirements for almost all non-immigrant visa applicants, and problems in transfer of data in SEVIS are causing extended delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> and its link to individual consular posts at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies\\_1214.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html) may be good sources of current information. For more detailed information, refer to Potential Delays in Visa Issuance.

## **Travel for dependents of students in F-1 or J-1 immigration status**

Dependents of students must travel with their own Form I-20 or DS-2019 for dependents in F-2 or J-2. The F-2's I-20 (or J-2's DS-2019) is similar to the principal's, although in SEVIS dependent information is on the front page and dependents will get a unique SEVIS identifying number assigned to them. Documentary requirements are essentially the same as for the principals. Note that if dependent status was obtained through a change of status application, the dependent will not be issued an F-2 or J-2 entry visa unless the student has already obtained an F-1 or J-1 entry visa. Dependents are advised to carry a photocopy of the principal holder's visa, I-94 card, and I-20 or DS-2019.

## **Special Considerations: Automatic Revalidation and Extension**

### **Travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean (except Cuba and Bermuda)**

If you are traveling only to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean (except Cuba and Bermuda) for fewer than thirty days, you may return to the U.S. with an expired entry visa in your passport. To qualify for this privilege, you must:

1. Be in lawful F-1 or J-1 status.
2. Have an unexpired I-94 card with you indicating your status. Do not surrender the I-94 card when you leave the U.S. If you do, you will need a valid unexpired entry visa to reenter the U.S.
3. Have a current I-20 or DS-2019 in your possession.
4. Have a passport valid at least six months into the future on the day you return to the U.S.
5. Travel only to one of the destinations named above and for fewer than thirty days. For example, you cannot use automatic revalidation to enter Canada, depart to another country, return to Canada, and then return to the U.S. within 30 days.
6. not apply for a U.S. visa while in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean.  
If you apply for a U.S. entry during your visit to one of these destinations, you must wait for it to be issued before you return. If your visa application is denied by the American consulate, you are not allowed to use "automatic revalidation" to return to the U.S. and must travel to your country of citizenship to apply for a new visa.
7. Have an F-1 or J-1 visa (expired or valid) in your passport. (If, however, you have changed your non-immigrant status to F-1 or J-1 in the U.S., the visa may correspond to your previous non-immigrant status before the change was granted.)
8. Be a citizen of a country other than Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, North Korea, Cuba, or Libya (these countries have been designated by the U.S. government as state sponsors of terrorism. If you are a citizen or national of one of these countries, you do not qualify for the privilege of automatic revalidation. You are required to present all documents described under General Information, above, including a valid, unexpired visa for your current immigration status).

### **Canadian Citizens**

Canadian citizens do not need a passport or entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada. Those entering the U.S. to study should request F-1 or J-1 status at the border and must always show the I-20 or Form DS-2019 and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector. Otherwise, the student will be in Tourist (B-2)

status and will not be able to take advantage of the special benefits allowed those in Student status, such as employment or practical training. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current student status. Canadian citizens not entering the U.S. directly from Canada need a valid passport but no entry visa.

### **Travel after completion of studies for F-1 Students on Practical Training**

To return to the U.S. during the authorized period of Optional Practical Training, your I-20 must have a recertification signature that was issued within 6 months of the date you are traveling back to the U.S. Also, you will need to have your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card as proof of your authorized work permission. Students outside the U.S. have no basis for returning to the U.S. in F-1 status after completing their programs of study unless they were authorized practical training before their departure and can show a valid EAD. If you leave the U.S. without the EAD, you will not be allowed to return to the U.S. for F-1 practical training following completion of your degree.

Moreover, students who need a new entry visa to return for F-1 practical training are strongly advised to speak to an ISSO adviser before making travel plans. It is more difficult to obtain a student visa while on practical training, as the issue of intent to return to your home country will be brought up. This is sometimes harder to prove once you have finished your degree and are working in the U.S.

### **Travel after completion of studies for J-1 Students on Academic Training**

To return to the U.S. during the authorized period of Academic Training, your DS-2019 must have a recertification signature that was issued within 6 months of the date you are traveling back to the U.S. Also, you will need to have your academic training permission as proof of your authorized work permission. Students outside the U.S. have no basis for returning to the U.S. in J-1 status after completing their programs of study unless they were authorized academic training before their departure.

Moreover, students who need a new entry visa to return for J-1 academic training are strongly advised to speak to an ISSO adviser before making travel plans. It is more

difficult to obtain a student visa while on practical training, as the issue of intent to return to your home country will be brought up. This is sometimes harder to prove once you have finished your degree and are working in the U.S.

### Other Travel Matters

**Canadian visas** - Persons from many countries are required to obtain a Canadian entry visa when entering Canada from the U.S. Visas may be obtained from the [Canadian Consulate General](#) at 1251 Avenue of the Americas (at 50th Street, tel. 596-1600) between 8:00 and 10:00 am. Consult the Canadian Consulate General for visa regulations concerning your country before making travel arrangements.

**Mexican visas**- Tourist cards or visas may be required for travel to Mexico. Information is available from the [New York Consulate General of Mexico](#), 27 East 39 Street, telephone (212) 821-0313 or 821-0378.

**Travel within the U.S.** - In general, special permission is not needed to travel within the continental U.S.. However, we recommend that you carry with you your passport, I-94, and I-20 or DS-2019 when you travel any distance from home.

## Pre-Departure Information Resources

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Once you arrive at Columbia, you will be very busy! First, settling into your housing, learning your way around the campus and the city, meeting new people all take time and energy. It will be a challenge to keep up with all the information you will be receiving during orientation, and then classes begin! Before you arrive may be the best time to read and prepare yourself for the move to New York and the academic system in the United States. Here is some information we hope you find useful.

The Department of State provides support to a network of Educational Advising/ Information Centers around the world. In addition to advising prospective international students on higher education in the United States, they can provide you with pre-departure materials and may conduct pre-departure orientation programs for students from your country or region who are going to the United States to study. Some programs offer participants the chance to meet fellow students who have recently spent time in the United States. Contact your nearest center well in advance of your departure for their program schedule and to reserve a place. Some centers may charge a fee for these programs. For more information, refer to <http://educationusa.state.gov/centers.htm>.

The U.S. Department of State's United States Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs provides educational information on-line. We highly recommend that you refer to their website "*Living in the U.S.*" at <http://educationusa.state.gov/life.htm>.

Social Customs and Cultural Differences are addressed at <http://www.edupass.org/culture/>. This is interesting to read before you get here, and useful to continue to refer to as you adjust to living in the U.S.

Funding for International Students—some links:

<http://finaid.org/scholarships/>

<http://www.iefaf.org/>

[http://www.iie.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About\\_IIE/Scholarships\\_Awards\\_and\\_Grants/Scholarships\\_Awards\\_and\\_Grants.htm](http://www.iie.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About_IIE/Scholarships_Awards_and_Grants/Scholarships_Awards_and_Grants.htm)

## Keys to Academic Success

To succeed in the U.S. academic system, you need to know how it is organized and how it works. Listed below are some suggestions you should keep in mind as you begin your studies. You will learn more of the informal rules for academic success as your courses progress and you have the opportunity to talk with advanced students in your field. The more you discuss such topics with experienced students, the sooner you will be able to develop an understanding of how your academic unit functions. Keep in mind that you may need a period of adjustment before you are able to demonstrate the best of your ability.

*Expect to find different values in the U.S. educational system.* From your successful experience in other academic systems, you have developed certain assumptions about the purposes and methods of education and about the way your field of interest should be studied. For example, you may assume that it is important to memorize large quantities of information, or that the way to study your field is to concentrate on a very limited aspect of it in great depth. Here, on the other hand, you may find that memorizing material is considered less important than synthesizing ideas from a variety of sources, or that a field of study might be approached by contemplating briefly the works of a large number of scholars. It is important to recognize that differences of this kind exist between the systems of the United States and other countries, and to understand that you may have to adjust your thinking.

*Know what is expected by the instructor.* Professors do not have a prescribed way of teaching or grading students at Columbia University. You must determine what each professor expects of his or her students. Sometimes you must attend every class and actively participate in class discussion. Other times the expectation will be that papers be handed in at various intervals, with attendance or class participation seen as less important. It is your responsibility to be absolutely clear about your professor's expectations.

*Talk with your instructors.* Professors here expect students to ask questions in class or immediately after it. They also expect students to consult them in their offices when there are problems. If you are not doing well and

you do not go to see the professor about the situation, he or she may assume that you are not serious about the class. In other words, most professors will evaluate the attitude of a student as negative or, at best, indifferent if the student never raises questions either in class or out of it. If at any time you feel unsure of what is expected of you in class or are troubled by some aspect of the work, ask the professor and some of your fellow students about it.

*Select your courses wisely.* When arranging your course schedule, consult not only your academic adviser but also experienced students familiar with available courses and professors. Try to choose a combination of more demanding and less demanding courses, rather than only difficult ones requiring unusually heavy amounts of work. If it is possible, especially early in your program, do not take more courses than you must.

*Keep up with readings and assignments.* If you are accustomed to waiting until halfway through the term to begin studying, you will need to change your approach.

Here are some helpful websites with more information concerning study skills:

<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/>

<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning/tentt.html>

<http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/helplist.htm>

## Purposes of the U.S. Academic System

The U.S. system, as a whole, is intended to provide a broad education for as many people as possible. Higher education is viewed as a public good that supports democratic governance. There is no screening examination to direct a student into an academic or non-academic track at an early age. A high proportion of the population completes both secondary school and post-secondary education.

The U.S. system also produces specialists, people who have studied a limited range of topics in depth. Specialization comes later in the U.S. system than in many others. It is not until the third (junior) year of undergraduate (first degree) work that a student concentrates on the study of his or her major field. At that point, students mainly take courses in their major field. Students who have received the bachelor's degree from U.S. schools will normally have a theoretical

knowledge of the field of study rather than a practical one. First degrees offered by other educational systems often omit the general education component of the U.S. bachelors, but may represent study in the major subject approaching that reached at the U.S. masters level.

There is further specialization in U.S. graduate work. At the graduate level, students study only their major subject along with languages or other subjects that will aid them in their field of study. Most original research is done at the doctoral level.

## The Central Value of Academic Honesty

The most serious offense in the academic world is to represent another person's work as your own. This is called "plagiarism". Sadly, each year several international students are expelled from the University for plagiarism.

When you are writing an academic paper of any kind (including, for example, an essay exam) you must be sure to acknowledge, in the paper itself, any ideas you have taken from other people or written sources. Furthermore, if you wish to copy something word for word from a source you must put quotation marks around it in addition to giving written credit to the author. If you are ever in doubt about when and how to properly acknowledge a source, be sure to ask your professor, academic adviser, or other students. Books on proper writing styles are available at the Columbia Bookstore. You may also refer to the following websites for more information on the definition of plagiarism and how to avoid it:

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

Talking during examinations (especially in a foreign language), copying from another's paper and having someone else do your work are unacceptable. Please be aware that something as simple as asking to borrow a pencil or using another's calculator during an examination can be misunderstood. As noted, penalties for cheating can result in expulsion from the University.

## Organization of the Academic System

### Methods of the Academic System

**Continuous Assessment** In many courses you will be assessed or "graded" on every assignment given to you including homework, "pop" quizzes, and class participation. Sometimes these can be a major part of the overall assessment or grade given at the end of the course. Some professors may deduct marks from your overall average if you do not attend classes.

**Examinations** There are many examinations at the undergraduate level. Nearly every class has a "final" at the end of the term and most also have a "midterm". Additional tests or "quizzes" may be given with some frequency, or even without notice. At the graduate level, examinations are less frequent and term papers (see below) are more common. All examinations are designed to assure that students are doing the work assigned, and to assess their understanding of a subject. There are two general types.

*Objective examinations* test one's knowledge of particular facts. International students may have difficulty with objective examinations, not because they do not know the subject, but because they are unfamiliar with the format of the questions and their knowledge of English may not be strong enough to enable them to distinguish subtle differences in meaning. Objective examinations generally consist of five kinds of questions:

- Multiple choice: from a series of possible answers, you select the most appropriate one (or more).
- Matching: two columns of words, phrases, or statements are given, and you indicate the related pairs.
- True or false: a list of statements is given; you indicate which are valid and which are not.
- Identification: you give the source and a brief explanation of the significance of certain names, terms, or phrases.
- Blanks: you fill in the gaps in given phrases or statements so as to render them complete and correct.

*Subjective examinations*, sometimes called essay examinations, require the student to compose a full response to a question or statement. This kind of examination tests one's ability to organize and communicate his or her knowledge of a particular subject.

For strategies on test taking, see these websites:  
<http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/testskil.htm>  
<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/testprep.html>

**Laboratories** Some courses require work in a laboratory, where the theory learned in the classroom is applied to practical problems.

**Lectures** The most common method of instruction here is the classroom lecture. Lectures usually are supplemented by classroom discussion (especially in small classes), by reading assignments in textbooks or library books, and by periodic written assignments.

It is important that you contribute to discussion in the classroom. In some countries it is considered disrespectful for the student to question or challenge the professor, but in this country it is viewed as a healthy sign of interest, attention, and independent thinking—as long as it is within a context of mutual respect. In many classes part of your grade will be determined by your contribution to discussion.

When the class is too large to permit questions and discussion, or if for some reason you do not have the opportunity to raise questions, you may see your professor privately during his or her office hours or make an appointment for another convenient hour. Instructors usually announce their office hours at the first meeting of the class.

**Seminars** The seminar is a small class at the advanced undergraduate or graduate level. It is likely to be devoted entirely to discussion. Students are often required to prepare presentations based on their independent reading and research.

**Term papers** In many courses you will be required to write a comprehensive paper based on study or research you have done in the library or laboratory. Your professor will usually assign such a paper in the early part of the course.

You are expected to work on it during the term and submit it near the end. The grade you receive on the paper will carry significant weight in determining your grade for the course.

Booklets available in bookstores and the libraries explain the format you must use for footnotes and bibliographies. If you have questions about a particular term paper assignment, discuss them with your professor as early as possible. Papers are typewritten.

The following are useful websites with information on writing papers:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/html/tools.htm>

<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/writing.html>

## Research

Academic Information Systems (AcIS) provides facilities and services to help you with your research. AcIS operates a large cluster of central computer systems for instruction, academic research, and network services as well as clusters of public workstations and printers. AcIS also provides free information on how to use the computer system and consultants are available to answer questions as they come up. The computing Support Center offers personal assistance to students with questions or problems with AcIS services or personal computing. The Helpdesk phone is 212 854-1919 and the email address is [consultant@columbia.edu](mailto:consultant@columbia.edu). For more information, refer to the website at <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/>.

Columbia has one of the largest university collections in the United States. The extensive resources available in 22 Columbia Libraries include more than seven million volumes with over 100,000 being added annually, plus an additional three million units of microfilm, and 48,000 serial titles. Students also may request materials not available in the Columbia libraries through Inter-Library Loan. With these services, most of the libraries within the United States are available to you. This vast information will help you in your research only if you learn how to access it. Each library on the campus has trained employees who are happy to answer your questions about its organization, the location of specific materials, bibliographies, and special services. One very helpful service is "CLIO". Columbia Libraries Information Online (CLIO) makes available, from all library locations, records of materials recently catalogued.

More information on libraries can be found on line at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/>.

# Housing

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## University Housing

Because housing in New York City is scarce and very expensive, you are strongly advised to apply for University housing for at least the first year. Only undergraduate students accepted to Columbia College and the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science are assured of University housing. Application for University housing for Columbia College and under-graduate students of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science is made directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Complete information on University Residence Halls is available on their Web site at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/reshalls/>.

If you are a student in another of the Morningside campus schools, application is made to your school's admissions office. Apply to the Medical Center's Housing Office if you will attend one of the Medical Center schools. If you have not yet received an application for University housing and wish to apply, you should contact the appropriate admissions office immediately for the application form.

Complete information on the application process for University housing is available on Columbia's Web site. Those who will attend another Morningside campus school should access <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/>. Students at the Medical Center should access <http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/hshousing/>.

Do not assume that a room is reserved unless you have received written confirmation of the reservation. A nonrefundable deposit is required upon assignment of a room. You will be notified of the date that you may move into your residence hall or apartment. If you plan to arrive in New York before your move in date, you will want to arrange for temporary housing (see below).

University housing is unable to accommodate all of Columbia's married graduate students. Unless you are able to obtain housing in advance, we advise you not to bring your family with you and to send for them only when you have found suitable housing. Each student is responsible for making his or her own arrangements for housing. **The International Students and Scholars**

**Office and the International Affairs Office cannot arrange housing accommodations.**

## Non-University Housing

Non-University housing is difficult to find and rentals are extremely expensive. If you hope to obtain non-University housing, try to come to New York *at least* three weeks ahead of time, and pre-arrange a temporary place to stay for one to two weeks. It is recommended you start your search no earlier than four weeks before your desired move-in date, and that you be as flexible as possible with your plans. An investment of time and money early on in your search may save you a good deal of both in the longer term.

**The Off Campus Housing Assistance (OCHA) Office is a University Office that can be very helpful in your search.** OCHA has information about various neighborhoods, relationships with reputable real estate brokers, and maintains online listings of non-Columbia owned rooms and apartments for lease, sublet, or share—long or short term, furnished or unfurnished—throughout New York City. You must have a Columbia ID and password to access their online listings, but new admits to the University may arrange access by sending a copy of their admission letter. Details are available on the OCHA Web site at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/ocha>. Of special interest on this site is a section called *Tips on Apartment Hunting*. The OCHA office is located at 419 W. 119th Street, lower level, between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive. OCHA's phone number is 212-854-2773 and the office is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

You will need to have immediate access to cash so that you can provide the deposit after you are approved for an apartment. It would be wise to bring your funds to the United States in U.S. dollar traveler's checks. Your funds will be insured against loss or theft and traveler's checks are easily given to the real estate broker or landlord for your deposit. When renting a room or an apartment, you should always request a lease with all relevant charges noted, such as rent, and any other costs charged to you (electricity, gas, etc.) from the landlord. Without a lease, you have no binding agreement, and your landlord may decide to alter arrangements previously agreed upon.

When you are apartment hunting, you will be making a lot of phone calls and you will need to leave a number at which you can be reached. It can be inconvenient to make these calls from public phones, and costly from a hotel room. You can make this easier if you set up wireless/cellular service for a month soon after arrival. Many of the following companies offer short-term pre-pay for minutes plans without a contractual obligation. Some companies to look into are:

AT &T Wireless Services ([www.attws.com/](http://www.attws.com/))

Sprint PCS ([www.sprintpcs.com/](http://www.sprintpcs.com/))

Verizon ([www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com))

Voicestream ([www.voicestream.com](http://www.voicestream.com))

Cingular ([www.cingular.com](http://www.cingular.com))

OCHA has a list of dealers nearby.

Students at the Medical Center can inquire about off-campus rentals in the Health Sciences Housing Office, Bard Hall, Room 105 (telephone 212-305-5884, or see the web site at <http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/hshousing/>).

## Temporary Housing Options

This list of temporary housing options has evolved over several years in collaboration with the Off-Campus Housing Assistance office (OCHA). **Accommodations are not inspected or "approved" by the ISSO or OCHA.** Listing of accommodations does not constitute recommendation of such facilities, nor is the accuracy of the description verified.

You should check current availability and the cost of the accommodations when making a reservation; prices noted here were effective in May 2003 but change seasonally. Mention that you are a Columbia student/affiliate to receive any possible discounts.

All listings are located in Manhattan unless otherwise indicated. Hotels near the airports are grouped together at the end of this document. An asterisk (\*) indicates walking distance to Columbia.

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### INSTITUTIONAL GUEST ROOMS WITHIN THE COLUMBIA NEIGHBORHOOD

Please note that most of the following have a maximum of 7 nights stay. These rates do not include tax and are subject to change seasonally.

#### \*INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

500 Riverside Drive (at W. 122 St.)

New York, NY 10027

Phone: (212) 316-8473

<http://ihouse-nyc.org/>

11 Guest Rooms (maximum stay is 30 days)

Single/Double: \$115-140

Triple: \$135-145

#### \*TEACHERS COLLEGE - WHITTIER HALL

1230 Amsterdam Ave. (at W. 120 St.)

(212) 678-3235

12 Guest Rooms; complex pricing structure from \$45 - \$100 per night for singles, doubles, and suites with kitchen/bath. Call for details M-F.

#### \*UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY - LANDMARK GUEST ROOMS

3041 Broadway (at W. 121 St.)

212-280-1313

<http://www.uts.columbia.edu>

25 Guest Rooms. Single/Double: \$120 and up (w/private bath)

Complimentary breakfast included M-F. Local calls are free.

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### DORM-STYLE / HOSTEL ACCOMODATIONS

This type of accommodation usually has fully furnished private or shared rooms, shared bathrooms, and sometimes a kitchen available. There is usually a maximum stay of 28 days.

#### BIG APPLE HOSTEL

119 W. 45<sup>th</sup> St. (between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

(212) 302-2603

[www.bigapplehostel.com](http://www.bigapplehostel.com)

Shared room \$33

Private room \$90

Shared bathrooms. Includes cable TV and linens.

Maximum stay is 21 days.

#### CHELSEA CENTER HOSTEL

313 W. 29<sup>TH</sup> St. (between 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

(212) 643-0214  
Daily: \$30  
Shared rooms and baths. Includes breakfast and linens.  
Kitchen available.  
Maximum length of stay is one week.

#### **CHELSEA INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL**

251 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7 & 8 Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 647-0010, Email:  
[chelsea\\_international\\_hostel@msn.com](mailto:chelsea_international_hostel@msn.com)  
[www.chelseahostel.com](http://www.chelseahostel.com)

Dorm: \$27  
Private room: \$65  
Shared cooking facilities, laundry, shared baths. Lockers available. Does not provide towels or locks for lockers.  
Must present passport.

#### **DE HIRSCH RESIDENCE**

(Operated by the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street YM-YWHA)  
1395 Lexington Avenue (At 92<sup>nd</sup> Street)  
Phone: (212) 415-5650; (800) 858-4692; Fax: (212) 415-5578

[www.92ndsty.org](http://www.92ndsty.org) or [www.dehirsch.com](http://www.dehirsch.com)

Single: \$1,095 and up/month  
Double: \$895 and up/person/month  
Minimum stay is 30 days and maximum is one year.  
Share baths and kitchens. Must apply a couple of months in advance. Fully furnished.

#### **HARLEM YMCA**

180 W. 135<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> & Lenox Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 281-4100  
Private room \$50, Doubles \$100 per day (shared bath)  
Doubles or Private room w/ private bath \$125 per day  
Private room: \$150/week/seniors (65+), \$350/week all others. \$175/week/students  
Microwave available, linens provided. Maximum stay is 28 days.

#### **\*HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL**

891 Amsterdam Avenue (At 103<sup>rd</sup> Street)  
Phone: (212) 932-2300, Email: [hiayhny@aol.com](mailto:hiayhny@aol.com)  
[www.hostelling.com](http://www.hostelling.com)  
Daily: \$29 - 35/day (HI members), \$32 - \$38/day (non-members)  
Includes linens and towels, shared kitchen and bath.

#### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER**

38 W. 88<sup>th</sup> Street (at Central Park West)  
Phone: (212) 787-7706; Fax (212) 580-9283

Daily: \$20  
Reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance, or check possible availability the morning you wish to stay. 2-week maximum stay. Provides linens, shared bath & kitchen, no lockers, but there is a safe.

#### **\*JAZZ ON THE PARK**

36 W. 106<sup>th</sup> Street (between Central Park West and Manhattan Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 932-1600  
[www.jazzonthepark.com](http://www.jazzonthepark.com) or [jazzonthepark@hotmail.com](mailto:jazzonthepark@hotmail.com)  
Daily: \$27-\$30 (dorm room)  
Weekly \$200 - rates are for Columbia University students and affiliates only.  
Includes full continental breakfast. Offers organized events and jazz in the evenings. Karaoke and BBQ on Saturdays.

#### **MANHATTAN YOUTH CASTLE**

1596 Lexington Ave. (between E. 101<sup>st</sup> & 102<sup>nd</sup> St.)  
Phone: (212) 831-4440 [www.youthcastle.com](http://www.youthcastle.com)  
Daily: \$30 (1-3 nights).  
Weekly: \$120, 4 weeks/\$360 (call for details on pricing)  
Dorm-style rooms with shared baths.

#### **SUGAR HILL INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

722 St. Nicholas Avenue (at 146<sup>th</sup> St.)  
Phone: (212) 926-7030  
Email: [info@sugarhillhostel.com](mailto:info@sugarhillhostel.com) or <http://www.sugarhillhostel.com/>  
Daily: \$25/person (dorm). Doubles for \$30/person/night, 2-week maximum stay, 7-day advance purchase: \$20/person/night (dorm) or \$25/person/night for a double.  
Shared Kitchen and bath.

#### **VANDERBILT YMCA**

224 E. 47<sup>th</sup> Street (between Second & Third Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 756-9600; Fax (212) 752-0210  
Daily: \$65 – 79/single/double occupancy/shared bath  
Premium Rooms: \$95-135

#### **WEST SIDE YMCA**

5 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street (at Central Park West)  
Phone: (212) 875-4100; Fax: (212) 875-1334  
[www.ymcanyc.org](http://www.ymcanyc.org)  
Daily: \$59 – 69

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**ACCOMMODATIONS from NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Usually private furnished rooms with shared bath. No cooking facilities but may have up to 2 meals provided. Usually require reservations a few months in advance.

**THE BRANDON**

340 W. 85th Street  
Phone: (212) 496-6901  
[brandon@voa-gny.org](mailto:brandon@voa-gny.org)

Daily: \$60, Monthly: \$895 – \$1067  
Shared bath, 2 meals per day. Housekeeping Services. 24/7 Front Desk. Women only.

**CENTRO MARIA RESIDENCE**

539 W. 54<sup>th</sup> Street (Between Tenth & Eleventh Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 757-6989; Fax: (212) 307-5687

Single: \$175/week  
Double: \$150/person/week

Curfew 11:30 PM. Breakfast and dinner included. \$85 registration fee is nonrefundable. Student rate available. Operated by the Religious Sisters of Mary Immaculate.

**Women only, Must be 18-29 Years of age.**

**EL CARMELO RESIDENCE**

249 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 242-8224; Fax: (212) 242-7233  
Weekly: \$160

Variable rates depending on length of stay. Curfew. Breakfast and dinner included five days a week. **Women only, must be between 18-30 years of age.**

**GREENPOINT YMCA**

99 Meserole Avenue, Brooklyn  
Phone: (718) 389-3700 ext.13; Fax: (718) 349-2146  
Daily: \$43 – 58, Weekly: \$231-350  
Shared bath. Full access to facilities. Breakfast included. 10% student discount.

**JAMAICA YMCA**

89-25 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica (Queens)  
Phone: (718) 739-6600; Fax (718) 658-7233  
Daily: \$48, Weekly: \$332  
\$550/month for students w/ proof of registration. Student rate available w/ID. \$10 key deposit. 28 day maximum stay if non-student.

**JEANNE D'ARC RESIDENCE**

253 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 989-5952

Monthly: \$300-500  
Long waiting list, call at the end of the month for application. Prefer three-month minimum stay. **Women only.**

**KOLPING HOUSE**

165 E. 88<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 369-6647; Fax: (212) 987-5652  
Daily: \$50  
Weekly: \$165

Includes lunch or dinner M-F. Shared bath. Make reservations 3 months in advance. Maximum stay 3 months. Preference given to graduate or international students. Operated by the Catholic Kolping Society of New York. **Men only.**

**MARKLE EVANGELINE RESIDENCE**

123 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 242-2400; Fax (212) 229-2801  
Weekly: \$140 – 240

Includes 2 meals of choice per day. Shared baths. Minimum stay of one month. Application needed 4-6 weeks in advance. Operated by the Salvation Army. **Women only.**

**PARKSIDE EVANGELINE RESIDENCE**

18 Gramercy Park South  
Phone: (212) 677-6200; Fax: (212) 677-0640  
Weekly: \$198 – 227

Private and shared baths. Operated by the Salvation Army. Includes 2 meals per day. Three month minimum stay. **Women only.**

**PENNINGTON FRIENDS HOUSE**

215 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street (Near Third Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 673-1730  
Daily: 80-115  
Monthly: \$622-961.  
Operated by the Quaker community. Breakfast and dinner included.

**SACRED HEART**

432 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street (between 9-10 Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 929-5790; Fax (212) 924-0891  
Weekly: \$240  
Breakfast and dinner included Monday through Friday, curfew. **Women only.**

**ST. MARY'S RESIDENCE**

225 E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 249-6850; Fax: (212) 249-4336  
Weekly: \$165 - \$215 depending on length of stay.  
Shared bath. Two years maximum stay. No meals served  
– kitchenette available. No smoking building. **Women  
only.**

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## STUDENT HOUSING SERVICES

### EDUCATIONAL HOUSING SERVICES STUDENT HOUSING CENTER

Administrative Office: 23 Lexington Avenue  
Phone: (212) 977-9099

[www.studenthousing.org](http://www.studenthousing.org) or  
[reservations@studenthousing.org](mailto:reservations@studenthousing.org)

Has three facilities in **Brooklyn** and one in **Manhattan**:

**ST. GEORGE RESIDENCE** (Weller Building and Studio  
Building) 100 Henry Street, Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn

Phone: (718) 977-9099,

Email: [reservations@studenthousing.org](mailto:reservations@studenthousing.org) or

[www.studenthousing.org](http://www.studenthousing.org)

Semester: \$3,400-4,275

Community kitchen available.

**TILLARY STREET RESIDENCE** 202 Tillary Street,  
Brooklyn

Phone: (212) 977-9099, Email:

[reservations@studenthousing.org](mailto:reservations@studenthousing.org) or

[www.studenthousing.org](http://www.studenthousing.org)

Semester: \$3,000-4,000

Kitchen in every unit.

**EASTSIDE RESIDENCE** 224 E. 47<sup>th</sup> St. (between 2<sup>nd</sup>  
and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.), NY, NY 10017

Semester; \$4,200

Meal plan available.

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## HOTELS

Generally indicates that no kitchens—or meals are  
provided. Some have a choice of private or shared bath.

### ABINGDON GUEST HOUSE

13 Eighth Avenue (between 12 St & Jane St.)

Phone: (212) 243-5384; Fax: (212) 807-7473

[abingdon@msn.com](mailto:abingdon@msn.com) or [www.abingdonguesthouse.com](http://www.abingdonguesthouse.com)

Daily: \$137 and up. Private rooms and baths.

### AMSTERDAM INN

340 Amsterdam Ave. (at W. 76 St.)

(212) 579-7500

<http://www.nyinns.com/>

Daily: \$59 - 129

Private rooms with private or shared baths.

### BEACON HOTEL

2130 Broadway (between 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Streets)

Phone: (212) 787-1100

[www.beaconhotel.com/](http://www.beaconhotel.com/)

Daily: \$145 – 195

Private baths.

### BELVEDERE HOTEL

319 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (407) 740-6442; Fax: (407) 740-8222

[info@reservation-services.com](mailto:info@reservation-services.com) or [www.reservation-services.com](http://www.reservation-services.com)

Daily: \$125 - 210

### BEST WESTERN/WOODWARD

210 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 247-2000; Fax: (212) 581-2248

Daily: \$169 - 299

### CARLTON ARMS HOTEL

160 E. 25<sup>th</sup> Street (Off Third Avenue)

Phone: (212) 679-0680

[www.carltonarms.com](http://www.carltonarms.com)

Daily: \$60 (single) - \$117 (4 people) per night reflects  
discounted student rate. Further weekly discount  
available.

### CHELSEA STAR HOTEL

300 W. 30<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 244-7827 or toll free (877) 827-6969

Dorm Rooms: \$30/day

Single: \$69 (with shared bath)

Double: \$89 (for the room with shared bath)

### CHELSMORE APARTMENTS

205 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street

(212) 924-7991 press #2 for reservations

[www.chelsmore.com](http://www.chelsmore.com)

Monthly: \$1,500-3,000. Furnished and unfurnished  
apartments.

### DOUBLETREE GUEST SUITES

1568 Broadway (at W. 47<sup>th</sup> St.)

(212) 719-1600

Single: \$239  
Double \$269 and up  
Microwave and refrigerator in rooms.

**EDISON HOTEL**

228 W. 47<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: 212 - 840-5000  
[www.edisonhotelnyc.com](http://www.edisonhotelnyc.com)  
Daily: \$160

**EXCELSIOR HOTEL**

45 W. 81<sup>ST</sup> St. (between Central Park West & Columbus Ave.)  
(212) 362-9200  
[www.excelsiorhotelnyc.com](http://www.excelsiorhotelnyc.com)  
Daily: \$140 and up

**GERSHWIN HOTEL**

7 E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street (between Fifth and Madison Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 545-8000 Fax: (212) 684-5546  
<http://newyork.citysearch.com/E/V/NYCNY/0003/99/26/>  
Dorm Style: \$33-53 (shared bath)  
Private Style: \$99 – 219 (economy suite)

**GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL**

<http://www.gramercyparkhotel.com/>  
Two Lexington Ave  
Phone: (800)-221-4083, Fax: (212)-505-0535  
Rates from \$210

**HABITAT HOTEL**

130 E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street (on 57<sup>th</sup> and Lexington Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 753-8841; Fax: (212) 829-9605  
[info@stayinny.com](mailto:info@stayinny.com) or [www.habitatny.com](http://www.habitatny.com)  
Daily: \$105-155  
Shared and private bath

**HOTEL BELLECLAIRE**

250 W. 77<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway & West End Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 362-7700, Fax: (212) 362-1004, Toll Free: (877) 468-3522  
[www.hotelbelleclaire.com](http://www.hotelbelleclaire.com)  
Daily: \$99-159  
Private art deco rooms with shared bath, 18 night maximum stay  
Special rate for students/affiliates of Columbia

**HOTEL LUCERNE**

201 W. 79<sup>th</sup> St. (at Amsterdam Ave.)

Phone: (212) 875-1000  
<http://www.thelucernehotel.com/>  
Single/Double: \$130-170  
Junior Suite: \$210  
Parking: \$25

**HOTEL NEWTON**

2528 Broadway (at W. 94<sup>th</sup> St.)  
(212) 678-6500  
<http://www.thehotelnewton.com/>  
Single/Double: \$95 and up  
Parking: \$20

**HOTEL WALES**

1295 Madison Avenue (at 92<sup>nd</sup> Street)  
Phone: (212) 876-6000  
[www.boutiquehg.com](http://www.boutiquehg.com)  
Daily: \$139-329

**HOWARD JOHNSON**

851 Eighth Avenue (at 51<sup>st</sup> Street)  
[www.hojo.com](http://www.hojo.com)  
Phone: (212) 581-4100; Fax: (212) 974-7502  
Daily: \$89 – 299 (depending on season)

**LEO HOUSE**

332 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 929-1010  
Daily: \$62 – 78  
Shared or private bath.

**MILBURN HOTEL**

242 W. 76<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and West End Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 362-1006  
[www.milburnhotel.com/](http://www.milburnhotel.com/)  
Studio: \$135/day  
Suite: \$165/day (up to 5 people can be accommodated in Suites for an additional per person charge). Mention that you are from Columbia University.

**MURRAY HILL INN**

143 E. 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 545-0879; Fax: (212) 545-0103  
[www.murrayhillinn.com](http://www.murrayhillinn.com)  
Daily: \$99-109. Single occupant room with private bath.

**PARK SAVOY HOTEL**

158 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street (between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 245-5755; Fax: (212) 765-0668

[www.citysearch.com](http://www.citysearch.com)

Daily: \$85-155

#### **PORTLAND SQUARE HOTEL**

132 W. 47<sup>th</sup> Street (between Avenue of the Americas and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Phone: (212) 382-0600 or (800) 388-8988; Fax (212) 382-0684

Daily: \$65/shared bath/\$110-160/private bath

#### **QUALITY HOTEL ON BROADWAY**

215 W. 94<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 866-6400 or (800) 695-8284; Fax: (212) 866-1357

Daily: \$90 and up

#### **RADIO CITY APARTMENTS**

142 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street (between Avenue of the Americas and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Phone: 1-(877) 921-9321 or (212) 730-0728; Fax: (212) 921-0572.

<http://www.radiocityapartments.com/>

Daily: \$152 and up

#### **RIVERSIDE TOWER HOTEL**

80 Riverside Dr. (at W. 80 St.)

(212) 877-5200

[www.riversidetowerhotel.com](http://www.riversidetowerhotel.com)

Single: \$98

Double \$100

Suites: \$115-150 (up to 5 people)

Cooking facilities

#### **RIVERVIEW HOTEL**

113 Jane Street (between Washington St. & the West Side Highway)

Phone: (212) 929-0060; Fax: (212) 675-8581

[hriverview@aol.com](mailto:hriverview@aol.com)

Daily: \$40 single, \$65 double (shared bath)

Weekly: \$202 single, \$306.50 double (shared bath)

[www.hotelriverview.com](http://www.hotelriverview.com)

No private baths, theater on premises.

#### **SEAFARER INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

15<sup>th</sup> Street & Irving Place

Phone: (212) 677-4800 [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org)

Daily: \$50

Shared bath. Students need letter from their school verifying current registration or a valid student ID card.

MasterCard or Visa needed to hold reservation.

Maximum stay is 21 nights.

#### **TRAVEL INN**

515 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> St.

(212) 695-7171

[www.nyhotel.com](http://www.nyhotel.com)

Single/Double: \$125-250

Free Parking

#### **WESTPARK HOTEL**

6 Columbus Circle, at 58<sup>th</sup> St.

Phone: (212) 246-6440 or (800) 248-6440; Fax: (212) 246-3131

[Westparkny@aol.com](mailto:Westparkny@aol.com) or [www.westparkhotel.com](http://www.westparkhotel.com)

Daily: \$139-249

#### **WYNDHAM HOTEL**

42 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 753-3500

Daily: \$140 – 170

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#### **AIRPORT HOTELS**

To make a reservation any of the following hotels near New York's three airports, call 1-888-382-7213 in the US or 516-771-7213 from outside US or go to <http://www.bookahotel.com/bookahotel.htm> and select "New York Airport Hotels".

#### **JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT (JFK)**

The following hotels are located four miles from JFK Airport and twenty miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to JFK. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking. Cancellation policy 24hrs in advance.

#### **SHERATON FOUR POINTS**

151-20 Baisley Blvd

Single: \$139

Double: \$149

#### **HOLIDAY INN AT JFK**

144-02 135th Avenue

Single: \$149

Double: \$159

#### **RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL**

Only hotel located in JFK Intl Airport

Single: \$139  
Double: \$149

**PAN AMERICAN HOTEL**

79-00 Queens Blvd

Single: \$129  
Double: \$149

Located six miles from JFK airport and five miles from LaGuardia airport. Has free shuttle pick up and drop off to both JFK and LaGuardia airports.

**LA GUARDIA AIRPORT (LGA)**

The following hotels are located one mile from LaGuardia Airport and eight miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to LaGuardia. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking. Cancellation policy 24hrs in advance.

**CLARION HOTEL LAGUARDIA**

9400 Ditmars Blvd

Single: \$126  
Double: \$135

**CROWN PLAZA LAGUARDIA**

104-04 Ditmars Blvd

Single: \$159  
Double: \$169

**LAGUARDIA MARRIOTT**

102-05 Ditmars Boulevard, East. Elmhurst (Queens)

Phone: (718) 565-8900; Fax: (718) 898-4955

<http://marriotthotels.com/marriott/>

Single: \$139 and up.

**PAN AMERICAN HOTEL**

79-00 Queens Blvd

Single: \$129  
Double: \$149

Located six miles from JFK airport and five miles from LGA airport. Has free shuttle pick up and drop off to both JFK and LGA airports.

**NEWARK AIRPORT (EWR)**

The following hotels are located three miles from Newark Airport and about twelve miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to Newark. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking.

**RAMADA HOTEL AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

US 1&9 at Haynes Avenue

Single: \$109  
Double: \$119

**DAYS INN NEWARK AIRPORT**

450 Route 1 South

Single \$100  
Double \$115

**HOLIDAY INN NORTH AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

160 Frontage Road

Single: \$115  
Double: \$129

**ECONOLOGDE AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

853 Spring Street

Single: \$65, Double: \$75  
No restaurant.

**HILTON HOTEL AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

1170 Spring Street

Single: \$159, Double: \$169

## Other Resources for Housing

In addition to OCHA's services, listings of available apartments are published in the classified advertisements of a weekly newspaper, the *Village Voice*, on Wednesdays (Tuesdays on line at <http://www.villagevoice.com/realestate/> and in the *New York Times*, ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)). The *Times* Sunday *Real Estate* section is much larger than the daily listings.

General information about finding housing and getting settled in New York City can be found in the book *Help Yourself to Housing* published by Metro International and available on-line at <http://www.metrointl.org/programs/housingbooklet/>.

Other resources:

<http://www.thesublet.com/>

[http://www.collegesublease.com/college\\_sublease\\_rent\\_links.htm](http://www.collegesublease.com/college_sublease_rent_links.htm)

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

<http://www.newyork.citysearch.com>

## Money Matters

### Estimated Expenses

The following is an overview of expenses—*excluding tuition*—that you will encounter during one academic year (9 months) at Columbia University:

#### Monthly Expenses

<b>Room</b>	<b>\$760.00</b>
<b>Board (food)</b>	<b>\$410.00</b>
<b>Medical (including insurance)</b>	<b>\$175.00</b>
<b>Books</b>	<b>\$70.00</b>
<b>Personal (including transportation)</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,615.00</u></b>
<b>Total for 1 semester</b>	<b>\$7,265.00</b>
<b><u>Total for 1 academic year</u></b>	<b><u>\$14,530.00</u></b>

A similar estimate of expenses appears on your visa certificate. Remember that the estimate given is conservative. New York is one of the most expensive cities in the world, and it is extremely difficult to live on less than the indicated amount. These figures do not include thesis expenses, photocopying, or other miscellaneous academic expenses. Also, if you plan to remain in the United States during your summer vacation periods and your visa certificate lists costs for only nine months, you will need additional funds amounting to 30–35 percent of your nine-month living expense figure. Married students accompanied by spouse and children should be prepared to provide additional funds for their families of at least \$700 per month for their spouse and \$350 for each child.

For one of many on-line currency converters, go to <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

As you plan your budget, keep the following in mind:

1. You may be required to take English courses in conjunction with a reduced academic program or

English courses exclusively. No degree credit is given for these courses; they will lengthen the time you will need to earn your degree and increase your costs.

2. You are required to register full-time every semester
3. If you have accepted an assistantship, you will receive a salary that will be subject to city, state, and federal taxes. (Your salary may be exempt from federal taxes if there is a tax treaty between your home country and the United States.)
4. United States tax law requires the University to withhold tax at the rate of 14 percent on scholarship and fellowship grants paid to individuals on temporary visas, including Student (F-1) and Exchange Visitor (J-1), that exceed the cost of tuition and fees.
5. In the United States, you are responsible for the payment of medical and hospital charges. These charges are high, and all students are urged to secure medical coverage both for themselves and their families. Medical insurance is required of all full-time Columbia students and is also available for dependents through Columbia University at additional cost. Students in J-1 immigration status and their dependents are required by immigration regulation to have medical insurance at all times.

Plan to have your funds for tuition, fees, and living expenses available before each academic term. You will be notified when payments for tuition and fees or University housing are required prior to the general registration period. In most cases, new students receive a preliminary bill from the University approximately two months before the term begins. Tuition and fees may vary according to your program. You should consult the detailed information in the handbook *Guide to Fees and Payments*, produced by Student Financial Services and usually included with the preliminary bill. You are expected to pay any bill by the due date noted on the bill.

Students in Morningside campus schools who have questions about their bill may contact Student Financial Services, 210 Kent Hall, by telephone at 212-854-4206,

or by email at [sfs@columbia.edu](mailto:sfs@columbia.edu). Students at the Medical Center (including those in the biomedical sciences in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences) should contact Student Financial Services, 1-141 Black Building, by telephone at 212-305-3633, by fax at 212-305-1590, or by email at [sashs@columbia.edu](mailto:sashs@columbia.edu). Student Financial Services makes every effort to respond to faxes and email within five business days, a better option than phone calls for many international students because of time differences.

If your country's currency exchange regulations require confirmation of your expenses for tuition or maintenance before you will be allowed to obtain dollar funds, please contact the International Students and Scholars Office or Immigration Affairs Office for certification as soon as possible. Please be specific regarding your needs. To obtain funds to cover your study expenses in later years, you may request monetary exchange letters from the ISSO or the IAO at any time.

## Bank Wire Transfer

Funds for your tuition and fees can be transferred directly to Columbia University by bank wire. This is easily and conveniently done; however, there may be a transaction fee or currency conversion fee involved—check with your bank on this. Please note, however, that you should **transfer funds to cover TUITION and FEE charges only**. Do not transfer funds for living expenses to Columbia.

Your bank wire must specify your name, the school of the University in which you will be enrolling (such as the School of Engineering), and that the funds are for tuition. You should also specify the term (September, January, May).

Bank wire transfer is made to:

Wachovia Bank NA  
50 Main Street  
White Plains, NY 10606  
Columbia University Account No: 2000011750143  
ABA # 031201467

If you have prearranged housing, we recommend you bring approximately U.S. \$3,000 in the form of U.S. dollar

“traveler’s checks” to cover immediate expenses for initial supplies and books, cold weather clothes, and such settling-in costs as security deposits for rent, telephone, and utilities. If you do not have prearranged housing, we recommend you bring approximately U.S. \$5,000 in the form of U.S. dollar traveler’s checks for your immediate expenses and read carefully the section on Non-University Housing.

## Neighborhood Banks

When deciding upon what bank to use, you will probably select the most convenient but you may want to compare banks in terms of service costs, minimum required balance or Interest rates. The following are New York banks with branches near the Columbia campus:

CitiBank: on campus at Alfred Lerner Hall, first floor, and at 2960 Broadway at West 111 Street

Chase Manhattan Bank: 2824 Broadway at West 109 Street

Washington Mutual: 2875 Broadway at 112 Street

Banco Popular: 2852 Broadway at West 111 Street

Columbia Credit Union: Alfred Lerner Hall, Room 505, fifth floor

Commerce Bank: 2831 Broadway at 109 Street

## Banking Definitions

### CHECKING ACCOUNT

Unlike many other countries, most Americans use personal checks as payment. You can set up a checking account at your bank. You will get a statement at the end of each month, which lists all your transactions as well as service charges, interest earned and your balance.

### ATM CARD

You can obtain an ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) card when you open up your bank account. This is convenient as you will be able to make transactions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As you set up your bank account, you will decide upon a PIN (personal identification

number) and will use this number for all your bank transactions. The PIN is confidential, so be careful with it. You will receive the actual ATM card in the mail within a week or so of setting up your account. The ISSO can provide you with a letter to verify your status as a student that will help you to set up your account. Although you will be asked for it, you do NOT require a Social Security number to open a bank account.

### DEBIT CARD

Many ATM cards can also be used as a debit card, which means that you can use the card, in lieu of cash, to pay for things with the money being subtracted from your account.

### CREDIT CARDS

As most international students have not lived in the U.S. for very long they will not have the required credit history to qualify for a credit card. If you have a credit card from home that you can use, bring it! Don’t assume you will be able to get one quickly when you arrive in the U.S. This can be quite inconvenient, as you are getting started here. High deposits may be asked for in order to get things like a mobile phone. Here are some strategies on establishing a credit history:

1. apply for a charge card at department stores
2. apply for a regular student credit card that has a low credit limit. Often there are representatives signing students up around campus the first two weeks. Check out Commerce Bank, American Express, Citibank, and Chase. The last two banks are in the neighborhood and you can speak with someone personally.
3. Pay your bills on time!

# Student Health Care and Insurance

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Health care in the United States is very good but very costly. There is no national medical care system or insurance program. You must pay for medical services. Hospital costs in the New York area can be \$2,000 a day, and that does not include physicians' fees, which are also very high. One cannot afford to be without medical insurance.

For this reason, the University requires all full-time students and strongly urges all dependents either to subscribe to the **University's Student Health Insurance or to have proof of comparable medical coverage**. If you believe that you already have, or can purchase a policy at home, be very sure that it is comparable to the one offered by Columbia. If not, you will not have your insurance requirement waived, and will end up paying for two. This has happened to international students in the past, so be careful. The Health Services web site has information on comparing medical coverage at <http://www.health.columbia.edu/ins/comparing>. If you and any dependents are in J immigration status, immigration regulations relating to your status require you *and* your family to have a comprehensive health insurance policy in order to maintain your status.

The university offers a two-part health care program: the Health Service and the Student Medical Insurance. **All full-time students are also required to pay the Student Health Service fee each semester.** The Columbia University Health Service provides a comprehensive range of programs to help students stay healthy and productive during their time at Columbia. Primary care, counseling, health education, and other medical services are offered free or at a nominal charge to students who have paid the Health Service fee. The clinic is staffed by full-time professionals and part-time specialists. Morningside students use the University Health Service located on the third and fourth floors of John Jay Hall (212-854-2284), while those registered at the Medical Center use the Student Health Service located on the street level of 60 Haven Avenue (212-305-3400).

The Health Services does a mailing in the summer to incoming students with information describing both the Health Service and the health insurance offered to you. This is also available on their web site at

<http://www.health.columbia.edu>. Do read it and try to understand it. Most of us don't think about health care unless and until we feel unwell. Negotiating health care systems can be overwhelming, especially when the system is unfamiliar to you. It's even more of a challenge when you have many other responsibilities and priorities to attend to. Now, before you get here, is a good opportunity to read the information, while you have more time. The ISSO will have a representative from the Health Services at our Orientation program, so you will have an opportunity to get your questions answered.

If you will be accompanied by any family members, it is imperative that your dependents also have adequate medical insurance. Dependents may be covered under the Student Medical Insurance plan, but the plan may not be as comprehensive as you would like. For J-1 dependents, More information regarding specific coverage plans can be obtained at the [Institute for International Education's \(IIE\) website](#). Here are some other insurance carrier options for international families that you may want to investigate.

Seabury & Smith <http://www.seaburychicago.com/>  
HTH Worldwide <http://www.hthstudents.com/voluntary.cfm>  
International SOS <http://www.internationalsos.com/>  
Wallach & Company <http://www.wallach.com/>  
Medex <http://www.medexassist.com/>  
CMI <http://www.studyabroadinsurance.com/>  
The Harbour Group <http://www.hginsurance.com/>  
NY International Group <http://www.nyig.com/>  
T.W. Lord and Associates Toll free: (800) 633-2360

## IMMUNIZATION

New York State has very strict regulations on proof of immunization against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). You are required to provide either proof of immunization or blood test results showing specified levels of MMR antibodies before you can register at a school in New York State. If you have not been immunized against MMR or have not had all three of these illnesses, you may want to consider getting immunized before you come to the United States. If you are unable to be immunized before leaving for the United States, you can receive the series of injections from the Student Health Service for a fee per injection. You will receive information about the MMR requirement directly from the Health Services this summer.

# Packing for New York

## Weather

During the summer, June through September, the weather is often hot and humid and requires lightweight clothing. The temperature ranges from 70 degrees Fahrenheit (21 degrees Celsius) to the 90s (above 32 degrees Celsius). A raincoat and an umbrella will be useful as there is considerable rain.

The winter season, late November through March, is marked by sudden and extreme weather changes; several days of cold weather may be followed by days of moderate temperatures. The range in winter is between 20 degrees Fahrenheit (-7 degrees Celsius) and 45 degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius), and occasionally the temperature drops to zero (-18 degrees Celsius). Days with snow or rain alternate with periods of clear and bright weather. The area around Columbia is quite windy.

The **spring and fall** seasons are generally moderate, the temperatures ranging from the 50s Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius) to the 70s (20s Celsius).

Updated weather information for New York City can be found on the The Weather Channel web page:

<http://www.weather.com/>

## What to Bring

When you arrive to the United States, it is important to carry the following documents **on your person or in carry-on luggage**:

- Passport: valid at least 6 months into the future
- Visa Stamp: should be stamped inside passport (excluding Canadians)
- I-20 issued by Columbia University
- Funding documentation: this may include personal bank statements, financial aid award, award letter from your department
- Street address where you will spend your first night in New York

The documents listed above are the most crucial ones that you could be required to present at the port of entry. In addition, the following items are strongly suggested:

- Credit Card that you can use in the US
- ATM card
- US Currency
- US Traveler's Checks
- Medications you use regularly; extra prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. Many drugs in the U.S. require a prescription from a doctor, so if you have a chronic health problem that requires medication, it is recommended to bring enough to last a while.
- Valuables such as jewelry, or items that can't be replaced if luggage is lost, such as personal photos or letters
- Experienced travelers recommend a change of clothing and toiletry items in case of unexpected delays, missed flight connections, or lost luggage

Moving overseas, and starting school in a new country can be an exciting, and rewarding experience that will stay with you for a lifetime. However, it can also be intimidating, frustrating, and at times seemingly inconvenient. We offer the following packing suggestions that may make your time in the US more comfortable:

1. **Pack lightly:** You will be responsible for carrying your own luggage, and often arrivals at New York (or any US airports) can be overwhelming. The last thing you want to worry about is your fleet of 50 pieces of luggage! Remember that anything you forget, you can purchase here. New York City is a major shopping metropolis, and almost anything you would want to buy is only a bus or subway ride away.

2. **Clothes and Fashion:** Refer to the section above that discusses the weather conditions here in New York. As a guideline, you should plan on bringing a variety of clothing options to accommodate Summer, Fall, and Winter. Since summers can be very hot and humid, you may wish to pack shorts, t-shirts, and sandals. Fall weather can vary in temperature, and anything from light-weight jackets to leather jackets are typically worn. The winter months call for warm overcoats, scarves, and winter boots. Since all buildings are heated, clothes of medium weight that you can layer provide the maximum comfort. If you are from a country that does not experience cold weather, you may want to wait to purchase a winter coat here in New York.

Footwear should be comfortable for walking. Sneakers are most common, as are boots during the Fall into Winter. Summers call for sneakers or sandals. Dress at

Columbia is typical of student style on most college campuses- casual. Students typically wear jeans, sneakers, and t-shirts. You may wish to pack a few semi-formal/formal items for special occasions. Also, depending on your major, a suit may be a good thing to have handy.

**3. Household Items:** It is recommended to purchase most of your household items (cooking and eating supplies, small electrical appliances, bed sheets and towels) here in the US. These items can add unnecessary weight when you travel, and most can be found for moderate prices. In particular, electrical items from your home country may not be compatible with the US electrical supply and usage may not be permitted in the university residence halls.

**4. Mementos from Home:** You may want to consider bringing some reminders of your home. Photographs of family, and friends, or other small significant items can be very comforting when you're in unfamiliar surroundings.

**5. Additional:**

- Camera
- Small souvenirs from your home to give as gifts
- CDs or cassette tapes of your favorite music
- Alarm clock
- Umbrella

## Getting to Campus

### Transportation from Airports

Columbia University is in the borough of Manhattan in New York City. The main entrances to the Morningside campus are at either Broadway or Amsterdam Avenue and W. 116th Street. The center of the Medical Center campus is located at W. 168th Street and Fort Washington Avenue.

The New York City area is served by three airports. John F. Kennedy (JFK) Airport and LaGuardia Airport are in the borough of Queens, and Newark Airport is in the state of New Jersey. JFK is approximately twenty-five miles from Columbia, LaGuardia is approximately fifteen miles

from Columbia, and Newark is about twenty miles from Columbia. Most international students will arrive at JFK. Transportation costs more to come from Newark Airport because it is in another state. LaGuardia Airport has international flights from Canada and Mexico only. All three airports have Ground Transportation Information Counters on the lower baggage claim level.

### Baggage Claim

After going through Immigration Inspection, you will walk to 'Baggage Claim' where you will get your suitcases. You can get a luggage cart for a few dollars by putting in U.S. dollars or by swiping a credit card. Depending upon what terminal you arrive in, the cart dispenser could be located near the baggage claim or it could be found right after immigration inspection. If you see the carts, don't wait, just get one! They disappear quickly. After loading your baggage on the cart, head to the "**Ground Transportation Desk**".

### Transportation Options

#### By Taxi

The easiest way to come to the University from the airport is by taxi. Follow the "Taxis" signs to the uniformed taxi dispatcher. The dispatcher will give you a card with the number of the cab assigned to you and the approximate fare you can expect to pay at your final destination. You should ride only in a licensed yellow taxi from the designated taxi stand outside the baggage-claim area. Do not go with anyone who may approach you in the airport offering you a "good deal" on a ride to the city.

#### Other Options

In addition to taxis, there are also private buses, van service, and public transportation, including subways and city buses. All are described in the links below:

JFK:

<http://www.panynj.gov/aviation/igtmain.htm>

[http://www.nyctourist.com/travel\\_jfk.htm](http://www.nyctourist.com/travel_jfk.htm)

Newark: <http://www.panynj.gov/aviation/egtmain.HTM>

LaGuardia: <http://www.panynj.gov/aviation/igtmain.HTM>

## Baggage

Baggage cannot be left at the airport, nor will baggage be accepted by any department or school of the University, the International Students and Scholars Office, or the Immigration Affairs Office. Students who have received confirmation of a room reservation at a University **residence hall** may send prepaid baggage directly to the address. It will be accepted during the ten days before the beginning of the term. Write your name, residence hall room number, and the address of your residence hall clearly on the shipping ticket.

Small trunks and suitcases that you are carrying with you can usually be transported by taxicab. The charge for carrying a trunk in a cab is usually about \$2; there is no charge for carrying suitcases.

## Useful Maps

NYC Subway

<http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nyct/maps/submap.htm>

Manhattan Street map

<http://www.aaccessmaps.com/show/map/manhattan>

Interactive Campus map

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/aboutcolumbia/maps/index.html>

## Getting into your Assigned Columbia Housing

This information comes directly from the University Apartment Housing Office.

### Keys and Contracts:

“In order to make an appointment to sign your UAH lease or Student Housing Contract, please call (212) 854-9382 between the hours of noon and 4 P.M., Monday through Friday. Appointments can only be made once we have received your acceptance and payment for a unit. You may choose the date and time you wish to sign with the exception of Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, when the UAH

Office is closed; it is not possible to move into an apartment at those times. Plan your travel arrangements to coincide with your lease signing and move-in date.

The required monies must be paid, and the appropriate photos provided, before you will be able to sign your lease or contract. Payment must be in the form of money orders, cashier's checks, certified checks or travelers' checks. NO International Postal money orders, personal checks, cash, electronic transfers, or credit cards will be accepted. You will be billed from the day you sign your lease/contract and obtain a key release authorization.

Leases/Contracts must be signed by the prospective tenant in the presence of a UAH employee at the UAH office, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Leases/Contracts will not be mailed or faxed and keys will not be mailed. Only the tenant of record may sign the lease and make rent payments. Keys will not be provided nor move-in permitted before the lease/contract is signed. Deliveries cannot be accepted by any UAH employee prior to your move-in date.”

### Moving In

Once you have signed a lease or Student Housing Contract you will receive a pass authorizing the superintendent of your building to give you keys to your building and assigned unit. You may pick up your key and move in only after signing your lease/contract in the UAH office, not before. Only the person whose name is on the pass may pick up the keys, and an acceptable form of identification, preferably a photo ID, is required. Superintendents, who are employees of the University, are available for key pick up Monday through Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 3:45 P.M. It is not possible to sign a lease/contract or move in on weekends or University holidays.

Your UAH unit should be clean and in good condition upon move-in. All fixtures and appliances should be in working order. If you have questions or need assistance, contact your superintendent or Area Housing Supervisor.

Review other information for new tenants at:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/>

# Welcome To NY! The First Few Weeks

Relocating to a new country in one of the fastest-paced cities in the world is an exciting, but challenging experience. There are many things to take care of, and they can't all be done at once. Not knowing where to find what you need or how things are done, can be unsettling and frustrating. Even a good command of English does not necessarily prepare you for the new accents and idioms you may encounter here. It is important that you be patient with yourself—and others. We know that obtaining a visa and making travel plans is a difficult process, but it is advisable to come early, before your academic commitments begin, to allow you time to settle in, get to know your way around, meet new people, and feel more “at home” before classes start. The earliest you can arrive, according to immigration regulations, is 30 days before the program start date on your visa certificate (I-20 or DS-2019).

## New Student Checklist

- Find housing! If you were unable to secure assigned University housing, use the resources described in the Housing section.
- Notify the ISSO of your New York-area address soon after arrival. Use your Columbia University Network ID (UNI number) and password—usually the same as the email ID—to access our on-line form at [https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US\\_address\\_report\\_US\\_address\\_form.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US_address_report_US_address_form.html).
- **Check in at the ISSO at 524 Riverside Drive, located at 123<sup>rd</sup> Street in a building named International House North.** Within 10 days of arriving in NYC, come by the office with your immigration documents—passport, I-94 card, and visa certificate (I-20 or DS-2019). We want to make sure that your documents were processed properly when you entered the U.S. Moreover, ***we must register your arrival at Columbia in SEVIS, which will change your status from “initial” to “active”.*** This must occur within 30 days in order to maintain your status.
- Open a **bank account**. You do not require a Social Security number to open an account, but we can provide a letter certifying your status at Columbia if you need it.

- Check with your school for instructions about any required placement tests you may need to take.
- **Register for a full-time course load** as required by law. Most schools at Columbia require 12 points, with a few exceptions. Make sure you know what constitutes fulltime registration in your school. (Students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences must register for one full “resident unit” to be full-time.) For information on how to register, refer to [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/enro\\_about.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/enro_about.html).
- Obtain your **Columbia Student Card** (University I.D.) Many Columbia University students receive their Columbia Card during orientation week through pre-arrival application with their School. If you do not receive your ID card through this arrangement, go to the ID Center at 204 Kent Hall ([http://www.columbia.edu/about\\_columbia/map/kent.html](http://www.columbia.edu/about_columbia/map/kent.html)) Monday through Friday, 9 – 5 pm (Tuesdays until 6pm). In order to obtain a Student Columbia Card, you must be registered in at least one course in the current term. Also, you must present a valid photo ID at the time of issuance. This Columbia Card will be your official University ID for the entire length of your academic career at Columbia University. For more information, access <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/id/>. Participate in Orientation activities! Most schools within the university hold their own orientation programs. The informational portion of ISSO's Orientation Program for international graduate students will take place on Friday, August 22, 2003. Two weeks of the ISSO's Celebrating New York! events are a great way to meet other new students and Peer Advisers, and learn your way around the city. More information will be sent by email and posted on the web site this summer as arrangements are finalized.
- Obtain a Social Security number. The 9-digit temporary ID number you were assigned by the University must be replaced with a Social Security number issued by the U.S.
- Contact your consulate in New York City. They can provide emergency assistance, cultural programming, and tax treaty information. A list of

consulates in New York can be found at <http://www.citidex.com/252.htm>.

## Getting Around Manhattan

### A Brief Orientation

Manhattan is quite easy to navigate. Named and numbered avenues run north-south from 1st Avenue in the east to 12th Avenue in the west. Cross streets run east-west from 14th Street to the northern tip at 215th Street. Broadway runs diagonally across the length of Manhattan from a northwest to southeast direction.

If you are presented with an avenue address (such as 524 Amsterdam Avenue or 411 Third Avenue), call ahead to determine the cross street, or use a Manhattan Address Locator found in telephone and guidebooks as well as on-line at <http://www.ny.com/locator/>

Fifth Avenue is the dividing line between East and West. Building numbers go up in both directions from Fifth Avenue, so an address which is, for example, 12 East 23rd Street is in the first block east of Fifth, and the address 12 West 23rd Street is on the first block west of Fifth. Note that Central Park divides the east and west side of the city between 59th and 110th Streets.

Invest in a good street map and NYC guidebook soon after your arrival, and you're sure to make good use of it throughout your stay.

### Public Transportation

The New York City subway system covers 231 miles of track in the five boroughs of New York City—Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island. It runs every day of the year, 24 hours a day, although with reduced frequency late nights and weekends. The subway system is a great, fast way to get around, avoiding above-ground traffic.

Riding buses when you have the time is enjoyable, for the obvious reason of being able to look out the window and see the changing neighborhoods. You board the bus at the front, and pay by using a MetroCard or having \$2 in change. (No bills or pennies are allowed)

Bus drivers stop at bus stops only if there is someone waiting there, or if someone on the bus presses the "stop requested" strip located between windows in advance of the stop. It's a good idea to take a bus late at night when traveling alone rather than a subway.

### Using a MetroCard

MetroCards are electronic fare cards that are used for public transportation (subways and buses) in all five boroughs of New York City. The basic fare as of June 2003 is \$2.00, regardless of distance.

There are two kinds of MetroCards:

1. the Unlimited Ride MetroCard lets you ride all you want for a specific time period (from when you activate it, not when you buy it)
  - a. the 1-Day Fun Pass for \$7, which allows unlimited usage from the moment it is activated on a bus or subway turnstile until 3:00 a.m. the next day. This is very handy and economical on any day when you know you'll need to make more than 3 trips on buses and/or subways.
  - b. The 7-Day (\$21) card; and
  - c. The 30-Day Metrocard (\$70).

2. The Pay-Per-Ride MetroCard can be bought in denominations from \$4 to \$80. Put \$10 or more on your card and receive a 20 percent bonus. For example, a \$20 purchase gives you \$24 on your card—12 trips for the price of 10. You get an automatic free transfer between subway and bus, or between buses, within a two-hour period from the time you pay your first fare. For maps and schedules of NYC transportation and commuter rail lines, see <http://www.mta.info/metrocard/index.html>.

### Taxis

Taxicabs (called "cabs" or "taxis" are yellow and have a medallion number on the top of the roof. If it is lit up and says "on-duty", it is available. The passenger is charged by the time and distance on a meter. It is usual to tip the driver 10-15% of the fare. It is also possible to use private car services by calling in advance to pick you up. One reliable car service in the Columbia neighborhood is AA Special Car Service at 212 666-3939, usually arriving within minutes of your call.

## Settling In

### Local post offices

- West 104<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue) 212 662-0355  
Monday - Wednesday 8:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Thursday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Friday 8:00 am - 7:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 534 W. 112<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue) 212 864-7813  
Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 365 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street (near St. Nicholas Avenue) 212 662-1540  
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 511 W. 165<sup>th</sup> Street (off St. Nicholas Avenue) 212 568-2387  
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

ZIP (postal) codes are required for all U.S. mailing addresses. The correct ZIP code for a particular address can be found using the ZIP Locater on the United States Postal Service website at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

### Shopping

#### Food (supermarkets)

- Apple Tree - 1225 Amsterdam Avenue at 120<sup>th</sup> Street
- Citarella's - Broadway and 75<sup>th</sup> Street
- C-Town - 125<sup>th</sup> Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue
- D'Agostino - Broadway and 110<sup>th</sup> Street
- Fairway - 131<sup>st</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. by the Hudson River; also Broadway and West 74<sup>th</sup> Street
- Met Foodmarket - 1316 Amsterdam Avenue between 123-124<sup>th</sup> Street
- Morton Williams - Broadway and West 115<sup>th</sup> Street
- Zabar's - Broadway and 80<sup>th</sup> Street

#### Specialty / Ethnic Foods

You can find foods from all over the world in NYC. Here is a very short list.

- All ethnic foods: Soho Provisions at 518 Broadway

- Asian foodstuffs: Asia Market at 71½ Mulberry Street
- British food items: Myers of Keswick at 634 Hudson Street
- Chinese: Chinese American Trading Company at 91 Mulberry Street
- Chinese Bakery: Fung Wong Bakery at 30 Mott Street
- German specialties: Schaller & Weber at 1654 Second Avenue
- Greek specialties: Likitsakos at 1174 Lexington Avenue between 80-81<sup>st</sup> Streets
- Indian and Middle Eastern Spices: K. Kalustyan at 123 Lexington Avenue, 28-29<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Foods of India at 121 Lexington Avenue
- Italian specialty foods: Melampo at 105 Sullivan Street between Spring and Prince Streets  
Raffetto's Corporation at 144 West Houston Street between Sullivan and MacDougal Streets
- Japanese foods at Katagiri & Company at 224 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues
- Japanese products at Yohan Plaza - 595 River Road, Edgewater, New Jersey, 201 941-9133.  
Special shuttle leaves from Port Authority Bus Terminal platform 51 every hour
- Korean: Han Arum at 25 West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Polish specialties: East Village Meat Market at 139 Second Avenue
- Vietnamese specialties: Thuan-Nguyen Market at 84 Mulberry Street
- West African specialties: West African Grocery at 535 Ninth Avenue

#### Furniture and Other Items for Your Room or Apartment

- Bed Bath & Beyond - 620 Avenue of the Americas (between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets), 212 255-3550. Also on Second Ave. and 61<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Century 21 - 22 Cortlandt Street 212 227-9092
- Columbia Hardware - 2905 Broadway (between 113<sup>th</sup> and 114<sup>th</sup> Streets), 212 662-2150
- Crate & Barrel - 650 Madison Avenue (59<sup>th</sup> Street), 212 308-0011
- Discount Stores - 32<sup>nd</sup> Street (between Broadway and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Odd Job, Weber's, Jack's and more...
- Gothic Cabinet Craft - 2652 Broadway (between West 100<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Streets), 212 749-2020

- House of Futon - 637 Broadway (between Bleeker and Houston Streets, in SoHo), 212 529-9190
- IKEA - Call 1800 BUS-IKEA for a weekend bus schedule from Port Authority at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue East. (The ISSO has a bus from campus to IKEA the last four Thursdays in August—check the ISSO On-Line Calendar for details.)
- Kmart - 1 Pennsylvania Plaza at 250 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues), 212 760-1188
- Macy's Herald Square - 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 695-4400
- 99¢ Discount Store - between Broadway and Amsterdam on West 125<sup>th</sup> Street
- Pottery Barn - 1965 Broadway at West 67<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 579-8477
- Webers - East side of Broadway at 71<sup>st</sup> Street
- Zabar's (Upstairs) - 2245 Broadway (between 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Streets), 212 787-2000
- Radio Shack - 2812 Broadway at 108<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 662-7332
- The WIZ - 2577 Broadway at 97<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 663-8000

#### **Bicycles, Rollerblades, and Other Sports Equipment**

- Blades, Board and Skate - 120 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, 212 787-3911
- Eastern Mountain Sports - 20 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street (between Broadway and Columbus Avenues), 212 397-4860
- Modell's Sporting Goods - 300 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street (between St. Nicholas Avenue

#### **Used Furniture and Other Household Items**

- Aunt Meriam's - 435 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street 212 531-0322
- Columbus Avenue Flea Market at 77<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbus Avenue on Sunday
- Flea Market - 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue on Saturday and Sunday
- Salvation Army - 536 West 46<sup>th</sup> Street (between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue), 212 664-8563, and 268 West 96<sup>th</sup> Street at Broadway, 212 663-2258

#### **Furniture Rental**

- Cort - 49 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street [www.relocationcentral.com](http://www.relocationcentral.com)
- International Furniture Rentals - 345 Park Avenue between 51-52<sup>nd</sup> Street [www.rent-ifr.com](http://www.rent-ifr.com)
- Metro Furniture Rentals - 310 Fifth Avenue 212 736-4200

#### **Computers, Telephones, and Other Electronic Items**

- CompUSA Superstore - 1775 Broadway (at 57<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue), 212 262-9711
- Gateway Country - 4 Columbus Circle (on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 57<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Street. 212 246-5575 [www.gateway.com](http://www.gateway.com)
- J&R Computer World and J&R Music World 15 Park Row (Ann and Beekman Streets) 212 238-9100; [www.columbia.edu/acis/sales/](http://www.columbia.edu/acis/sales/) (Columbia students may also purchase Apple and Dell products at discounted rates)

## Meeting People

Most people are in the same situation when they arrive. There's much to do and see in New York, but in the beginning it's important to get comfortable with the subway and bus system and to have the opportunity to form friendships and find others with common interests.

**Celebrating New York! (CNY!)** is a series of activities and events that begins in late August and culminates with the annual ISSO Sunset Boat Cruise in New York Harbor on Sunday, September 7, 2003. These excursions will help acquaint you with New York City and are led by Peer Advisers—continuing students who remember how it feels to be new to Columbia and New York City. One of the wonderful things about participating in CNY! is the opportunity to meet others from different schools and fields of study at Columbia—once classes begin, it's not easy to do.

Another ISSO program that takes you to places of interest—but out of the City—for a day or a long weekend is Road Scholars. Its destinations have included Niagara Falls and Toronto, full day ski trips for all levels, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

## International House

A rich resource in the Columbia neighborhood is International House, located next door to the ISSO at 500 Riverside Drive. I. House is a residential community of more than 700 students, scholars and interns of different nationalities and backgrounds. Today, more than 75 years after its founding by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., *I. House* is world-renowned as a center for cultural exchange and international events. Many Columbia students live there, but they also offer Non-Resident memberships, allowing access a rich array of facilities, programs, and activities, including Wednesday night ballroom dancing and weekly films. Visit the I. House website at <http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/> to learn more about their programs.

## Metro International

You are also eligible to participate in a variety of activities offered by *Metro International*, a not-for-profit organization serving international students, Fulbright scholars, and spouses in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Metro designs programs that introduce visiting students and scholars to New Yorkers and to the City's diverse cultural, political, and social institutions. In the process, Metro ensures that international students make important personal contacts while they are in the U.S., so as to return to their home countries with an informed perspective about American life.

Funding for *Metro's* programs and services comes from government, foundation, and corporate grants, private contributions, membership fees of participating universities, and program fees from individual participants. *Metro's* web site is [www.metrointl.org](http://www.metrointl.org).

### Student Groups

There are School-specific and University-wide student groups and clubs. Look at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/groups.html> to see if there are any that interest you.

## University Offices and Resources

- **I need an ID card**  
ID Office, 204 Kent Hall, 212 854-4323  
F-1 or J-1 Students must have registered for their courses in order to receive their ID cards. Visiting scholars should bring their visiting scholar designation letter; faculty and researchers should bring their departmental appointment letter.  
[www.columbia.edu/cu/id/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/id/index.html)
- **I need an email account**  
Academic Information Services (AcIS), 101 Philosophy Hall, 212 854-1919  
Once registered for classes, students may register for an email account at any public terminal.  
[www.columbia.edu/acis](http://www.columbia.edu/acis)
- **I need to pay my tuition bill or arrange a tuition payment plan**  
Student Financial Services, 204 Kent Hall, 212 854-4206  
[www.columbia.edu/cu/sfs/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sfs/)
- **I need to see a doctor, get information about health insurance, or submit an immunization form**  
Student Health Services, John Jay Hall, second floor, 212 854-2284  
[www.health.columbia.edu](http://www.health.columbia.edu)
- **I need to talk to someone about my classes**  
Please visit your department or academic advisor or (for Columbia College and SEAS undergraduates) your class center.
- **I want to know about registration, add/drop, and tuition payment deadlines**  
Please refer to the academic calendar maintained by the Office of the Registrar, 205 Kent Hall.  
[www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/)
- **I want to learn about the Columbia Libraries**  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/culpubs/culguide/>
- **I want to find the University Bookstore**  
The Columbia University Bookstore is in Alfred Lerner Hall, Broadway and 115<sup>th</sup> Street.  
[www.bkstore.com/columbia/](http://www.bkstore.com/columbia/)

Many course-related materials are also sold at Labrynth Bookstore at 536 West 112<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue), 212 865-1588, [www.labyrinthbooks.com](http://www.labyrinthbooks.com)

- **I want to go to the gym**  
Marcellus Hartley Dodge Physical Fitness Center, near Broadway and 120<sup>th</sup> Street next to Havemeyer Hall, 212 854-2548  
  
[www.columbia.edu/cu/athletics/recreation\\_facility/dodge\\_gym.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/athletics/recreation_facility/dodge_gym.html)
- **I want to improve my English skills**  
Columbia University's American Language Program offers courses in English as a Second Language (ESL). See <http://www.ce.columbia.edu/alp> or call 212 854-3584

Teachers College offers inexpensive ESL classes, taught by TC students who are ESL teachers in training. The Community English Program, 212 678-3279 or 212 678-3097,  
[www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/CEP.htm](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/CEP.htm)

Teacher's College has a writing skills center  
<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/writingcenter/>

- **I want to learn more about renting a Columbia apartment**  
CU Housing Info for New Tenants at  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/>

### ALL ABOUT NEW YORK

Explore New York City with one convenient click of the mouse in a resource page compiled by Columbia University Libraries. The best sites for every category you can think of are here.  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/nyc/>

# Staying Safe at Columbia and in NYC

New York presents some of the same security concerns as any other urban area, but by using common sense and caution, you can do a great deal to increase your personal safety. These are some tips to follow.

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Express yourself with confidence and control (i.e., when you're asking for directions or walking alone), rather than with fear or anxiety.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable about where you are, or are suspicious of someone near you, leave or stay away.
- Let roommates, friends, or partners know where you will be, when to expect you, or if you're going to be late or out of town.
- Avoid walking (and exercising) alone—have a friend, roommate, or partner join you. At the Morningside Heights campus, if you cannot find someone to walk with you from 8 PM to 3 AM, call Columbia's escort service at x4-SAFE / x4-7233. Outside of these hours, call Columbia Security at ext. 2798 for an escort. For the Medical Center campus, call x7-8100 twenty-four-hours anytime for an escort. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to call for an escort—your safety, well-being, and peace of mind are at stake.
- At night, take the well-lit and well-traveled paths. Avoid shortcuts through dark or isolated areas.
- Be prepared and ready with your keys before you approach your residence hall, apartment, home, or automobile.
- If you think someone is following you, don't lead him or her to your destination—instead, abruptly change directions. If this person continues to follow you, get help at a public place.
- Be aware of your valuables and belongings, such as your backpack, handbag, or wallet. Even if you're in a "safe" place for a short time, take them with you rather than leave them behind.
- When taking the bus or subway, use well-lit, and preferably well-peopled, bus stops and subway platforms. When riding the bus, sit near the driver. When riding the subway, avoid the isolated sections of the platform, such as the ends, and avoid the empty or fewer-peopled subway cars. Don't sleep on the bus or subway. Also be aware of who gets off the bus or subway with you. Head directly to a public place, such as a store, restaurant, or residence hall, if you feel that someone is following you.
- Be an active, safety-conscious student: notify Columbia's Facilities Management Department at x4-2275 (Morningside) or x7-7367 / -8100 (Medical Center) about broken lights, emergency call boxes, windows, doors, locks, etc. Report all crime(s) to Columbia's Department of Security or the police precinct (for Morningside Heights, the 26th Precinct number is 678-1311; for Medical Center, the 33rd Precinct number is 927-3200).

(This information was adapted from crime prevention material supplied by The National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, D.C., Copyright 1995.)

Free shuttle service (with Columbia ID) is available between the Morningside Heights and Medical Center campuses, and also within the Morningside Heights area at night. Call x4-2796 for more information and a current schedule. In case of an emergency situation, you can contact Columbia's Department of Security at x4-5555 (Morningside) or x7-7979 (Medical Center).

# Working in Student Status

## On-Campus Options for Students in F-1 and J-1 Status

Students in F-1 or J-1 status enrolled in a full-time program of study and in valid immigration status may work for the university that they attend. This is considered employment “incident to your status” and does NOT require special authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). On-campus employment means simply that you are paid by Columbia University or working at a University location with an employer that is providing services to students, such as the Bookstore.

During academic terms (early September to mid-May), on-campus work may total 20 hours per week, including work that is part of your financial aid or merit award. During your annual vacation (usually mid-May to early September) and the intersession (approximately the last week of December through the third week of January), on-campus work may be full-time, provided you intend to register at Columbia in the semester following the break.

### Paperwork Requirements

An *I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification* form is required of everyone employed in the U.S., including American citizens. At Columbia, students in F-1 and J-1 status complete this form at the ISSO, no later than the day they begin employment. You will need to bring your immigration documents to the ISSO to do this.

The ISSO will return the completed form to you to take to the hiring department. In addition to Form I-9, the department will give you York State tax Form IT-2104 and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-4 to complete. Nonresidents for tax purposes must complete the W-4 according to certain restrictions. Instructions can be found on the ISSO web site at [www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/)

On-campus employment is subject to U.S. taxation. You may, however, be able to benefit from tax treaty provisions between the United States and your home country that will allow you to reduce or eliminate the amount of taxes on any relevant earnings. In order to determine whether an applicable tax treaty provision exists, you should consult IRS Publication Number 901, *U.S. Tax Treaties*, and IRS Publication Number 519, *U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens*. These publications are available at

the ISSO or on-line at [www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html). If you determine that there is a tax treaty provision relevant to your on-campus employment, you should also file IRS Form 8823 with your department at the same time you complete Form I-9.

### Finding On-campus employment

Students should talk to their departments about departmental teaching or research positions. While international students are NOT eligible for federally-funded Work-Study positions, there are a number of University offices that frequently need qualified student employees, including the University Libraries (Butler Library), Academic Information Services (101 Philosophy Hall), Security (Low Library), and Student Enterprises, which includes the Columbia University Tutoring and Translation Agency or CUTTA (East Campus). The Center for Career Education (CCE) also maintains a database for searching for part-time jobs; refer to <http://www.cce.columbia.edu/>.

## Off-Campus Work Options

### F-1 Status

Off-campus work is possible only after you have been in the United States in valid student status for at least one academic year. Such work authorization always requires the written permission of the ISSO and may require USCIS approval as well. To acquaint you with the options, here is an overview. There is time for detailed procedures later on.

### Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT is permission to work if there is an internship requirement for everyone in the degree program. Students pursuing master degrees in International Affairs, Public Affairs, or Public Health have such a requirement. CPT authorization can also be given to those who are fulfilling the requirements of an internship or practicum elective offered for academic credit toward their degree within their school or department. CPT is authorized by the ISSO.

### Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT is defined as “employment related to one’s field of study.” It offers you valuable opportunities to supplement your education through work experience in your field of study. Students in F-1 status have a total of 12 months of OPT eligibility per degree level, which can be used part-time during the academic year, full-time during summer vacation periods, and following completion of all degree requirements. If you use any OPT before the completion of your program, it gets deducted from the 12 month total after the completion. The ISSO must process an OPT recommendation through SEVIS on your form I-20 as the first step of the student’s application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for employment authorization.

### **Internship with an International Organization**

Students in F-1 status are eligible to work part-time during the academic year and full-time during vacation periods for international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc. Authorization is granted by the USCIS with a certification from the ISSO. This type of employment is independent of OPT and as such does not get counted toward OPT’s 12-month limit.

### **Unforeseen Financial Hardship**

If, after one academic year in student status, a student experiences extreme financial difficulties which were unforeseen when beginning the academic program, s/he may be able to apply for off-campus work permission from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). If granted, it is possible to work up to twenty hours a week during the academic year and full-time during the summer and vacation periods. In your application, you must establish and document the fact that unforeseen changes that severely affect your financial resources have occurred since you initially qualified for F-1 status by demonstrating funding available for at least the first year.

## **J-1 Status**

There are two types of employment authorization for students in J-1 status: Academic Training (AT) and permission to work pursuant to extreme unforeseen financial difficulties.

### **Academic training (AT)**

AT is defined as “employment integral to an exchange visitor’s academic program.” It may occur during and/or after the completion of studies. A student in J-1 status is eligible for AT after one semester. In general, there is a maximum of eighteen months of AT, depending on the length of the academic program, with the exception of certain post-doctoral research or teaching positions, which may qualify for up to thirty-six months. Permission for AT employment is granted by the J-1 Exchange Visitor’s program sponsor in the form of a letter. Columbia students whose DS-2019 forms were issued by Columbia would apply to the ISSO; those whose DS-2019 forms were issued by sponsoring agencies such as the IIE, LASPAU, or the OAS, must apply to their sponsors for this permission.

### **Unforeseen Financial Hardship**

If, after one academic year in student status, a student experiences extreme financial difficulties which were unforeseen when beginning the academic program, s/he may be able to apply for off-campus work permission from the Exchange Visitor program sponsor. If granted, it is possible to work up to twenty hours a week during the academic year and full-time during the summer and vacation periods. In your application, you must establish and document the fact that unforeseen changes that severely affect your financial resources have occurred.

To apply, you must have been in F-1 or J-1 status for at least one full academic year and must be a degree candidate in good academic standing. In your application, you must establish and document the fact that unforeseen changes that severely affect your financial resources have occurred since you initially qualified for J-1 status by demonstrating funding available for at least the first year.

# Tax Issues for International Students

Tax laws in the U.S. are extremely complex and the ISSO is not qualified to answer individual questions regarding tax liabilities. All international students should refer to our website for detailed tax information as well as attend one of several tax-filing workshops held each spring through the ISSO. It is the responsibility of each international student at Columbia to understand his or her own tax situation. There are, however, a few areas that may be of immediate concern to incoming international students.

**Tax-Filing Requirement.** All international students in F-1 and J-1 status are required to file at least one tax form by April 15th if present in the US at any time in the previous calendar year—even if they had no US income. One thing you'll want to be aware of soon after you arrive is that it is a good idea to keep all receipts for educational expenses such as books, as you might need to refer to them in the spring when filing tax forms. Each spring, the ISSO sponsors tax-filing workshops conducted by international tax experts, as well as free access to an on-line user-friendly software application for "Non-resident aliens", called NRAware. You will receive ISSO news email reminders about workshops and deadlines.

**Scholarships/Fellowships.** This funding is subject to federal, state and local taxes on the amount received in excess of tuition and fees (your tuition will not be taxed but any stipend received will be subject to taxation). All teaching and research assistantships are taxable, according to an individual's rate of pay.

**W4 Form.** For those on the Columbia University payroll (including students receiving funding from Columbia as well as those students who have on-campus employment) a **W4** form must be completed before one is able to receive payment. This form is very important. You will receive it along with other employment forms from your employer/department. Nonresidents for tax purposes must complete the W-4 according to certain restrictions. Instructions can be found on the ISSO web site at [www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/).

**Tax Treaty.** The U.S. has an agreement (treaty) with over 50 different countries that determine how the country's residents will be taxed while temporarily in the U.S. A treaty may specify that residents of that country are exempt from all or part of U.S. income tax. These tax

treaties are very specific and it should be noted that just because someone is a resident of a tax treaty country does not mean that the person will automatically qualify for tax benefits. If your country is one that carries a tax treaty with the U.S., you will want to complete the [Form 8233](#) before being put on Columbia's payroll (this includes those who will be receiving funding from Columbia).

Since you need to come to the ISSO to complete An *I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification* form before your department processes your payroll papers, you can also pick up a copy of [IRS publication I-901](#), a summary of tax treaty countries and provisions. Be sure to bring your passport, I-94, and I-20 or DS-2019 when you come for an I-9. Instructions for completing form 8233 are on the ISSO web site at [www.columbia.edu/cu/isso](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso) under Taxes. If you require further information, contact the Columbia University's Controllers Office (Payroll) at (212) 854-4823.

In addition to reviewing tax information on the ISSO web site, you can check the Internal Revenue Service site ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)) for complete U.S. tax information, publications and forms. For New York State tax information/publications/forms, go to <http://www.tax.state.ny.us>.

## Family Matters

### Information for Spouses and Partners

Although it is exciting to have the opportunity of living in another country for a while, it can be challenging for the spouse of a student or scholar to settle in and find his or her own independent reasons for being here, and her own circle of friends. Students and scholars are very busy and must spend a great deal of time studying or doing research. But in addition to being busy, the student or scholar has built-in opportunities to interact with others and form friendships. Spouses and partners, on the other hand, must actively seek out those opportunities. This task may be a bit more difficult for international spouses whose immigration status does not allow them to be employed in the United States, or who may not be proficient in English. U.S. immigration regulations prohibit employment for spouses in F-2 and H-4 immigration status. Fortunately, there are many ways for spouses and partners of international students and scholars to become involved with the University and its community.

### International Spouse Network

Other spouses are an excellent resource for companionship and information sharing, so the ISSO coordinates the International Spouse Network. We have a Welcome Lunch at the beginning of each semester and compile an international spouse directory. There is an informal monthly lunch for spouses, usually on the first Monday of the month, throughout the academic year. You will meet other spouses of students and scholars who are also new to this neighborhood, as well as those who joined the spouse network last year and will be happy to share their knowledge and experience with you. You will find others who have interests in common—such as visiting museums, jogging, tennis, movies, or forming a playgroup for parents and kids. In addition to enjoying all that New York has to offer in terms of museums, sightseeing and entertainment, many spouses have found that becoming involved in one of NYC's many volunteer opportunities has enriched their lives and provided more of a sense of belonging. The Network will acquaint you with some volunteer opportunities. Your participation in the International Spouse Network can help you adjust to life here in New York and at Columbia, provide you with opportunities to meet others, form friendships, learn about American culture, and simply have fun! Children are welcome.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### ***Can I use Columbia facilities, such as the library and gym?***

Spouses who are not studying at Columbia are not eligible for a Columbia ID; therefore they will be denied access to most Columbia facilities. One exception is the gym, which they may pay to use. Spouses may apply for a library card granting reading privileges (but not borrowing privileges) at 201 Butler Library, tel. 212 854-2271. Bring some documentation with both your name and your spouse's name and address on it, such as a lease or bank statement, or documents reflecting your immigration status as an F-2, J-2, or H-4.

### ***Can I work in the United States?***

It depends on your status. Immigration regulations do not allow F-2 dependents of F-1 students to work. J-2 dependent spouses of J-1 students (and scholars) are eligible to apply for work authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The I-765 employment authorization application can be downloaded from the [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) web site, and more information is available at the ISSO.

### ***Can I apply for a Social Security Number?***

Social Security numbers are issued only to those who have eligibility to be employed in the United States. Therefore, an F-2 spouse—or a J-2 spouse without work authorization—cannot get an SSN, but can apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). The ITIN is needed for filing tax Form 8843, required of all those in F and J status, including dependents. The ITIN is obtained by application to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); the ISSO has information about this process. It takes 6-8 weeks for the IRS to issue the ITIN. A J-2 spouse can apply for an SSN only after he or she has applied for and received work authorization from the USCIS.

### ***I'd like to improve my English. Are there classes for spouses?***

There aren't classes specifically for spouses, but there are local resources. Many spouses take advantage of the inexpensive ESL classes at the Community English Program (CEP) at Teachers College that are taught by TC students who are ESL teachers in training. Teachers College is located on 120<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. Information on registration is

available by calling 212 678-3279 (a recorded message) or 212 678-3097 (office phone). The Community English Program's website

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/CEP.htm> is the best source of information on registration dates, fees, programs and class schedules. Registration for the fall semester is usually in mid-September.

The Columbia Baptist Campus Ministry usually offers a free English conversation group in Earl Hall. Call 212 854-1514, or visit their office in Room 108, Earl Hall.

Also refer to International Center below.

***Since I'm not working or studying full-time—and my spouse is extremely busy all the time—I'm concerned about how to meet other people and find productive ways to spend my time. Any suggestions?***

**International House** • 500 Riverside Drive (north of 122nd Street), New York, NY 10027, 212-316-8400. Life at International House is an experience in international understanding. Its hundreds of members come from more than eighty countries and study or train in most academic and professional fields. An extensive program of academic, cultural, social, and recreational activities provides a medium for members to exchange ideas and perspectives and to form friendships. You may be interested in applying for Non-Resident Membership. As a Non-Resident Member, you will receive a monthly calendar of events in the mail and have the opportunity to become a part of this exciting and enriching experience. To apply for Non-Resident Membership, contact the Admissions Office of International House at (212) 316-8436. To get a sense of the types of programs and activities they offer, refer to <http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/>.

**Metro International** • 285 W. Broadway, Suite 450, New York, NY 10013 (near Canal Street), 212-431-1195. This organization helps international students, scholars, and their families in the New York area make use of the cultural, ethnic, and professional resources of the city. Its aim is to build inter-institutional contact and cooperation among students and staff, and to help international students and spouses meet the challenges of living in New York City. They sponsor various activities, including tours throughout New York and weekend trips to nearby cities. In the process, *Metro* ensures that international students make important personal contacts while they are

in the U.S., so as to return to their home countries with an informed perspective about American life.

Funding for *Metro*'s programs and services comes from government, foundation, and corporate grants, private contributions, membership fees of participating universities, and program fees from individual participants. *Metro*'s web site is <http://www.metrointl.org>.

**International Center in New York** • 50 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 7th floor, New York, NY 10010, 212-255-9555. Students and their family members, medical personnel, business trainees, diplomats, and official visitors from abroad are served by this center, a privately funded nonprofit volunteer organization. English conversation practice is offered by volunteers to individual members, and there are English classes taught by professional teachers. Other services include discussion groups, films, invitations to visit American homes, theater parties, discount and free tickets for plays and concerts, and weekend tours to places of interest. There is an annual membership fee for students, scholars, and spouses and partners.

<http://www.intlcenter.org/>

**China Institute in America** • 125 E. 65th Street, New York, NY 10021, 212-744-8181. This organization serves Chinese students, visiting scholars, business professionals, and their families, as well as others who are interested in China. Programs include English and Chinese language exchange, field trips, weekly films, lectures, discussions, participation in the Institute chorus, and dance parties.

<http://www.chinainstitute.org/>

**Japan Society** • 333 East 47th Street New York, NY 10017 Phone: 212.832.1155 Japan Society, America's leading resource on Japan, is a private, nonprofit, nonpolitical institution offering programs in the arts, business, education and public affairs. Founded in New York in 1907, Japan Society promotes greater understanding and cooperation between Japan and the U.S. <http://www.japansociety.org/>.

**Public Libraries** • The New York Public Library and its branches provide a wide variety of resource information and special programs for residents, including lecture and film series of general interest for adults. To apply for borrowing privileges—a library card—one must present proof of residence by showing a rent receipt or utility bill. Videotapes, DVDs, record albums, and books are

available for borrowing. Many libraries will also have special sections and activities for children.

<http://www.nypl.org/branch/man/cl.html>

### **Community Impact • 105 Earl Hall, Columbia University 854- 1492**

Community Impact is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to serving disadvantaged people in the Harlem, Washington Heights, and Morningside Heights communities. Community Impact strives to provide high quality programs, advance the public good, and foster meaningful volunteer for students, faculty, and staff of Columbia University through partnerships with more than 100 community organizations and agencies who do service work in these neighborhoods. Many spouses and partners have enriched their own lives by helping to make a difference in the lives of others.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ci/>

## **Information for Families with Children**

### **Childcare**

For preschool children, there are several possibilities for full- or part-time child care:

**Babysitters** • A baby-sitter will sometimes come to the family's home to watch the child (or children); sometimes a parent takes the child to the baby-sitter's home. It may be a one-on-one situation, i.e., the baby-sitter alone with your child, or you can look for situations that include other children.

Columbia Student Employment, located at the Center for Career Education at East Campus (on the Morningside campus), is a job referral service available to all registered Columbia students and their spouses. If you are looking for child care, you can post an "ad" at the job board there. Another strategy families have used is to advertise on bulletin boards on campus, in their apartment buildings, at playgrounds, and at pediatricians' offices. It is always recommended to get references from a prospective child care provider, and speak with parents she or he has worked for in the past.

**Day Care Centers** • Day care centers may be public centers, run by churches, or privately owned. Some day

care centers require that the parent give time to help care for the children one or two mornings or afternoons a week. Resources of interest to parents are the organizations Child Care Inc., 275 Seventh Avenue, 929-7604, and the Day Care Council, 10 E. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 213-2423, which provide information on the options open to families (public and private day care centers, family day care, nursery schools, and after-school programs) based on your location, children's ages, hours of care, and family income.

Columbia University has compiled information about options and resources at

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/provost/childcare/>.

### **School-Age Children**

Education from kindergarten through the completion of high school (grade twelve) is offered in both public and private schools. Public school education in the United States is free. As an apartment renter or homeowner, you pay taxes indirectly or directly and thus earn the right of access to your town or city public school system. The school year starts in September and runs through mid to late June. **Registration will require your child's birth certificate and immunization records.** The quality of public schools varies from zone to zone, and town to town.

New York City public schools are divided by residential districts—your home address determines your district. Those who live near the Morningside campus are generally in School District 3, 300 W. 96th Street, 212-678-2800, or District 5, 433 W. 123rd Street, 212-769-7500. Those who live near the Medical Center campus are generally in School District 6, 560 W. 169th Street, 212-927-0608. If your child chooses to attend a school outside your district, you are required to have your child gain admission to that school. School district offices and individual schools may be contacted directly for more information.

New York City's Department of Education has a web site with information at

<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>

Other great resources can be found at

<http://www.insideschools.org/>

<http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~schoolsandyouthtextdocs/resources.html>

Private schools in New York are quite expensive, although there may be scholarships available for families with limited income. An on-line resource for learning more about independent (private) schools is at

<http://home.earthlink.net/~schoolsandyou/textdocs/resources.html#Indep>.

Columbia University is opening a new K-8 school in September 2003. More information at

<http://theschool.columbia.edu/>

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