August 2009

Dear International Student:

Welcome! The primary objective of WPI, in hosting international students, is to enable them to achieve their academic goals.

We also welcome your presence as a means of strengthening our knowledge and understanding of your country and culture.

The Office of International Students and Scholars, with the help of the International Student Council, has prepared this handbook, which contains valuable information about the college and about living in Worcester. We hope this handbook will be a helpful resource throughout your stay at WPI. It is written as a supplement to other WPI publications.

As the staff of the International House, we welcome you to WPI. The international life of WPI as well as the WPI community is greatly enhanced by your presence.

Sincerely,

Tom Hartvig Thomsen, Director
Office of International Students and Scholars

Colleen Callahan, International Student Advisor
Office of International Students and Scholars

Janice T. Martin, Administrative Assistant
Office of International Students and Scholars

Billy D. McGowan, Director
English as a Second Language Program

/jtm
Dear International Student,

On behalf of the International Student Council, we welcome you to the international community of WPI. As you know college life is an exciting and challenging experience and we hope to share with you that great undertaking and hopefully make it a very pleasant one.

The International Student Council (ISC) of WPI is a student organization devoted to the interests of international students. Representing more than sixty-three countries, it is an extension of WPI’s commitment to diversity. The ISC is comprised of international as well as American students working together to create a home away from home. Through multicultural events and dealing with specific academic and co-curricular issues, the Council promotes international awareness reinforcing WPI’s resolve to offer a global education to all its students.

The way we see it, the ISC is a community of fun, ambitious, and motivated people who together enhance the quality of their own lives and the life on the WPI campus. We do this through major events like the International Dinner, Dance Party, and the Cultural Festival; including trips to Boston, and New York. Our on-campus events include Midnight Breakfasts, Wednesday Lunches, and Game Nights. There is always something happening in the ISC and if you think something is missing, you can always start it. You can be assured that you will find someone who speaks your language, enjoys the same cuisine, listens to your kind of music and knows about your country. Moreover, everyone is very eager to learn about new cultures as well as share their own.

The first few days may seem quite hectic with all the information and activities. It will be a great learning period and the ISC is here to serve as your guide and also to make those first experiences a little more fun and exciting. The most important thing to us is that you get the most out of your college life, and we promise that we will do our best to help you meet your goals. Starting today with the Pre-Orientation Program, you and the other international students will start building a long-lasting friendship that outlives not only these first couple of weeks, but also your entire time at WPI. It is very likely that the people who you meet this following week are going to be a part of your family for the years to come. Once you are settled in, we invite you to come to the International House and join the International Student Council. We look forward to having you as a member of the WPI international community and wish you all the best.

Shikar Saxena
Chair

Khondkar Hasan
Co-Chair

Buddhi Paranamana
Secretary

Alsan Ali
Treasurer

Omar Kiyani
Public Relations Officer

August 2009
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**Introduction**

In addition to information about WPI's services and programs for international students, this handbook is written to give you an introduction to Worcester and Worcester County. Worcester County is home to 14 colleges and universities, many unique museums, musical performing groups and local theater groups in addition to many interesting sights.

Worcester has historically attracted immigrants from all over the world including Armenians, Finns, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Jews, Lebanese, Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. The descendants of the “old” immigrants and the newly arrived immigrants from the Caribbean, India, Latin America, and South East Asia make Worcester a culturally diverse city.

The section of the handbook covering government regulations is up to date as of August 1, 2009. Immigration regulations will change, often with short notice. It is recommended that you check with the Office of International Students and Scholars for any changes in US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations.
Culture Differences

Culture Shock

"Culture Shock" is the term for the sense of disorientation and confusion, which almost all people experience to some degree when they arrive in another country and a new culture. When you leave what you are familiar with (food, language, family/friends, climate, etc.) and are expected to function in your new culture, you might experience culture shock. There are some simple steps you can take to minimize the impact of culture shock.

- Listen and observe. Watch others' reaction in different situations. The more you know about how Americans behave, the less uncomfortable you will feel.
- Ask questions. Don't assume that you will always know what is going on or that you will always understand every communication.
- Try not to evaluate or judge. A lot of things will be different. It is important not to view everything as good or bad in comparison to your own culture.

Social Customs in the United States

It is difficult to generalize about social customs in the US because the American society is very complex and diverse. Hopefully, the following information from the US Information Agency's Pre-departure Orientation Handbook will be helpful as you adjust to your new "culture".

Greetings

Upon meeting each other for the first time, men always and women usually shake hands, firmly. "How do you do," "good morning," "good afternoon," and "good evening" are formal greetings. Usually people just say "hello" and "hi". (Remember that social customs differ in different sections of the country and between younger and older people.)

First names are more readily used in the US than in other countries. It is acceptable automatically to use the first name of someone of approximately your same age or younger.

Men and women will be confused if you use Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. with a first, or "given" name, as is the custom in some countries. These titles are used with the last or family name.

If you have any doubts about what to call someone, simply ask, "What shall I call you?" If people seem unsure how to address you, tell them the name you prefer, and pronounce it slowly, so they will understand.
The use of "nicknames" is fairly common in the US. A nickname is not the person’s real name, but a name given by family or friends. Sometimes a nickname is a shortened version of the person’s first or his family name – like “Al” for Alan, or “Andy” for John Anderson. Being called by a nickname is not uncomplimentary; in fact, it often is a sign of acceptance and affection.

Social Invitations

Social invitations are extended by telephone or by written note or a printed invitation. Some casual, verbal comments that sound like invitations -- like "come by and see me" or "maybe we can get together sometime" -- are generally not intended to be taken literally. An invitation is not firm until a date and time and other arrangements are set.

Promptness

It is polite to arrive at or shortly after (but not before) the appointed hour. If you will be more than a half-hour late, telephone the host or hostess and say when you will arrive.

What Americans are Like

The notion of the US as a "melting pot" where all cultures blend together is somewhat misleading. Although some immigrants to the US have given up their original languages and customs, there are still many differences among Americans. You should also be aware of the diversity among international students attending WPI. Being an international student means that you share a common bond with students from countries other than the US. Beyond this similarity, differences between students from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe can be great.

The United States is populated by a large and highly diverse collection of individuals, and it is difficult to generalize about "What Americans are like." As you read the typical traits listed below, remember that US society is composed of people from many social, cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds, different economic situations, and vastly different philosophies of life.

Americans are Individuals

Probably above everything else, Americans consider themselves individuals. There are strong family ties and strong loyalties to groups, but individuality and individual rights are most important. If this seems like a selfish attitude, it also leads Americans to an honest respect for other individuals and an insistence on human equality.
Americans are Direct

Honesty and frankness are more important to Americans than "saving face." They may seem blunt at times, and they may bring up in polite conversation topics and issues, which you may find embarrassing, too controversial or even offensive. Americans are quick to get to the point and do not spend much time on formal social amenities. This directness encourages Americans to talk over disagreements and to try to patch up misunderstandings themselves, rather than ask a third party to mediate disputes.

Americans are Very Informal

International students may consider this cross-generation, cross-class informality disrespectful, even rude, but it is a part of US culture.

Americans are Generally Competitive

They place a high value on achievement, and this leads them to compete against each other.

Americans are Friendly, but in Their Own Way

In general, friendships among Americans tend to be shorter and more casual than friendships among people from other cultures. This has something to do with American mobility and the fact that Americans do not like to be dependent on other people. Americans also tend to "compartmentalize" friendships, having "friends at work," "friends on the softball team," "family friends," etc.

Americans Ask a lot of Questions

Some of which may to you seem pointless, uninformed or elementary. Someone you have just met may ask you very personal questions. No impertinence is intended; the questions usually grow out of a genuine interest.

Americans are Time-conscious and Value Punctuality

They keep appointment calendars and live according to schedules. They usually are on time for appointments.
Campus Facilities and Information

What does WPI offer to complement your academic education? There are several learning and recreational resources on campus that you can use to complement your classroom activities. A brief description of these services will give you a general idea of how and when you can use them.

**International Student Advisor**

The international student advisors, Tom Hartvig Thomsen and Colleen Callahan, are in the Office of International Students and Scholars, located in the International House, 28 Trowbridge Road. The international student advisors are here to serve you, so do not hesitate to bring your concerns and questions to the Office of International Students and Scholars. The international student advisor advises international students and exchange students on a wide range of topics, which include immigration matters, social and cultural differences, financial matters, and personal concerns. The international student advisor provides programs designed to help students adjust to life in the US and to minimize the difficulties they may experience both initially and throughout their stay. The Office of International Students and Scholars publishes electronic information updates to keep you up to date regarding educational, social and cultural activities, and changes in immigration regulations.

In addition, this office provides several services to international students such as:
- safekeeping of passports, tickets, etc.,
- Notary Public,
- summer storage,
- limited temporary housing for international graduate students and scholars,
- resources for travel in the US,
- tax information,
- international student career workshops,
- International Student Handbook.

**International House**

The International House functions as a center for international education by drawing on the resources on campus, such as international students and scholars, faculty and students returning from overseas experiences and international faculty members. For our international students and scholars, the International House also helps in creating a sense of community. The house serves as the venue for a variety of programs throughout the year, such as brown bag lunch discussion with international scholars and faculty, coffee hours, exhibits, video showing and other social and educational activities.
Notary Public

Janice T. Martin in the Office of International Students and Scholars is a Notary Public. The notary services are provided free of charge. The office will charge for all photocopies done in conjunction with notary function.

Massachusetts notaries are empowered to: administer oaths and affirmations; take acknowledgments, affidavits and depositions; issue subpoena; protest commercial papers and in certain circumstances may be required to be present at the removal of the contents of bank safe deposit boxes and to seal and list their contents.

A Massachusetts notary may witness documents for use in other states and nations provided the notary is physically in Massachusetts when performing the notarial act. A notary public is a public servant, obligated to fulfill the needs of the general public whenever possible.

Student Activities Office

The Student Activities Office (SAO) is part of Student Life Office and most of the co-curricular activities and programs on campus are coordinated through the SAO and SLO. For a more detailed description of a number of WPI services and programs, you should consult the Student Activities web page: http://www.wpi.edu/Admin/SAO/

International Student Council

On the 2nd of November 1988, the International Student Council (ISC) was officially recognized, as the student organization devoted to providing for the needs of the international student community at WPI. The ISC’s many activities include collaborating with the other international student organizations on campus such as the:

- Black Student Union (BSU) bsu@wpi.edu
- Chinese Student Association (CSA) dragon@wpi.edu
- Chinese Student and Scholars Association (CSSA) cssa@wpi.edu
- Deutschklub german@wpi.edu
- Hispanic Caribbean Student Association (HCSA) hcsa@wpi.edu
- Indian Student Organization (ISO) iso@wpi.edu
- Korean Student Association (KSA) ksa@wpi.edu
- Muslim Student Association (MSA) msa@wpi.edu
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers shpe@wpi.edu

Since its induction, the ISC has held events such as the International Student Olympics, International Student Leadership Conference, Cultural Festival, International Dinner, ISC Ski Trip, Fiesta, and Boston trips, which are now fixed events on the ISC calendar. Although
events are a major part of the ISC’s activities during the year, the ISC tries to concentrate its efforts on other matters or problems that affect international students at WPI. The ISC is always open for suggestions, comments, and is always eager to help out students in any way possible. There are several ways of contacting the ISC:

- By mail to: International Student Council (ISC), Campus Center.
- By e-mail at: isc@wpi.edu or the ISC Web Page at: http://isc.wpi.edu
- Campus Center Office, Room CC316

The Bookstore

Barnes and Noble Bookseller @ WPI, located in the Campus Center, sells textbooks for all WPI courses, supplies, and equipment. In addition, the bookstore offers services such as college-oriented clothing, cards, gifts and magazines, along with special ordering of any book in print. You should be aware that once a book is marked in any manner (pencil, pen, gummed stickers, etc.), it automatically becomes a "used" book as far as the publishers are concerned and the book cannot be exchanged or returned for credit.

Campus Police and Campus Security

Campus police provide services such as protection of life and property; criminal investigations and assistance in case of illness or accidents. Parking and traffic control is the most visible function of the WPI Police, but they can also help you with:

- Transportation to the hospital in case of emergency sickness,
- Crime prevention programs and engravers (to permanently imprint your name/I.D. on your property),
- Escort service,
- Emergency medical services.

The office is located at 26 Boynton Street, Founders Hall, Lower Level. You can reach them 24 hours a day/7 days a week at:

- Campus Police (emergency) – 1-508-831-5555
- Campus Police (routine) – 1-508-831-5433
- SNAP/Routine – 1-508-831-6111
- Director of Public Safety – 508-831-5270.

Security Night Assistance Patrol

The WPI Police Department sponsors WPI’s Security Night Assistance Patrol (SNAP). The WPI Police Department trains and supervises students. While on duty, the students work
closely with WPI police. They act as additional "eyes and ears" for the Campus Police and also provide an escort service for students walking on and off campus during the late evening hours. There may be times when a mobile escort is unavailable or not deemed necessary and a walking escort will be provided. To request the SNAP service or an escort please contact Campus Police at 508-831-6111. The escort service is available:

- Spring: 6:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
- Fall: 4:00 p.m. – 4:00 a.m.

After these hours, an officer may walk you to your destination upon request.

Career Planning for International Students

WPI's Career Development Center (CDC) provides assistance to WPI students in making post-graduation plans. The CDC coordinates a busy schedule of interviews by recruiters from private industrial firms–large and small–and government, civic, and professional organizations, along with services such as résumé critiques, etc. Career planning for you as an international student is obviously very different from that of an American student.

To better assist international students, the CDC and the international student advisor offer a number of services in the areas of career development and planning.

Computer Services

Hours – The main office of the Computing and Communications Center, located in Fuller Labs, room 213, is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. during the academic year.

When WPI is not in session and during Term E, working hours will be posted at the CCC. Other areas supported by the CCC will have hours posted on location.

The CCC Web page, [http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/CCC/Labs/hours.html](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/CCC/Labs/hours.html), lists all the present public computer labs along with hours of operation and equipment available at each location.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The Humanities and Arts Department currently offers two English courses especially designed for international students: IS 1811, Writing for Non-native Speakers of English, and IS 1812, Speech for Non-native Speakers of English. International undergraduate students whose native language is not English and who have not studied extensively in English should include in their Humanities Sufficiency course sequence these two courses. For more information consult the Undergraduate
The WPI ESL Program offers several options for international students. In the ESL Summer Institute (three-week, and five-week programs), students will have the opportunity to brush up on their English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), strengthen their understanding of English vocabulary, and concepts for science and technology before the beginning of the school year, while they also learn how to use e-mail, computers, and create Web sites.

During the fall semester, we offer a course, which prepares international TAs for their new assignment. By completing this course, international TAs will be better prepared knowing the “rules” of the new culture while utilizing clear, concise, and appropriate language and behavior.

Finally, the ESL Program offers an ESL Seminar to provide an ongoing system of support where students can review certain aspects of the English language, American culture, and the American educational system. ESL Director, Billy McGowan, is located in the International House and can be reached at 508-831-6033.

Center for Communication Across the Curriculum

Trained Peer Tutors are available at no cost every day to help WPI students with any writing problems, especially those arising from project work. Students with writing problems of any type may be referred by faculty to the center, may make appointments on their own initiative, or make an appointment using the electronic schedule on the website. In addition to tutoring, the center has handouts on formats for reports and proposals and books on improving writing. The center works with native speakers as well as with those for whom English is a new language.

The Writing Workshop is in the upper level of the Project Center, 2nd floor. Phone 831-6070. (www.wpi.edu/+writing).
- Hours: (by appointment)
- Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday & Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- e-mail: writing@wpi.edu

Library Services

The services at the George C. Gordon Library are available to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the Worcester community. The library has several departments to help you in your class, homework, projects or personal needs. The Reference
Department and the Circulation Desk are two very important services you should get to know. The Reference Department can assist you in using the library, help you with research problems, and obtain books and journal articles not immediately available in the library.

Library resources come in all kinds of formats: print, microform, audiotape, videotape, audio CD-ROM, and on-line. The WPI library provides access to library services and resources from anywhere via the library web pages: http://www.wpi.edu/+library).

The Circulation Desk lends books for a period of four weeks for undergraduates and seven weeks for graduate students. Also, the books and materials reserved by the faculty members (teachers) for certain courses can be found there. Audio books and NYTBS may be borrowed for four weeks and videos for seven days.

In addition to these services, the Gordon Library offers the following facilities: 50 public-access computers, 19 study rooms, 371 study seats (not counting labs). They also have an audio-visual room with more than 1,800 videotapes, nine television/VCR players. Many of these videotapes contain recorded lectures that may be useful in understanding some of your courses. The audio-visual room is located on the first floor of the library, a microform room, located on the second floor, equipped with microfilms and microfiches containing technical reports and journal, magazine and newspaper articles, an instruction room, with PCs, which can be used as a lab when not reserved for classes, a music room where you can listen to records or tapes (the library's or your own), a reading area with current local, national and international newspapers, journals and magazines, approximately twenty study rooms of various sizes complete with tables and blackboards.

If you want to obtain a detailed explanation of the library's services and facilities, we recommend that you go the library’s Reference Department and speak with one of the librarians.

**Library Hours**

- **Sunday** 12:00 Noon-1:00 a.m.
- **Monday-Wednesday** 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 Midnight
- **Thursday** 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- **Friday** 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
- **Saturday** 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

When WPI is not in session, and during E Term, the library's working hours will be posted at the library entrance.

**Medical Services and Health Insurance**

Health programs for WPI students consist of medical services on campus and insurance to cover the cost of hospital care off campus. In accordance with Commonwealth of Massachusetts’s
mandatory student health insurance legislation, all students must have primary coverage for sickness and accident with a minimum of $65,000 medical limit. Mega Life and Health Insurance Company offers student accident and health plan designed for WPI students. Even though this policy will fulfill the mandatory requirements, we further recommend that you consider getting a major medical policy. To make effective comparisons among insurance policies and choose the one that offers the selection of benefits best suited for your needs or visa requirements; you need to understand some of the most important features of health insurance policies. Only comparing price (premium) could be a mistake if you later need treatment and learn that the inexpensive policy will not pay for the care you require. For more information go to [www.studentresources.com](http://www.studentresources.com).

**Health Services**

The WPI Student Health Center, located in the Stoddard C building on Hackfeld Road, is open throughout the school year. Students who have paid the student health fee and have submitted a completed health form are eligible to use the facility. Their website is: [http://www.wpi.edu/Admin/Health](http://www.wpi.edu/Admin/Health)

The Student Health Center was established to provide basic health services for students. Health maintenance and health education is emphasized. A series of wellness-oriented health workshops and seminars are provided to help students learn and maintain positive and productive health styles.

During the academic year, the Health Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (closed 12:00 Noon to 1:00 p.m.) 508-831-5520). A team of physicians and nurses is available to provide primary care and coordinate referral services. The physicians are in the office five days a week for approximately four hours each day. When the Health Center is closed, the physicians are available by phone to evaluate and provide medical services to the students.

If you need medical attention when the Health Center is closed, please follow this procedure:
1. Call Hahnemann Family Health Center at 508-334-8830
2. Identify yourself as a WPI student.
3. The doctor on call will return your call as soon as possible.

Routine allergy injections are administered at no charge, by appointment, provided the student furnishes the serum, and on the instruction of the student’s allergist or physician.

Gynecological services are available four hours a week on an appointment basis. These services include routine gynecological exams, treatment of gynecological complaints, contraceptive education and counseling, and pregnancy testing and counseling.

WPI requires each entering student to complete a health form prior to registration. Students without one on file will not be allowed to register for classes.
All patient records are kept completely confidential, even to others within the college. Information relating to diagnosis and treatment may be released only with the written consent of the patient.

**Health Insurance**

You need to understand some of the most important features of health insurance policies to make effective comparisons among insurance policies and choose the one that offers the selection of benefits best suited for your needs or visa requirements. Only comparing price (premium) could be a mistake if you later need treatment and learn that the inexpensive policy will not pay for the care you require.

Health insurance in the US is essential to cover the high cost of hospital and medical expenses. A short stay in the hospital often costs more than a year's tuition at WPI. If you are married, it is essential that you obtain adequate health insurance for your family.

Some of the issues you should think about when choosing a health insurance policy are:

**Deductible Amounts**

Most insurance policies require the insured individual to pay a small part of the medical cost before the insurance pays anything. This amount that you must pay first is called the deductible.

**Co-payment Percentage**

Most insurance policies pay a percentage of your medical costs after you pay the deductible. For example, some policies pay 80% of the costs, you pay 20%. Many insurance policies pay a larger co-payment for certain types of illness, a smaller co-payment for other types of illness. Others pay a percentage until you have paid a certain amount (called an out-of-pocket maximum), then they pay 100%.

**Specified Limits**

Some policies give specific dollar limits on what they will pay for particular services. For example, they may limit the hospital room and board charge, the doctor's fee, the surgery fees, the psychologist/psychiatrist fees, the anesthesiologist charge, etc. Other policies pay "usual" charges for these costs, which mean they pay what is usually charged in the local area. If you are looking at a policy with specific dollar limits, you can check average costs in the area where you will be living to be sure that the dollar limits are sufficient to pay for all the services you may need.
Benefit Period

Some insurance policies limit the amount of time they pay for illnesses or injuries. For example, if a policy has a 52-week benefit period, it will stop paying for a medical benefit 52 weeks after it began, even if the insured individual still requires that treatment.

Extension of Benefits

The extension of benefits provision applies if you are receiving treatment at the time your insurance policy expires and you are not eligible to renew the original policy agreement. Many companies will extend the policy and continue to pay benefits for a limited period of time.

Exclusions

Most insurance policies exclude coverage for certain conditions. It is important to read the list of exclusions carefully so that you understand exactly what is not covered by the policy.

Medical Evacuation/Reparation

For international visitors in the US, coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains is important. If your policy covers medical evacuation, it will pay your transportation costs if you need to return home because of a covered medical condition. If it covers repatriation, the insurance company will pay the cost of returning your remains home from the US should you die here.

Premium Cost

It is important to compare the cost of the policies you are considering, but keep in mind that you need to judge the policies based on the comparable coverage they provide. Generally, when a policy costs less, it provides less coverage; you usually get what you pay for and no more. Costs shouldn't be the only factor in your decision. Far more important is being sure that the insurance protects you adequately against unexpected medical costs.
Sports and Recreational Facilities

All the sports facilities on campus are available for you and your family according to posted hours. These facilities include an enclosed swimming pool and sauna located in the Alumni Gymnasium. Other facilities that you can find in the gym and other places on campus are: tennis, squash, racquetball, badminton, basketball, volleyball courts, table-tennis, baseball, football, soccer, track fields, a fitness center, and a bowling alley.

Student Development and Counseling Center

The Student Development and Counseling Center, known as West Street House, provides a wide range of services to all enrolled WPI students free of charge.

Professional staff members offer:
- personal counseling,
- seminars on stress management, study skills, job interviewing, creative decision-making, and other topics,
- wellness programming to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

The Student Development and Counseling Center is located at 157 West Street near the corner of Institute Road (508-831-5540).

Housing

Finding adequate housing is one of the most important tasks you have as a new student. If you make well-informed decisions about housing, you can begin your studies at WPI without the worries that inappropriate housing can create.

This section has been prepared to assist you by presenting, in some detail, information on the options that exist and the resources available to help you evaluate those options. As a first step, read this section carefully. It contains important information on both on-campus and off-campus housing.

On-campus Housing

Residence hall living at WPI offers convenience of location, camaraderie with other students, and educational sharing and exchange. Residential Services is committed to the principle that learning at college occurs both in and out of the classroom. Almost 50% of WPI's undergraduates, approximately 1,350 students, live in the residence halls.
Some of the advantages to living on campus:
- you get to know more people,
- you can develop an awareness of American students as individuals and as members of a group, which might help you integrate into the WPI community,
- you might improve your English.

Some disadvantages:
- after the freshman year there is no guarantee of on-campus housing,
- there are no areas on campus designed for storing your belongings,
- you must vacate your room during the Christmas vacation.

**Off-campus Housing**

Graduate and undergraduate students who were unable to or did not wish to obtain housing on campus will have to find a place off campus, i.e., property not owned by WPI.

Finding living accommodations can require a great deal of time. Most students spend one to two weeks of intense searching to find an adequate apartment. It is not easy, especially if you are living on a limited budget. In this area, a one or two bedroom apartment is estimated to rent from $600 to $800. You will find below some considerations that are important when establishing a place to live.

**Sources of Assistance**

WPI's Residential Services, located in Ellsworth 16, maintains a list of available off-campus apartments and a list of students who have an apartment but are seeking a roommate. Residential Services' staff members can assist you in locating the type of housing most appropriate for you. Several pamphlets available at the office contain good information about what you should do to find an apartment. Residential Services maintains a listing of off-campus apartments close to WPI. The apartments are listed on line at the following web address: http://www.wpi.edu/cgi-bin/RSO/AptFinder/apt_search.cgi

The local newspaper, the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, is another good source of assistance. As a rule, the week's most complete housing section appears in the Sunday and Friday editions. Housing advertisements are also published in Worcester Magazine, a weekly, free-of-charge paper, available at the entrance to Daniels Hall or at grocery (supermarket) and/or drug stores.

Some very good resources for finding rooms and apartments are:
- Apartment Directory, 508-799-6737
- Salisbury Estates, 508-798-0456
- Theo’s Properties, 508-754-4330
- Highland Associates, 508-755-8484;
There are several real estate agencies in Worcester that can be helpful when looking for an apartment, but it is far better to find it yourself by using the sources mentioned above.

Additional information about housing may be obtained from the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA). The CMHA can also assist you with legal matters. It is located at 7-11 Bellevue Street, 508-791-7265.

**Renting an Apartment (Flat)**

When renting an apartment you are normally asked for a one-month security deposit plus the first and last month's rent. The security deposit will be returned to you when you leave if there has been no major damage to the apartment. For your own protection, you should examine the apartment carefully before you sign the lease (contract) and get a written statement signed by the landlord about the condition of the apartment at the time you move into it. The landlord or leassor is the person who rents the apartment. The lease or contract is a legal agreement between you (tenant, lessee) and your landlord specifying the renting conditions.

In the negotiations with your landlord, you should:
- know which services and utilities are not included in the rent—electricity, gas,
- air-conditioning, TV-antenna, washing machine, etc.,
- ask if the landlord will pay for repairs,
- know the exact duration of the lease,
- learn the conditions under which you can end the lease if you need to leave the apartment,
- ask if you can sublet to someone else and under what conditions you may do so,
- be sure that the landlord knows the size of your family. (Some apartment houses do not allow children or pets.)

**Utilities**

Your landlord (apartment's owner) may or may not include the cost of utilities in your rent. Check your lease to know which ones you have to put into service. Contact the offices indicated below if you need any of these services.

**Electricity**

To obtain electric service for your apartment you need only call the electric company and give them your name, address, and some sort of identification. If your apartment currently has electric service, it will then put in your name immediately. If your apartment does not have the service, you will obtain the service in one or two days. You will be billed on a monthly basis.

National Grid  
Customer Service and Emergencies,  
1-800-322-3223 (toll-free)  
Gas

Gas service is obtained by calling the NSTAR Gas, Customer Sales and Service, and emergencies: 1-800-592-2000. Give them your name, address, plus your landlord's name and telephone number. After calling, you will have to wait for about 24 hours to get the service. You will be billed monthly.

Water

Most landlords provide water and sewer service. If yours does not, call the Worcester Water Department as soon as you know the date that you will move in. When you call, you must provide the name and address of your landlord.

Worcester Water Department
Telephone: 508-799-1485

Banking

Americans don’t usually carry a lot of cash. They prefer to pay by check or by credit card even for small purchases. To function efficiently in the US economy, you will need to open a checking and/or savings account at a local bank. This section introduces you to some of the basic banking options available to you. When selecting a bank, you should compare services and service charges. When you open an account with a bank, most banks require two pieces of identification, such as your passport and WPI student ID. You do not need a Social Security number to open a bank account. At the time you open your account you can complete a W-8 Form instead of giving the bank your Social Security number. You may open a checking or savings account at any nearby bank. Other services you may find at these banks are foreign currency conversion, traveler's checks and interbank transfer.

Types of Accounts

Savings Accounts enable you to save money and accumulate interest on these savings each month. These accounts are convenient and safe if you have some extra money that you are not going to use immediately. Most banks pay about 2% interest compounded daily and credited monthly.

Checking Accounts are convenient for payment of bills and occasional expenses. As with the other accounts, you should bring to the bank valid identification (passport or Massachusetts driver's license) and the initial deposit. The initial deposit may take up to
two weeks to clear before you can withdraw money from your account. You will then be able to order "personalized checks" which are numbered and include your name, address, and account number. When making purchases, many businesses will require these personalized checks, and will ask for your telephone number and proper identification.

Checks are written by filling out the name of the person or organization to whom the payment is being made and the date and the amount of payment (in numbers and in words), which are then validated by your signature. Do not sign your checks until you are ready to use them and have ascertained that all written information is correct. Do not make checks payable to “cash”.

When cashing checks you will be required to present one or more pieces of identification, such as a Massachusetts driver's license or a credit card. To make bank deposits, fill out a "deposit slip" and present this (along with the check or cash) to the bank teller. If the money is in the form of a check, you will have to endorse the check by signing your name on the reverse side.

A checkbook, which includes a register on which to record each deposit and check written, will help you keep an accurate balance. Monthly, the bank issues a balance statement, which includes summary statements of deposits, withdrawals and service charges, which you should compare to your own records. The accuracy of the balance in your checkbook is very important. Any check written for an amount higher than funds available in your account will be returned and the bank will charge you a fee.

**Bank Cards**

Many banks issue cards that make deposit and withdrawal services available to you 24 hours a day by use of an automated teller machine (ATM). These machines, which are located outside banks, in supermarkets and on campus, are very convenient. You can avoid waiting in line at the bank and have access to cash after the bank closes or in an emergency. Banks that are members of a national ATM network allow you access to your funds via your bankcard at selected ATMs throughout the country (usually a fee of $1.00 to $2.00 is charged for this service).

**A Note of Caution**

When you are withdrawing cash from an ATM after dark, be aware of your surroundings to prevent an assault. Protect your bankcard and your secret access code as you do your cash and credit cards.
Credit Cards

Credit cards can be convenient, especially if you unexpectedly have major expenses. You can pay university and medical fees, airplane tickets and car repairs with any major credit card. But you must understand that credit cards are seductive, and before you know it you may be in debt. Before you accept a credit card, you must be sure to understand all your obligations. Most banks charge an annual fee of $20 to $40. If you are unable to pay your full balance, you will be charged high interest rates (usually 18-20%) on the remaining balance and any additional charges you make.

Securing Money from Home

In order to secure money from home, you may need a letter from the international student advisor stating that you are currently enrolled at WPI. We call these letters "certificate of attendance" and you can request them from Janice T. Martin in the Office of International Students and Scholars.

Each country has its own requirements and restrictions on transfer of foreign currency. If you need specific information, you should contact the Education Department at your own embassy in Washington, DC.

The person sending you money should have all the specific information about your bank and your account. Your bank can also provide you with their identification number so that money can be wired from your family's bank to your bank and credited to your account.

Mail Service

WPI Central Mail Delivery

Undergraduate students may pick up incoming mail from their mailboxes located in the Central Mail facility in the Campus Center. You should be advised that at no time would packages or letters be given out to anyone without your WPI ID and signature. You must pick up such packages personally. You may also weigh letters here and purchase stamps.

Note: When you graduate, or leave WPI for some other reason, be sure that you fill out the necessary postal forms to ensure the forwarding of your mail.
US Postal Service

The government provides mail service in the US. It is a federal service. US mail is delivered every day except for Sundays and federal holidays.

Certified Mail

You can use this service when you want proof of the delivery of your mail. Your mail is treated like ordinary mail but the receiver's signature is obtained and returned to you as a proof of the delivery.

Special Delivery

You can use this service when you need your letters to be delivered with certain urgency. Upon its arrival at the post office in the city to which it has been sent, a special postal messenger will deliver the letter at once to the recipient's address.

Registered Mail

When you need your mail to be safeguarded, you can use this kind of mail service. Your mail will be covered by insurance. Therefore, if it is lost, the post office will pay you the value of the article.

Change of Address

When you change your address, there is a service that allows you to receive your mail at your new address. Special cards are available at any post office for reporting of a change of address.

Paying by Mail

In the US, most people pay their bills by mail. If you do not have a checking account, money orders can be obtained at any bank or at the post office. Cashier's checks from the bank can also be used. Cash should never be sent through the mail.

US Postal Offices (Local)

- US Post Office (Main Branch), 4 East Central Street, 1-800-275-8777
- Post Office (West Side), 126 June Street, 1-800-275-8777
- Mail Boxes Etc., 210 Park Ave, 508-757-1700
Transportation

Intercollegiate Transportation (Consortium Shuttle)

These shuttle buses leave from the WPI bus stop in front of Sanford Riley and stop at Assumption College, Becker College, Downtown, Clark University, Holy Cross, Worcester State College, Worcester Public Library and Common Outlets. They are free of charge with your WPI ID. Schedules (timetables) of the shuttle are available in the International House.

Bus/Limousine Service

- Worcester Regional Transit Authority, 508-791-2389, 287 Grove Street, www.therta.com
- Greyhound Bus Lines, 508-754-1102, 2 Washington Square www.greyhound.com/home/

Taxi Service

Red Cab, 508-792-9999
Yellow Cab, 508-754-3211

Train Service

Amtrak, 2 Washington Square, 508-755-0356, or 1-800-872-7245, www.amtrak.com
MBTA Commuter, 617-222-5215, Commute by Rail www.mbta.com

Airport Information

- Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, CT, 1-860-292-2000, 1-888-624-1533
- Logan International Airport, Boston, 1-800-235-6426
- T.F. Green Airport, Warwick, RI, 1-888-268-7222
Getting a Massachusetts Driver’s License

As an international student on a student visa, you are required to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license if you plan to get a car. If you have an out-of-state driver's license which has not expired (within one year), you can simply pay the required fees for conversion to a Massachusetts license. You can make the conversion after showing proof of residence in Massachusetts, given that you do not have any physical disability or prior criminal record. You can access the Registry of Motor Vehicles web site at: www.mass.gov/rmv/

If you have a foreign (except Canada and Mexico) driver's license, you will be required to pass a Massachusetts knowledge test, and a road test, in order to obtain your Massachusetts license. Although you may drive in the US with your valid foreign license for up to one year from the date of entry in the US, you must still apply for a Massachusetts license when you establish residency. Note that the one-year privilege extends to only the countries listed in Appendix A of the Driver’s Manual (http://www.mass.gov/rmv/dmanual/).

When getting your license, you will need to show your passport and Social Security Card. However, you will be issued a number different from your social security number as your driver's license number.

For more information on obtaining a driver's license and car registration, you should contact the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

- Worcester Main Office, 611 Main Street, Open Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri., 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Thursday, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

If you don’t have a driver's license but would like to get one in the US, you should contact a school for a course in driver education. You are not required by law to enroll in a driver education course, but you are encouraged to do so as it will introduce the driving rules and expectations in the US, plus decrease your insurance premiums. You will need a sponsor who is 21 years-of-age or older if you are taking the road test on your own.

Childcare Information

There are three main types of childcare available: private, family, and in-home. Each type addresses different needs. Each type is described here to assist you in deciding which type of care is best for your child.

Private Childcare

Also referred to as day care centers, these facilities are privately operated centers featuring a trained staff. Such centers primarily offer educational and developmental programs for children of varying ages. These facilities must be licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care. The EEC in its capacity as a licensing agency, licenses all child care
programs in Massachusetts. EEC enforces strong licensing standards for the health, safety and education of all children in child care. [http://www.eec.state.ma.us/oo_licensing.aspx](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/oo_licensing.aspx)

This is a good way to form a community for working parents, reinforce good child-rearing practices, and for children to gain playmates.

**Family Day Care Homes**

This type of childcare encompasses any private residence, which provides care for children during part, or all of the day. The total number of children in such a facility cannot exceed six. Such care is not a cooperative arrangement among neighbors. These day care homes must also be licensed by the EEC. In this type of childcare, children can interact and learn from one another.

**In-Home Care**

Childcare provided by a "sitter" or nanny can be considered in-home. This type of care can include relatives. Such services are usually found individually and participants are not required to have licensing or special training. This type of care is good for small babies because of the familiar environment.

**Additional Services**

The OCCS in Massachusetts can help answer child care questions that may arise. The OCCS also provides a referral service called the Child Care Connection. Also available are lists of referral services in the state of Massachusetts.

**Local Worcester Childcare Centers**

- Apple-A-Day Care Center, 18 Oxford St., 508-755-0030
- Children's Garden, VNA Care Network, 120 Thomas St., 508-756-7176.
- First Friends Early Care and Educational Center, 111 Park Ave, 508-791-4884
- Elm Park, 284 Highland St., 508-752-1201
- YWCA, 1 Salem Square, 508-791-3181
- YMCA, Central Branch, 766 Main Street, 1-508-755-6101

**Primary Education**

The Worcester Public School System offers a Parent Information Center to answer your questions about your child's education and options from kindergarten through high school. The Parent Information Center is located at 768 Main St., 508-799-3194. [http://www.wpsweb.com](http://www.wpsweb.com)
Restaurants and Cafés

The following listing of ethnic restaurants and cafés in Worcester (unless otherwise noted) is only a sampling of the many choices you have when eating out in Worcester. For a complete listing of ethnic restaurants in Worcester city look up restaurants in the “Yellow Pages” of the phone book.

Armenian
- Shiraz Armenian Cuisine, 259 Park Ave, 508-767-1639

Chinese
- Chopsticks, 1083 Main St. (Webster Sq.), 508-755-1075
- Dragon Dynasty, 104 Highland St., 508-755-5588
- Nancy Chang, 372 Chandler St., 508-752-8899
- Ping's Garden Restaurant, 90 Madison St., 508-791-9577

Indian
- Bollywood Grill, 97 Boston Turnpike (Rte 9), Shrewsbury, 508-793-9888
- India Café, 84 Boston Turnpike (Rte. 9), Shrewsbury, 508-754-2200

Italian
- Dino’s Restaurant, 13 Lord Street, 508-753-9978
- Leo’s Ristorante, 11 Brackett Ct., 508-753-9490

Japanese
- Sakura Tokyo, 640 Park Ave, 508-792-1078
- Zipango Sushi Bar, 270 Shrewsbury Street, 508-754-8047

Lebanese
- El Basha, 256 Park Avenue, 508-795-0222
- Sahara Café, 143 Highland St., 508-798-2181

Mexican
- Tortilla Sam’s, 107 Highland St., 508-756-7267
- Taco Bell, 463 Lincoln Street, 508-853-8226

Seafood
- Sole Proprietor, 118 Highland Street, 508-798-3474

Thai
- Thai Cha-Da, 264 Park Ave, 508-752-2211
Vietnamese
- Dalat Restaurant, 425 Park Ave, 508-753-6036
- Saigon Restaurant, 976 Main Street, 508-799-5250

Cafés and Coffee Houses
- Bean Counter, 113 Highland St., 508-754-3125
- Java Hut, 1073 Main St., 508-752-1678
- Worcester Art Museum Café, 55 Salisbury St., 508-799-4406
- Caffè Dolce, 154 Shrewsbury St., 508-754-3761

Diners – “Nothing Could Be Finer Than to Eat in Worcester's Diners."

Worcester is a "living diner museum" partly because the famed Worcester Lunch Car Company manufactured diners in Worcester. Today Worcester's diners serve good food to customers from all walks of life. Eating in a diner is a must for any visitor to Worcester.

- Art's Diner, 541 West Boylston St., 508-853-9705
- Boulevard Diner, 155 Shrewsbury St., 508-791-4535
- Broadway, 100 Water St., 508-753-3233
- Parkway Diner, 148 Shrewsbury St., 508-753-9968

Tipping in Restaurants -- Service charges, or tips, are not added to the bill in restaurants but are expected and often needed by the waiter/waitress as the main source of income. Tips in restaurants are 15% to 20%. You don't tip in a cafeteria or places where you help yourself.

Entertainment on Campus

The Activities Calendar, which is available from the Student Activities Office, lists the major events each month. Other sources of information about events on campus are Technews, the WPI weekly newspaper, and the WPI TV Bulletin Board.

The WPI Social Committee (SocComm) sponsors most of the activities on campus. The student-run group selects, plans, and promotes recreational, educational and social events. Student committees plan some of the more regular entertainment on campus. All committees are open to new members and offer opportunities to meet new people.

SocComm offers a little something for everyone! If you're interested in joining or want an update on what's happening, contact the Social Committee Office, 508-831-5509.
Entertainment in Worcester

Worcester has a very rich cultural life. The best sources of information are the weekly calendars published in Worcester Magazine or the Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

Theaters

- Worcester Foothills Theatre Company, 100 Front St., 508-754-3314 (Box Office)

Performance Centers

- DCU Center, 50 Foster St., 508-755-6800 (Ticket Office). The DCU Center is the area's most popular entertainment center attracting top names in music, sports, and entertainment. It is also home to the Worcester Ice Cats of the American Hockey League.

- Mechanics Hall, 321 Main St., 508-752-5608 (Ticket Office). This National Historic Landmark serves as a performing arts center hosting a wide variety of concerts and cultural events. Among these are the unique free "Brown Bag" lunch concerts, the International Artist Series, the Travel Film Series, and the Worcester Music Festival.

Museums

- Worcester Art Museum, 55 Salisbury St., 508-799-4406
- Higgins Armory Museum, 100 Barber Ave, 508-853-6015
- Worcester Historical Museum, 30 Elm St., 508-753-8278.

Shopping in Worcester

To find shops that carry the merchandise you are looking for; consult the yellow pages of the telephone directory. For general needs, such as clothing, shoes, bedding, and household appliances, you may want to go to one of the larger shopping centers (malls) not too far from campus.
Grocery Stores

- Price Chopper, 221 Park Ave, 508-798-5178
- Shaws Supermarket, 14 West Boylston Street, 508-852-7670
- Honey Farms, 101 Highland Street, 508-438-0201

Ethnic Markets

- Bahnan’s Bakery & Middle Eastern Style Food, 344 Pleasant St., 508-791-8566
- European Bakery, 29 Millbury St., 508-797-1651
- European Café and Deli, 23 Millbury Street, 508-797-1606
- Ha Tien Market, 892 Main Street, 508-831-7413
- Mekong Market, 747 Main Street, 508-304-1437
- Moscow Nights, 808 Pleasant Street, 508-799-0751
- Tom's International Deli, 118 Water St., 508-755-7295
- Twin's Oriental Market, 118 Cambridge St., 508-798-2547

Malls

- Greendale Mall, 7 Neponset Street, Info: 508-856-9400

Miscellaneous Shops

For inexpensive used furniture you might want to look at:

- Rainbow Furniture, 112 Grove Street, 508-752-9143.
Government Regulations

Introduction

As the United States seeks to develop immigration policy which balances security concerns with the desire to remain a welcoming society, we continue to see a pattern of stricter interpretations of existing regulations and introduction of new regulations in a way we have not experienced before. For international students, this means that you must pay close attention to any communication you receive from the International House regarding updates/changes in immigration regulations. In the post 9/11/01 climate it is also extremely important for you to make sure that you maintain your status as an F-1 or J-1 student while at WPI.

The US immigration law classifies international students in the US as temporary non-immigrant aliens ("aliens" means any person not a citizen or national of the United States). As international students, you are in the US on a non-immigrant visa, usually F-1 or J-1. If you have any questions, please don't ever hesitate to contact the International House to ask for advice. You will find many useful websites published both by US government agencies and different organizations or immigration attorneys. However, for the most accurate and up to date advice, we always ask that you rely on information provided by the International House.

The following information is meant to make you aware of your rights and responsibilities. As an international student; it is not meant to be a complete listing of all government regulations as they pertain to you.

Department of Homeland Security

With the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 22 different agencies and government organizations all come under the same department. The primary objective of the DHS is to protect the US against terrorist attacks, but it is also an objective of the department to enhance public service. Three major organizations under DHS are charged with enforcing immigration regulations in the US.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) -- The primary functions of ICE are: Immigration and customs investigations; customs air and marine interdiction, immigration and customs intelligence; detention and removal.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) - As a single unified border agency CBP is charged with border patrolling, customs service and immigration inspection at the ports of entry. (land borders, airports, and harbors). When you enter the US your first contact will be with an agent from this agency.
US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) - Most adjudication of immigrant and non-immigrant benefits will be done by USCIS either at the local USCIS Office or by mailing applications to a USCIS Service Center. As a student you might be filing an application for change of status, for Optional Practical Training or for re-instatement. These are all examples of application adjudicated by USCIS.
Department of Homeland Security Homepage:
http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/

Passport

Before coming to the United States, you were issued a passport by your government allowing you to leave and re-enter your own country. Your passport must always be valid for a period of six months longer than you expect to stay in the US. If necessary, your own consulate or embassy in the US will extend your passport. Consult them to learn what forms and fees are required. If you have a valid US visa in an expired passport you can still use the visa as long as it is presented at the port of entry together with a new and valid passport.

You can locate your Embassy or Consulate on the following webpage:
http://www.embassyworld.com/embassy/inside_usa.htm

Visa

The US visa is the label placed by a United States consular office on a page of your passport. It indicates that the consular office has determined that you are qualified to apply for admission to the United States in a particular immigration classification. A valid visa does not ensure an alien's entry into the US. An immigration officer at the port of entry makes this decision.

A visa contains the following information:
- the visa number,
- the location of the issuing consular post,
- the visa classification (F-1, J-1, etc.),
- the date of issuance,
- the expiration date,
- the number of applications for admission to the US for which it is valid, or the word "multiple” or the letter “M” in cases where an indefinite number of applications for entry to the US are allowed during the visa's period of validity.

The expiration date on the visa does not have any relationship to the length of time you can stay in the US, but only to the length of time it is valid to present to immigration when applying for entry to the US. The duration of your legal stay in the US will be noted on your Departure Record, also known as Form I-94.
Form I-94

Form I-94 records your arrival date in the US and should remain in your passport until you leave the country. It also indicates the type of visa you hold and your expected date of departure from the US. F-1 and J-1 visa holders will get a notation, D/S, meaning duration of status. When completing the I-94 upon arrival in the US you are also giving your initial address in the US. If you are subject to Special Registration you must remember to complete form AR-11 SR every time you change your address after your initial entry to the US. For all other F-1 and J-1 students you must inform the International House of any address change in order for us to update your SEVIS record.

With the latest changes in the immigration regulations, it has become very important that you maintain your status, since failing to do so can have serious consequences, such as being denied entry to the US.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA)

The provisions of IIRAIRA affect all non-immigrants, and in some cases, even immigrants (green card holders) are affected.

As an F-1 or J-1 student, you need to know, as a minimum, the following about IIRAIRA: Unlawful presence in the US can result in up to a 10-year bar from re-entering the US. For the purpose of this regulation, you are unlawfully present when an immigration judge, a CBP officer, ICE officer or a CIS officer determines that a status violation has occurred.

USA PATRIOT Act

The law “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism” was signed by President Bush on October 25, 2001. It is referred to as the PATRIOT Act and the act contains several important immigration related provisions, including the implementation of a new and updated state-of-the-art entry/exit system recording every non-US citizen arriving in the US, and notification of the Department of Homeland Security when non-immigrants have not departed the US under the terms of their visa/admitted status.

This is also known as the US-VISIT, which includes scanning of non-immigrant’s two index fingers and a digital photograph taken to match and authenticate travel documents at the port of entry.
National Security Entry/Exit Registration System (NSEERS)

What is special registration? Special registration is a government system tracking certain non-immigrants that enter the US or who are already in the US. As part of this program, individuals subject to special registration will be fingerprinted and photographed. If you get registered at the port of entry you will receive a packet with “Walk away Materials” explaining your obligations under the NSEERS program. Please note that individuals subject to special registration must report their departure to the immigration (exit-register) at the last airport before departure. For example, if you are flying home from Boston via Chicago you need to give yourself enough time to exit register in Chicago. Individuals subject to special registration are also required to inform the DHS of their address change in the US by using form AR-11SR. The form is available from the International House or online.

Currently non-immigrant male students from the following countries are subject to Special Registration: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

It should be noted that immigration inspectors can decide to make nationals of other counties subject to special registration and more countries can be added to the list as per the discretion of the DHS.

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

SEVIS is a tracking system for international students and exchange visitors in the US on F or J visa. The program facilitates timely reporting and monitoring of international students and exchange visitors. All F-1, F-2, J-1 and J-2 visa holders have a permanent SEVIS ID number and all actions taken by the international student advisor, the US Consulate issuing initial visa and the immigration inspector at the port of entry will be recorded in the individuals SEVIS record in the government database. WPI is required to keep our part of SEVIS up to date with the following information: Your address, local as well as home address, your program of study, your enrollment status, any employment we have authorized or recommended, program extension, dismissal from WPI, transfer to another school/program in the US and completion of studies date.

The SEVIS Fee you paid when applying for your initial visa is a one-time fee. This fee is collected by the DHS to fund the SEVIS Program.

We will do everything possible to update each student SEVIS record as we become aware of any changes, but it is ultimately YOUR responsibility to inform the International House of any changes in your circumstances. All reporting in SEVIS must be completed within specific timeframes, thus it is VERY important that you inform us immediately when you change your
address, major, etc. Furthermore certain actions on your part require prior approval by the International Student Advisor and update in SEVIS. If you enroll for less than full time, you need to see the International Student Advisor prior to enrolling, if you need and extension you must apply for the extension prior to the expiration date on your current I-20/DS-2019. Finally because we have to report your enrollment status every semester it is very important that you adhere to the enrollment dates and completes your enrollment and registration no later than within the first week of classes.

**Students with F-1 Visa**

If you were issued an I-20 form in order to obtain your US visa, you are on an F-1 visa. Any accompanying family members will be on an F-2 visa, unless they are full-time students as well. The following is a very brief overview of the F-1 regulations.

**Duration of Status**

Form I-94 should have a D/S written on it. Duration of status is defined as the period of time necessary to complete a full course of study in any educational program plus any authorized period of practical training following completion of that program plus 60 days in which to depart the US. The term "duration of status" is not an indication that you can stay in the US indefinitely as long as you are enrolled at a university.

**Maintaining Status**

The responsibility for maintaining your visa status lies with you. Being out of status can have serious consequences for your academic plans. There are several important things you must do to maintain your status.

- Keep your passport valid. Your passport must be valid for a minimum of six (6) months into the future. Addresses of embassies and consulates are available from the Office of International Students and Scholars.
- Do not work off campus without WPI or USCIS approval.
- Obtain extensions as needed. Allow ample time for WPI to assist you with any application for extension of stay.
- Maintain full-time enrollment and normal progress towards your degree. To remain in status, you must carry a full course of study every semester, except the summer term. For valid educational or medical reasons you can be allowed to carry a reduced course load. Only the international student advisor can approve this exception. Permission must be obtained prior to enrollment for a reduced course load.

**I-20 Form**

The first time an F-1 student comes into contact with the Department of Homeland Security, the student must present a Form I-20 properly and completely filled out by the
student and the by the designated official of the school the student is planning to attend. The I-20 is the student's permanent record of his/her non-immigrant F-1 student status in the US. The I-20 is used to record work and practical training. It should remain in your passport and should not be surrendered when leaving the US.

Leaving the US Temporarily and Re-Entering

F-1 visa holders need the following documents to re-enter the US after a temporary absence:

- Valid I-20 form endorsed by the international student advisor.
- Note: a new I-20 form is only required if there has been a change in your field of study, degree program, in the source or amount of funding, or if all the lines for endorsement are completed.
- Valid passport and US visa.
- Verification of adequate financial support.
- We also recommend that you carry with you an official copy of your transcript.

Dependents

Your spouse and/or children may enter the US on an F-2 visa provided they have evidence of adequate financial support. A person on an F-2 visa may NOT be employed under any circumstances. A separate I-20 form must be issued for the spouse/child.

Transfer

If you are considering transferring to another university in the US, you need to inform the international student advisor once you have decided to transfer. The school you are leaving needs to enter a “release” date into SEVIS and indicate the school you are transferring to. If you are a transfer student starting at WPI, you need to make sure your SEVIS record from your previous school has been released and you must register within the first week of class.

Special Note on Travel to Canada and Mexico

Check with the Office of International Students and Scholars as to whether you need a visa to enter Canada/Mexico. Applications and instructions for a Canadian Tourist visa are available on the web at: [http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp)

You may travel to Canada/Mexico with an expired visa if you have all other required documents. If you wish to apply for a non-immigrant visa from any of the US Consulate Posts in Canada or Mexico, you must schedule an appointment. For more information on how to
schedule an appointment go to: http://www.amcits.com/. You can also call the Visa Information Services Center at (900) 443-3131 for more information. (NOTE: there is a charge of $1.89 USD per minute for all ‘900’ calls.)

You should note that if your application for a new visa from a US Consulate in Canada or Mexico is denied, you must return to your country of residence and apply for the visa from there. Basically, the rule regarding automatic revalidation of an expired visa for the purpose of re-entry from Canada and Mexico applies to visits for pleasure of duration less than 30 days. Automatic revalidation of non-immigrant visas does not apply to nationals of the following countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba.

**Overview of Employment for Students with F-1 Visa**

The basic requirement for all types of employment is that you must maintain lawful F-1 status. The USCIS defines employment as work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, room and/or board, or any other benefit.

**On-campus Employment**

You can work on campus provided you are maintaining your F-1 status. On-campus employment must not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session. During vacation periods, you can work full time. In some situations, you can work off campus at a location, which qualifies as on-campus employment. You need to obtain an on-campus employment authorization from the international student advisor before starting any employment on campus.

**Off-campus Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship**

If you are experiencing severe economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances beyond your control, you may be eligible to apply for Employment Authorization from the USCIS. You should see the international student advisor before applying.

**Curricular Practical Training**

Curricular practical training is defined as work experience directly related to the student's field of study. Curricular practical training is the employment authorization used for F-1 students on co-op or graduate students on internship. You apply for curricular practical training work authorization from the international student advisor.

**Optional Practical Training**

The term “optional” refers to your option as far as when to use part of or all of your maximum 12 months of practical training. Optional practical training is defined as a work experience directly related to your field of study. The 12-month limit is for each
degree level. In other words, you get an additional 12 months if you move from a Bachelor's degree to a Master's degree or from a Master's to a Ph.D. Under certain circumstances you can also apply for a one-time 17 month extension of your OPT. Your degree must be a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) degree and the employer must be what is known as an E-Verifier.

**Students with J-1 Visa**

Exchange visitors are admitted to the US in J-1 status to engage in one of a number of possible activities one of which is study. The following information pertains to J-1 Student Status only. The United States Department of State administers the overall Exchange Visitor Program by designating sponsors to administer individual exchange visitor programs. The international student advisor who serves as the Designated Responsible Officer for the WPI Exchange Visitor Program administers the WPI J-1 program.

A number of students attend WPI on J-1 programs sponsored by outside agencies such as AMIDEAST and LASPAU. The international student advisor can provide information regarding the J-1 program to students on other programs, but only the specific program sponsor can approve any benefits associated with the program.

**Extension of Stay**

As an exchange visitor, you may apply for an extension of stay two-to-four weeks prior to the expiration date (obtained from you DS-2019) of your stay.

**Transfer**

Exchange visitors may transfer from one sponsor to another only if the first sponsor releases them. You can change your J-1 sponsorship either by leaving the US and re-entering with a new DS-2019 form or by transferring programs in the US by notification with approval from your current sponsor and SEVIS notification.

**Employment**

Employment is permitted only if it is an integral part of the program for which you came to the US and if it is in your field of study and will not unduly delay your degree (such as a part-time research assistantship). To obtain permission for this kind of employment, you must consult the program sponsor.

**Academic Training for J-1 Visa Holders**

An Exchange Visitor Student (J-1 visa) may be authorized for a period of up to 18 months academic training directly related to his/her program of study while enrolled or after completion of the academic program (three years for postdoctoral academic training).
However, the academic training cannot exceed the time enrolled in course work. The program sponsor can only authorize such a period of academic training for students on J-1 visas. Also, it is up to each program sponsor to determine the length of the academic training period up to 18 months. Some sponsoring agencies will only allow 6 or 12 months of practical training.

**Leaving the US Temporarily and Re-entering**

J-1 visa holders need the following documents to re-enter the US after a temporary absence:

- valid DS-2019 endorsed by the program sponsor. A new DS-2019 is required only if your form will expire before you plan to re-enter the US,
- valid passport and US visa,
- verification of adequate financial support,
- we also recommend that you carry with you a “Certificate of Attendance” and an official copy of your transcript

**Dependents**

Your spouse and/or children may accompany you on the basis of their own form DS-2019. They will get J-2 visas. Your spouse can work only if the USCIS approves his/her application for work authorization.

**Special Note on Travel to Canada**

Check with the Office of International Students and Scholars as to whether you need a visa to enter Canada/Mexico. Applications and instructions for a Canadian Tourist visa are available on the web at: [http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp). You may travel to Canada/Mexico with an expired visa if you have all other required documents. For more information on how to schedule an appointment go to: [http://www.amcits.com/](http://www.amcits.com/). You can also call the Visa Information Services Center at (900) 443-3131 for more information. *(NOTE: there is a charge of $1.89 USD per minute for all ‘900’ calls.)*

You should be aware that if your application for a new visa from a US Consulate in Canada or Mexico is denied, you must return to your country of residence and apply for the visa from there. Basically, the rule regarding automatic revalidation of an expired visa for the purpose of re-entry from Canada and Mexico applies to visits for pleasure of duration less than 30 days. Automatic revalidation of non-immigrant visas does not apply to nationals of the following countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba.
Two-year Home-country Physical Presence Requirement

Certain J-1 students must return home for at least two years after completing their educational program including academic training. This requirement applies to students whose program has been financed to some extent by the US Government or by their home country or to students whose skills are needed by their home country. For details on the two-year rule and grounds for waivers, you should contact your program sponsor.

Insurance Requirement for Exchange Visitors (J-1 and J-2)

Exchange visitors are required to have medical insurance in effect for themselves and any accompanying spouse and dependents on J-2 visa.

The minimum coverage, which your health and accident insurance must provide:

- at least $50,000 per person per accident or illness,
- up to $7,500 for repatriation,
- up to $10,000 for medical evacuation.

Students must maintain the required insurance during the duration of their J-1 status.

Change of Address

Foreign nationals are required to advise the DHS of any change of US address within 10 days. While in the past, the DHS has not enforced this rule, since the events of September 11, 2001; the DHS appears to seriously enforce this rule. If you are a student on an F-1 or J-1 visa you can satisfy this requirement by informing the International House of your address change within 10 days. You can download a Change of Address form from the International House homepage at:

http://wpi.edu/Admin/ISS/Immigration/alienco.pdf

Students subject to Special Registration must complete form AR-11SR available from the International House.

Social Security Number

All international students enrolling at WPI are issued an ID number; this is not a Social Security number and may not be used outside the university. In addition, the computer number received from Immigration is not a Social Security number and may not be used for any other purposes but immigration (your SEVIS ID Number). If you will be seeking employment, you will need a genuine Social Security number, and you should apply for one by taking your passport, I-20 form or DS-2019 form, I-94, and proof of Employment Authorization to the nearest Social Security Office.
The Social Security Office recommends waiting eight to ten days after your initial arrival before applying for the Social Security number.

Application forms for a Social Security number with instructions are available in the Office of International Students and Scholars. The Social Security administration verifies the status of all non-immigrant applicants for Social Security Numbers with USCIS. This USCIS check
can add about a six-week delay in obtaining a Social Security Number. Please note that the Social Security Administration can not check you in the SAVE system unless you have been Registered in SEVIS by the International Student Advisor.

Social Security Office
Madison Place, 51 Myrtle Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Telephone: 753-4105 or 1-800-772-1213.
Office hours, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
www.ssa.gov/

**US Tax Obligations**

In the US, every person who earns money must pay income tax. This tax is usually deducted from your paycheck. At the end of the tax year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31), all employers are required to create a summary statement of how much money each employee has earned or has been given (i.e., scholarships and grants) and how much tax was withheld from each paycheck during the tax year. The most commonly used forms of summary statements are called W-2 form and 1042's. These forms are mailed during the month of January to those who have earned income. It is the responsibility of each person to file income tax return forms with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the State of Massachusetts by April 15.

Some facts about tax obligations for non-US citizens:
- international students are not automatically exempt from paying income tax,
- most stipends, scholarships, grants, and fellowships are taxable,
- all F and J visa holders--even those who earn no money in the US--must file a statement at the end of the tax year.

Some countries have tax treaties with the US. If you are applying for tax treaty benefits, you must complete Form 8233.

All F and J visa holders are required to file a tax return whether or not they earned any US source income. If you had NO income from the US, you only have to file Form 8843. If you HAD US income, you must file Form 1040 NR-EZ. If you’re only US income is from on-campus employment, you can use the same forms. Individuals with more complicated tax situation should use Form 1040 NR.
Where to go For Tax Help and Information

There are several government publications that are very helpful:

- Publication 519 US Tax Guide for Aliens
- Publication 901 US Tax Treaties
- Publication 513 Tax Info for Visitors to the US
- Publication 520 Scholarships and Fellowships
- Publication 515 Withholding of Tax on Non-resident Aliens.

You can contact the IRS by phone at 1-800-829-3676 or 1-800-829-1040 for forms and booklets for questions.
Conversions

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Glossary A – Academic Terms Commonly Used on Campus

*Source:* Educational Counseling Section, United States Information Service

A glossary is a listing of terms and definitions limited to a specific field of knowledge. This section contains two glossaries:

**Academic Adviser:** Member of the faculty who helps and advises the student on academic matters. He or she may also assist the student during the registration process.

**Academic Probation (usually referred to simply as “probation.”):** A status resulting from unsatisfactory academic work; a student who is on academic probation must improve academic performance (i.e., grades) or be dismissed after a specified length of time.

**Academic Year:** The period of formal academic instruction, usually extending from September to June. Depending on the institution, the academic year may be divided into terms of varying length, such as semesters, trimesters or quarters.

**Accreditation:** Non-governmental approval of institutions and/or certain programs within institutions by nationally recognized accrediting bodies. Accreditation can affect the transferability of credits from one institution to another or can be linked to prerequisites for professional certification or licensure.

**Advanced Placement or Advanced Standing:** A waiver of some of the studies normally required for an undergraduate degree, granted to a student on the basis of prior study or experience (often as indicated by the student's performance on special examinations).

**Alumna, Alumnus:** A woman (alumna) or man (alumnus) who has attended or graduated from a school, college or university. (Plural forms: alumnae, alumni.)

**Assistantship:** A study grant of financial aid to a graduate student that is offered in return for certain services in teaching or laboratory supervision (as a teaching assistant), or services in research (as a research assistant).

**Carrel:** A small-enclosed desk in the library reserved by individuals doing library research.

**Class:** The word “class” has several different definitions: (1) Group of students which meets with an instructor or professor on a regularly scheduled basis; (2) The group of students in a particular year of study, i.e., freshman class (1st year), sophomore class (2nd year), junior class (3rd year), senior class (4th year); (3) The group of students who will graduate in a particular year, as “The Class of 2000.”

**Consortium:** A union of several colleges and/or universities within close proximity of each other, offering wider course selections, more extensive library resources and other extended cultural and educational opportunities.
**Cram**: Intense study for a test, done at the last possible moment.

**Extracurricular Activities**: Activities which are a part of student life but not part of regular classroom study, such as athletics, student activities, dances, clubs, etc.

**Professor Emeritus**: An academic title sometimes conferred on a retired faculty member.

**Quiz**: Short written or oral test, less formal than an examination.

**Registrar**: The college administrator who maintains student academic records.

**Research Paper**: A written report, which includes research findings and the development of the student's original ideas.

**Seminar**: A form of small group instruction combining independent research and class discussions under the guidance of a professor. Seminars are open to undergraduate seniors and graduate students.

**Transcript**: A certified copy of a student's educational record containing titles of courses, the number of credits and final grades in each course. An official transcript will also state the date a degree has been conferred.
Glossary B – Immigration Terms

For a complete listing of immigration terminologies go to the USCIS homepage: http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis. Click on the bar “Education and Resources”.

Alien Registration Number (or “A” Number): Identification number assigned to an immigrant for US government purposes. In certain cases, at the discretion of the USCIS registration numbers may be assigned to non-immigrant students and exchange visitors. However, most F-1, J-1 and M-1 students in the United States do not have “A” Numbers.


“Certificate of Eligibility” (Forms I-20, or DS-2019): Forms I-20 or DS 20-19 are issued by a recognized US educational, vocational or non-academic institution that accepts a foreign student for full-time study. Their sponsor or the US educational institution they will be attending issues the DS-2019 to exchange visitors. The I-20 and DS-2019 forms are not visas; they are visa petitions that state your eligibility to apply for the non-immigrant student visa status.

Change of Status: Change from one non-immigrant classification to another. Change of status requires USCIS approval.

Dependent: One who relies on another for support. For immigration purposes, a dependent is a spouse or an unmarried minor child (under 18-years-old).

Extension of Stay: Permission from the USCIS to remain in the United States beyond the expiration date specified on the Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record”.

F-1: US non-immigrant visa classification for regular students who have been accepted for full-time academic study at a recognized US educational institution.

F-2: US non-immigrant visa classification for dependents (i.e., spouse and unmarried minor children, under 18-years-old) of F-1 visa holders.

Form I-539: Application form to be filled out by non-immigrants requesting an extension of stay, reinstatement or a change of status.

Immigrant: A person who comes to a country other than his own as a permanent resident.

Naturalization: Process of becoming a citizen of a country not one's own.

Permanent Resident: Same as immigrant; a foreign national authorized to remain in the United States for an indefinite period of time.

SEVIS Number: The number on the I-20 Form or Form DS 2019
**Visa:** An endorsement, stamped into a passport by a proper authority of a country the bearer wishes to enter. The visa denotes that the passport has been examined, that certain requirements for entry have been met and that the bearer is permitted to proceed. The visa does not represent permission to enter the country; actual permission is granted at the point of entry.