ARRIVAL INFORMATION
For New International Students
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WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome you to Stony Brook University and we are looking forward to your active participation in the academic and social life of the University. This booklet will assist you in making preparations for your trip to the United States and serve as an easy reference guide once you have arrived.

Please read this essential information carefully. If you have any questions about preparing for arrival or arriving in the United States, please contact us. You will find our contact information under “Quick Reference” (p. 24).

Stony Brook University

Stony Brook University was established in 1957. In 1962, the campus moved to its present 1,000-acre wooded location on the north shore of Long Island, 60 miles east of New York City. The University has grown to an enrollment of more than 23,354 students. The distinguished international faculty of over 1,900 members attracts more than $150 million in external research support. The Wall Street Journal ranked Stony Brook eighth among public universities, based on students advancing to elite graduate programs.

There are many features that distinguish Stony Brook as a world-class university, including our international student body. Our campus community is diverse, representing over 100 different countries. We are looking forward to having you join us as an active participant in the many academic, social and cultural activities offered on campus.

International Services

International Services provides advice and assistance to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and visiting scholars on matters related to studying and living in the United States. These matters include immigration, employment, taxes, financial management, and a wide variety of cross-cultural issues. We provide informational and social programs for new and continuing international students on a regular basis.

Our International Services staff members have lived, worked and studied in many different countries, including Australia, Austria, Barbados, Benin, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Jamaica, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and U.S. Virgin Islands, and have many years of experience in international education. Each year we look forward to welcoming new students to Stony Brook and are eager to help you adjust to American culture.

International Services staff members are familiar with questions and concerns of international students and the U.S. system of education, and are available to help you prior to arrival and throughout your stay at Stony Brook University. Our orientation program is designed to help familiarize you with aspects of U.S. education and culture and provide you with specific information about study at Stony Brook University. We will also inform you of U.S. immigration regulations that you will need to know for maintaining your immigration status. Orientation
allows time to get to know your International Student Advisers, make new friends and overcome jet-lag before school starts.

Federal immigration regulations require that the University maintain accurate information regarding F-1 and J-1 students studying at Stony Brook. All new F-1 and J-1 students meet with an International Student Adviser for “check-in” and an “intake” interview within 30 days of arrival in the United States. The International Services office must report required information to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Your international student adviser will meet with you regularly throughout your stay in the U.S.

**SEVIS**
The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a real-time, federal immigration database for all F-1, F-2, J-1 and J-2 nonimmigrants. All Forms I-20 and Forms DS-2019 are created in SEVIS. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) maintains electronic records during each student’s stay in the United States. Information from the SEVIS database is shared with embassies, consulates, ports of entry, U.S. Department of Education and other government agencies.

To maintain your immigration status, events such as class registration, changes of address, changes of financial support and other actions must be reported to International Services in a timely manner for required SEVIS updates.

Orientation is our first opportunity to make you aware of the reporting requirements. Your ability to maintain your immigration status depends primarily on your awareness and understanding of F-1 and J-1 regulations. Failure to comply with reporting requirements can result in the termination of a student’s program in SEVIS.

**PLANNING FOR ARRIVAL**

*See “Housing” (p. 16) for important information about reserving on-campus housing well in advance of your arrival.*

We recommend that you visit [http://educationusa.state.gov/](http://educationusa.state.gov/) for the US Department of State’s pre-departure information.

**Transportation to the United States**
Prior to purchasing airline tickets, it is wise to shop for the most economical fare. Costs vary significantly depending on airline and travel date and other restrictions. *However, do not purchase non-refundable airline tickets until the visa has been stamped into your passport.*

An *International Student Identification Card*, available through STA Travel allows students to purchase reduced-price air, bus and train tickets. It also gives them discounts on accommodations in major world cities and discounts for certain services and shopping. The card automatically carries travelers’ health and
accident insurance policy for time spent en route to a destination. Please visit http://www.isic.org for further information.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Passport
Every international student must obtain a passport from his/her government for permission to travel abroad and re-enter their home country. Passports must be kept valid at all times while in the United States. Upon entry into the United States, passports are required to be valid for at least six months into the future.

Although previously exempt from the passport requirement, Canadian students are now required to use a passport to enter the United States.

Form I-20: Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status
Upon admission to a specific program of study, most international students are issued a Form I-20. Its formal title is, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status.” Proof of financial support, English language proficiency and other eligibility requirements must be met before a Form I-20 is issued.

The start date listed on your Stony Brook Form I-20 represents the first day of classes; however, you are required to arrive in time to participate in the mandatory International Student Orientation program. The orientation dates are noted in the letter enclosed with your Form I-20.

Form DS-2019: Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status
Exchange students and students funded by the U.S. government, home country government or other sponsoring agencies are issued a Form DS-2019. Its formal title is, “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status.” The Form DS-2019 is issued by a sponsoring program when a prospective student is admitted to a program of study, has documented English proficiency, demonstrated adequate financial support and met other eligibility requirements for J-1 status in the United States.

The start date listed on your Form DS-2019 is the first day of International Student Orientation, one to two weeks before the first day of classes. You are required to arrive in time to participate in the mandatory International Student Orientation program. The orientation dates are noted in the letter enclosed with your Form DS-2019.

VISA PROCESSING AT U.S. CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES

When you receive your Form I-20 or DS-2019, you need to review it very carefully to confirm that the biographical information matches your passport exactly. Your names should be spelled exactly as they are spelled in your passport. Your date of birth should be in month/day/year format, and all other information must be correct.
If there are any mistakes, please contact our office immediately by e-mail: internationalservices@notes.cc.sunysb.edu Write “I-20 correction” and your full name on the subject line. In the message, indicate the incorrect information and spell out the corrected information. For other general questions about your form, for applying for a visa, please e-mail us.

After confirming that your Certificate of Eligibility has no errors, you need to apply for an F-1 student or J-1 Exchange Visitor visa stamp at a U.S. consulate or embassy. Before reporting to the consulate or embassy, you need to make an appointment and pay a SEVIS fee. The SEVIS fee is $200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1 students. Forms and complete instructions for payment are available at: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm

- The SEVIS fee is separate and in addition to other visa application fees
- J-1 students sponsored by the U.S. government for “G-1” code programs, such as Fulbright, should follow their sponsors’ instructions regarding preparation for the visa application. “G-1” sponsored students do not pay a SEVIS fee.
- Students applying for F-1 and most J-1 visas are required to pay the SEVIS fee. This fee can be paid online by completing Form I-901 and using a credit card. When paying online, be sure to print a receipt to take with you to the visa interview, before closing the Browser. It is important that online fee-payers pay the fee at least three business days before their visa appointment.
- It is also possible to pay by check or money order. Follow instructions on the following webpage: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq4.htm#_Toc81222043; A receipt will be mailed to you. You need this receipt before reporting to the consulate to apply for the visa.
- F-2 and J-2 dependent family members are not required to pay SEVIS fees.

To make your consular appointment, check instructions for the U.S. Embassy or consulate nearest you: http://usembassy.gov/. Once you have received the Form I-20 or DS-2019 and everything is correct, pay the SEVIS fee (if applicable) and apply for your consular appointment right away. HOWEVER, only use the Stony Brook form if you intend to attend Stony Brook, as you are not allowed to use this paperwork to enter the US to attend a different school. Likewise, do not use another school’s Form I-20 or DS-2019 if you intend to attend Stony Brook University.

The U.S. Department of State’s website, http://travel.state.gov, has an excellent summary of information about applying for F-1 and J-1 visas.

At the visa interview, a consular officer will examine:

- Form DS-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application. Men aged 16-45 years old must also complete Form DS-157, Supplemental Visa Application
- Your Form I-20 or DS-2019
• The letter offering you admission to one of Stony Brook’s academic programs,
• Original documents demonstrating that you will have financial resources to study and live in the United States until you complete your studies
• Proof of proficiency in the English language.
• Check the website for the U.S. Consulate where you intend to apply for your visa to see if that post requires additional documentation or has issued special instructions for F-1 or J-1 visa application.
• Receipt for paying the SEVIS fee

Everyone applying for an F-1, F-2, J-1 or J-2 visa is required to document “bona fide nonimmigrant intent” by demonstrating binding ties to his or her home country. You will find more information about nonimmigrant intent on the U.S. Department of State website listed above.

When you receive your visa stamp, please check it before leaving the consulate. If you notice a mistake, it is much easier to return it to the visa section immediately for correction if you are still there.

Visa Delay or Denial
Some students may encounter delays in visa issuance due to security clearance checks. This is routine for applicants from designated countries and for students studying in certain technological fields. Consult consular websites for information about applying for a student (F-1) or Exchange Visitor (J-1) visa and for any additional documentation you could provide to facilitate the security checks and visa processing. The consular officer who conducts the interview should inform you if there will be a delay. Note that a security clearance delay is NOT denial of the F-1 or J-1 visa.

If you encounter difficulty in obtaining a visa, e-mail International Services at Stony Brook as soon as possible: internationalservices@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
Write “Visa problem” and your full name in the subject line. In your message, include the location of the consular post, date of the consular interview and reason for the visa denial or delay so that we can follow-up appropriately. Very few Stony Brook students are denied visas, and our advisers are prepared to help you through the process if you encounter problems.

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES
Students intending to enroll in a college or university should not enter the United States with a “visitor for pleasure or business” visa (B-1/B-2) unless it has been clearly designated “Prospective Student” by a consular officer. Students entering the United States on B-1/B-2 visas cannot begin studies until U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has approved a change of status to F-1 or J-1, a process that may take several months.

Likewise, do not enter the United States under the Visa Waiver program, in “WT” or “WB” status, as you will not be allowed to study. Individuals entering the United States with a visa waiver are not eligible to apply for a change of immigration status while remaining in the United States.
TRANSFERRING TO STONY BROOK FROM ANOTHER U.S. SCHOOL

**F-1 students** transferring from another school, college or university in the United States must obtain and complete a Transfer Report form from Stony Brook.

To begin the transfer procedure, a student should notify the Designated School Official (DSO), typically the International Student Adviser at the last school attended that he or she intends to transfer to Stony Brook. The DSO at the old school should complete the Transfer Report form, indicating the date the SEVIS record will be released to Stony Brook University. Form I-20 for transfer to Stony Brook can be prepared by the DSO at Stony Brook only after the SEVIS record has been released, admission and English proficiency verified, and original financial documentation is deemed adequate.

Undergraduate students should return the Transfer Report form to the Undergraduate Admissions office at Stony Brook.

Graduate students should return the Transfer Report form to their prospective departmental office.

*The transfer procedure is completed by reporting in person to an International Student Adviser at Stony Brook within 15 days of the beginning of classes. Failure to complete the transfer procedure in a timely manner is a violation of status.*

Any student already in violation of status should apply for reinstatement with the school in which they were previously enrolled, as soon as possible. Consult with an International Student Adviser for assistance.

**J-1 students** transferring from another school, college or university need to contact International Services to initiate the transfer procedure. The electronic transfer process conducted through SEVIS requires that the two J-1 programs coordinate their efforts. When the transfer is completed, a Stony Brook SEVIS Form DS-2019 will be issued. The form, “Request for SEVIS Form DS-2019 for New Student,” is also used for transfer students, and is available on the International Services website, [http://www.grad.stonybrook.edu/international/](http://www.grad.stonybrook.edu/international/).

**STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENTS**

Students intending to have their spouses and/or children live with them in the United States will need to make arrangements in advance of arrival. Students are encouraged to bring their families *only after appropriate family housing accommodations are confirmed*. The University cannot guarantee housing for married students, and low-cost housing can be difficult to find on Long Island.

Dependent family members (spouse and children under 21 years old) joining students in the United States each need their own Certificate of Eligibility from Stony Brook University or the sponsoring agency. Forms I-20 for F-2 dependents and Forms DS-2019 for J-2 dependents are issued based on proof of sufficient funds available *in addition* to the amount required for the duration of
the student’s entire course of study. Currently, a spouse needs to have at least $6,500 per year in financial support, and each dependent child needs $3,630 per year. (Agencies sponsoring J-1 students may have their own guidelines for amounts of support required for dependents.)

A Certificate of Eligibility may be issued for a dependent when the student’s initial Form I-20 or DS-2019 is prepared, or after the student has entered the United States and started the program of study. Each dependent needs to obtain an F-2 or J-2 visa stamp, before entering the United States.

Note that F-2 spouses of F-1 students are not allowed to work in the United States and are prohibited from “vocational” or matriculated study. F-1 children may study full-time through the high school level, and at that time they must apply for a change of immigration status to F-1 status to continue their studies. F-2 dependents may be eligible to work or study in the United States, but must await the approved change of status before beginning employment or study.

J-2 spouses and children of J-1 students may apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for permission to accept employment after arrival in the United States. Current immigration regulations allow spouses and children in J-2 status to study. Note that many J-1 and J-2 Exchange Visitors may be unable to change their immigration status while remaining in the United States if they are subject to provisions of the “two-year home country residency” requirement.

Unmarried domestic partners are not eligible for F-2 or J-2 status under U.S. immigration regulations.

**PURCHASING U.S. DOLLARS**

Many foreign governments place limits on the amount of their currency that can be exchanged for U.S. dollars (USD), or the amount of funds that can be brought out of the country.

Some governments require university documents certifying acceptance, dates of enrollment and expense estimates, before releasing or exchanging funds to U.S. dollars. To address these requirements, students should present their Certificates of Eligibility Forms I-20 or Forms DS-2019 and letters of acceptance to the appropriate officials.

It is the student’s responsibility to assure monetary transfer permission in advance. Please read sections about “Carrying Money” (p. 12) and “Payment of Tuition, Fees and Other Charges” (p.22)

**Budgeting**

At times during the academic year, such as at the beginning of each semester, larger amounts of readily-available funds may be required. Careful financial planning is required if your funds will be arriving periodically from overseas.
Personal expenses are conservatively estimated to average $1,000 to $1,500 per month for food, housing and miscellaneous items. Students expecting personal expenses to be covered by university stipends are cautioned that it may be several weeks before receiving their first stipend check. Plan to bring enough money to easily cover living expenses for the first two months of the first semester.

Note that our estimate of expenses is the minimum required to live on Long Island with careful budgeting. Students planning to live off campus, eat out in restaurants, purchase a car or enjoy off-campus entertainment will require additional funds.

WHAT TO BRING

It is important that you keep your most valuable items with you on the plane. We recommend cash, credit cards and traveler’s checks be carried in a discreet money belt. Be sure to carry with you:

- Airline ticket(s) for your flight(s) to New York
- Any prescription medications that you need to bring, with the written prescriptions from your doctor
- Your passport, valid at least six months into the future, with a valid visa stamp (only Canadian citizens will not need a visa stamp)
- Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Your Stony Brook admission letter and proof of financial support
- One complete change of clothing and toiletries, in the event that your checked luggage is delayed
- Your driver’s license and a translation, or “international driver’s license,” if you intend to drive
- A campus map, available at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/map/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/map/)
- This Arrival Information booklet.

Students may wish to bring items from home, such as photographs, crafts, art and music to decorate their new residence and to share aspects of home country culture with new friends.

Basic furniture is provided in campus residence halls, but plan to buy, a lamp (no halogen lamps are allowed in the dorms), light bulbs, clock/radio, bulletin board, pillows, bed linens, and towels. Warm blankets or a “comforter” will be necessary for our cold winter nights.

Current students recommend bringing a sheet, towel, and a few toiletries to use until you have a chance to go shopping. Some students also recommend bringing a few basic cooking implements, particularly if these items are much cheaper in your home country. International student clubs have posted some useful information on their websites specific to students traveling from their countries. Their addresses are listed at: [http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/clubs](http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/clubs)
While the following items may be purchased locally, we recommend bringing at least some of them to begin your stay. Just remember, if you pack it, you’re going to have to carry it around at least two airports!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Medicine and Toiletries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 pair of walking shoes</td>
<td>Prescription medicines*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 alternate pair of shoes</td>
<td>Eyeglasses/sunglasses or contact lenses and supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair flip-flops or shower shoes</td>
<td>Toothbrush and toothpaste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 pairs of socks</td>
<td>Soap and shampoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 pairs of underwear</td>
<td>Comb/brush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 pairs of shorts</td>
<td>Moisturizers and cosmetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 skirts and/or trousers</td>
<td>Deodorant or antiperspirant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 shirts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 sweaters and/or sweatshirts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raincoat/poncho</td>
<td>Camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing suit</td>
<td>Small, paperback dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy winter jacket</td>
<td>Address book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter hat</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of gloves or mittens</td>
<td>Backpack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarf</td>
<td>Towel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of waterproof boots or overshoes</td>
<td>Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightweight jacket</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleepwear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*You may be unable to get prescriptions written by your home doctor filled in the United States. Typically, you will need to be examined by a physician in the United States and issued a new prescription. If you have a chronic medical condition requiring regular medication, please contact Student Health Services before arrival to make arrangements.

**Shopping for Supplies**

We plan a shopping trip during the International Student Orientation for those who will need to make a few purchases shortly after arrival. Throughout the year, there is local bus service from campus to several shopping centers and grocery stores to accommodate purchase of food and personal supplies such as toiletries, bedding and bicycles.

Be careful to budget your spending, especially in the first few weeks of school. Resist buying luxury items on impulse. The same items will be available later, when you have a better idea of how much discretionary spending you can afford.

**Books**

Standard references in your native language may be helpful to get started. Excellent library resources provide students with ample opportunity to obtain supplemental reading materials, and basic texts needed for review and research.

Students are expected to purchase textbooks required for the courses in which they enroll. Course texts are available through the campus bookstore. Students may be able to save money by purchasing used textbooks through the bookstore.
or online. When purchasing a used textbook make sure it is the required edition of the text for your course.

We do not recommend bringing textbooks used in previous studies, unless they are specifically needed for transfer credit evaluation. Transfer students applying to receive advanced credit for courses taken elsewhere must provide an official course description for each course for which Stony Brook University credit is sought. You may also need the names of textbooks. Undergraduate students should contact Undergraduate Admissions for specific requirements for transfer credit.

Climate and Clothing
Individual tolerances for heat and cold vary considerably so the following are merely guidelines. Students from tropical climates may consider warm sweaters to be essential, even in summer, as most public buildings are air-conditioned from May through September.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer (June – September)</td>
<td>50 to 90°F = 10 to 32°C</td>
<td>Wear light clothing for hot days and light jackets for cool nights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (September– December)</td>
<td>20 to 80°F = -7 to 27°C</td>
<td>Layer clothing on chilly autumn days; raincoats or medium-weight coats or ski jackets are worn outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (December – March)</td>
<td>0 to 45°F = -18 to 7°C</td>
<td>In winter, heavy jackets/coats, warm hats, scarves, gloves, and waterproof snow boots are necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (March – June)</td>
<td>40 to 72°F = 4 to 22°C</td>
<td>Like fall, layer clothing. Spring can be rainy and cool, warming on sunny afternoons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carrying Money
We recommend that you arrive with enough U.S. currency to pay for transportation to campus and for expenses during your first few weeks here. Do not carry large amounts of cash or other valuables, due to the risk of loss or theft. Cash and valuables you bring should be in your carry-on baggage or a money belt, not in baggage to be checked.

If home country regulations permit, students should bring at least $1,000 USD in traveler’s checks or debit cards for the first few weeks of school, in addition to the funds required for tuition, fees and books. If you plan on living off-campus you will need significantly more. See “Off-campus Housing” (p.17).

Students bringing large sums of money to the United States should seek advice from a bank official regarding the safest and most convenient way to carry or transfer that
Most major banks in the United States have established connections with foreign banks, so it may be possible to transfer funds with a bank draft from your bank to be presented to the U.S. bank with personal identification. Transfer of funds should be in U.S. Dollars because foreign currency exchange may not be available locally, and the University and local businesses accept only checks or drafts in U.S. Dollars.

Credit cards, ATM cards, traveler’s checks, and U.S. bank drafts are also good options for safely gaining access to personal funds. Traveler’s checks may be purchased at banks or travel offices either in the home country or in the United States. They are typically available in denominations of $20, $50, $100, $500 or $1,000. Smaller denominations are preferable, as small checks ($20 or $50) are easier to cash. Students should carry at least $100 USD in cash when traveling; the largest denomination should be a $20 bill.

U.S. paper currency is issued in $1, $5, $10, $20, $50 and $100 bills; larger denominations are issued, but rarely circulated. Many shops prefer $20 bills or less when making purchases. Coins are 1 cent/penny, 5 cents/nickel, 10 cents/dime, 25 cents/quarter, 50 cents/half dollar, and 100 cents/dollar or $1. The half-dollar and dollar coins are seldom used and can be mistaken for quarters, however they are heavier and slightly larger than quarters.

ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

Preparing for Arrival Inspection
Form I-94, also known as the Arrival/Departure Record, is a long white card issued to passengers before the airplane arrives at the point of entry. Students complete the top and bottom sections of the form and a separate customs declaration form. If you are bringing $10,000 USD or the foreign equivalent into or out of the United States, you are required to declare the amount on the customs form.

Upon arrival in the United States, each person will pass through passport control (immigration inspection), and then customs inspection. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers take their duties very seriously, and we recommend that you remain patient and polite during this time.

Passport Control
During the passport control phase of inspection, every student entering the United States is required to present:

- A passport valid at least six months into the future, with
- A valid visa stamp (only Canadians citizens will not need a visa stamp)
- Form I-20 or DS-2019
- You may also be asked to present Stony Brook’s admission letter and proof of financial support.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer may ask some questions about your purposes for traveling to the United States.
Some examples include, but are not limited to: “What is your final destination?” “Where will you be studying?”, or “How long do you plan to be in the United States?”

At passport control, students will give the Form I-94 to a CBP Officer. The officer will make necessary notations and return a portion of the form, the Form I-94 card, often stapling it to the passport.

The Form I-94 card records the date of admission into the United States, and the assigned immigration status. Form I-94 is the document that specifically assigns J-1 or F-1 immigration status while students are in the United States. The length of stay for F-1 and J-1 students should be recorded as “D/S”, which means, “duration of status.” Any J-1 or F-1 student who receives a date-specific expiration date on the Form I-94 card should contact International Services as soon as possible after arriving on campus.

Keep your Form I-94 card safe while you are in the United States, as it is a very important document. The Form I-94 card will be collected by a CBP Officer upon departure from the United States, except under specific circumstances when traveling to Canada, Mexico and contiguous territories of the United States.

**Customs Clearance**

Once you are granted admission into the United States, claim your luggage so that U.S. Customs inspectors can examine all bags for compliance and present the customs form that was distributed by the airline personnel during the flight. The inspector may look through your luggage, asking questions about whether or not you have brought any prohibited items, have large amounts of currency ($10,000 USD, or more) to declare. This is to be done, even if your final destination requires travel to another airport. Often, working dogs sniff the baggage claim area to help find illegal imports.

Prohibited items include plants, fruits, meats, other fresh or cured food products, drugs and items for resale. For a more complete listing of prohibited items and further information about Customs inspection, ask for a booklet regarding customs regulations at the U.S. Embassy or consulate when you get your visa, or consult the CBP website at [http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm)

Once a CBP Officer collects your customs form, you may re-check your bags if proceeding to a connecting flight, or exit the airport.

**TRANSPORTATION TO STONY BROOK**

**Limousine Transportation**

“Limousine” or group van service is available from all New York airports to Stony Brook. The prices for shared rides vary, but are currently approximately $57 per person from JFK airport (not including recommended 15% gratuity, or “tip”); students should verify charges when reserving a ride.
Once your arrival time is known, it is advisable to reserve a ride to campus by phone or online at least 24 hours in advance. See the “Quick Reference section (p.24) for some limousine service phone numbers. Ask the driver to take you directly to your campus residence. A copy of the campus map will help the driver find your building on campus. A campus map is available at http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/res/map.shtml.

Courtesy telephones are available to contact ground transportation services. There may be a long wait for a shared-ride van service if a reservation was not made in advance. If you reserve transportation before you leave home, factor in time for customs and immigration inspections before you can leave the airport.

Seek advice on ground transportation only from uniformed personnel at the airport’s Ground Transportation desk outside of the restricted customs area. Do not go with unknown people who may be offering transportation outside of the customs area. Do not leave your luggage unattended.

Individual taxis to campus are very expensive and are not recommended.

Railroad Transportation
From JFK airport, take the AIRTRAIN link from any terminal to Jamaica station for the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). The $5 trip to Jamaica station lasts approximately 20 minutes. From Jamaica station, take the LIRR (Port Jefferson line, eastbound) to the Stony Brook station, about a 1.5 hour ride. One-way fares range from $7.50 to $10.50, depending on the time of day. Purchase your LIRR ticket from one of the ticket machines before boarding the train. There is an additional fee when buying a ticket from the conductor onboard the train. The ticket machines accept U.S. Currency in small denominations, credit cards and debit cards. More information on AIRTRAIN and the LIRR is available at: http://www.mta.info/mta/airtrain.htm

If traveling from New York City (Penn Station, 34th Street and 7th Avenue), take LIRR’s Port Jefferson line to the Stony Brook station. One-way fares range from $9.75 to $13.50, depending on the time of day. (More, if you purchase your ticket from the conductor onboard the train. Passengers may have to change trains at a station along the line.) This is indicated in the schedule pamphlet and announced on the train. When your ticket is being collected or purchased, ask the conductor for information about whether and where you may have to change trains.

If you arrive at the Stony Brook railroad station on the Saturday or Sunday before check-in day, or in the evening during the week, you may use a pay phone to call the University Police (631-632-3333) for assistance in getting to your campus residence.

Pay phones are coin-operated using quarter coins. If you are using your cell phone, you will need to dial any required long-distance code (such as 1+) and the Suffolk County area code (631) before the numbers listed above.
If you arrive between 8:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday, call International Services (631-632-4685). When you are using a campus telephone, dial 2-4685 for assistance from International Services.

**Automobile**
Take the Long Island Expressway (I-495, also called the “L-I-E”), east. Continue on the LIE to Exit 62N, Nicolls Road (County Route 97). Drive nine miles north on Nicolls Road, directly to the main entrance of the Stony Brook campus, on the left. You will see signs to direct you. A campus map is available at: [http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/map/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/map/) and [http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/res/map.shtml](http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/res/map.shtml).

**Luggage and Baggage**
Do not send baggage in advance of your arrival to the University. Stony Brook does not have storage facilities for luggage, trunks or packages. Most students bring necessary items as personal baggage on the plane. Check with a travel agent or airline for specific size and weight limitations. Excess baggage may cost less than air freight charges for similarly-sized parcels. Air freight shipments can be very difficult to get through customs, and may require the services of an agent for clearance and forwarding to campus. These services can result in significant delays and extra fees.

After arrival, friends and family may mail small packages to you by surface mail or airmail. A package marked, “gift,” with contents valued under $100 USD may enter duty-free (without tax). Any duty charge on mail packages is collected at the U.S. Post Office in Stony Brook village.

**HOUSING**

**On-Campus Housing**

*ON-CAMPUS HOUSING SHOULD BE ARRANGED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WELL IN ADVANCE OF YOUR ARRIVAL.*

Planning ahead and making arrangements for housing is extremely important. Residence Hall rooms are reserved on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. On-campus housing is not guaranteed. Students desiring to reside on campus should complete and return their housing application and deposit fee to the Division of Campus Residences before the deadline noted on the application.

Dormitory rooms or apartments will not be available before check-in day unless prior arrangements have been made and confirmed with the Campus Residences office. Students planning to arrive early and stay in a dormitory room or an apartment must notify the Campus Residences office in advance and be prepared to pay additional rent.

Accompanying dependents (spouses and children) cannot be accommodated without advanced approval from Campus Residences.
If you arrive on campus without a confirmed housing assignment, you will need to stay in a hotel or bed and breakfast. Expect to pay over $100 each night plus the cost of local transportation, until you are either assigned on-campus housing or find off-campus housing. Either is likely to take several weeks, even months, adding thousands of dollars to your expenses.

Address all housing inquiries and make all housing arrangements directly with the Campus Residences office. They may be reached by phone at (631) 632-6750 or by e-mail at reside@notes.cc.sunysb.edu. Undergraduate students can visit the website: http://sunysb.edu/newstudent and Graduate students can email: rlagrasta@notes.cc.sunysb.edu. Applications for campus housing may also be made on SOLAR. See http://it.cc.stonybrook.edu/student_guide/solar.

Off-Campus Housing
Off-campus housing is often difficult to find and it may take several weeks to find suitable and affordable housing. Housing may be far from the campus, which may force you to rely on often-inconvenient public transportation services, or purchase an automobile. Both methods of transportation require budgeting additional time and money.

Local apartment rentals usually require the equivalent of two months’ rent in advance. One month’s rent would be applied as a security deposit, refundable if no damage occurs to the facility. Students using services of a rental agent pay the equivalent of one month’s rent as a fee, in addition to the security deposit and one month’s rent in advance. A lease may be signed that obligates the tenant for a specific number of months, typically one year.

Off-campus rental rates vary, but students should expect to pay a minimum of $500 per month for a room in a shared house, and a minimum of $1,000 for a small studio apartment. Utility charges (gas, oil, electricity, water, and telephone) are often paid in addition to the basic rent.

Questions regarding off-campus housing may be directed to the University off-campus housing service, located in Room 250, Stony Brook Union. They may be reached by telephone at (631) 632-6770 or via email at: offcampushousing@notes.cc.sunysb.edu. Useful information may be found on their website: http://och.fsa.sunysb.edu

Home Stay Opportunity
Students may participate in a brief home stay with an American family before the beginning of the term. This program allows students to learn a bit about U.S. life and culture, and can help ease transition into American society. Requests should be made at least two months in advance. Contact:

Servas US, Inc.
11 John Street, Room 406
New York, NY 10038
Telephone (212) 267-0252
e-mail: usservas@igc.apc.org
Website: http://www.usservas.org/
Temporary Housing
Students arriving on the designated arrival date who have been assigned on-campus housing may move into the residence hall on that date. Arrangements made for early arrival must be made in advance with Campus Residences.

Students planning to reside off campus cannot stay in temporary on-campus housing, nor can the University rent private accommodations on behalf of students. See “Temporary Accommodations in the Local Area” (p.25).

Meals and Food Services
A wide variety of dining options are available on campus, from cafeterias and cafes to Jasmine, the Asian food court located in the Wang Center, and the Union Common. Campus dining accommodates special diets including halal, kosher and vegetarian foods. Further information about dining options and meal plans is available at http://www.campusdining.org/openchange-meal-plans

REPORTING TO INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

Check-in
All individuals in F-1 and J-1 immigration status based on Form I-20 or DS-2019 issued by Stony Brook must check-in with the International Services office.

If you arrive before check-in day, please come to the International Services office to meet with an adviser during our regular business hours, generally Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. An International Student Adviser will confirm your arrival in the federal SEVIS electronic database through an “intake interview” process. We are located in The Graduate School, 2401 Computer Science Building, on the West campus.

It is essential that J-1 students check-in and complete their intake interviews within 30 days of entry into the United States or the start date on Form DS-2019 – whichever is soonest – or the SEVIS record automatically “terminates,” as the federal tracking system will not reflect that you’ve reported to the school. This is a very serious violation and it can be very difficult or impossible to correct.

It is essential that F-1 students check-in and complete their intake interviews within 30 days of entry to the United States or the SEVIS federal tracking system will not reflect that you’ve reported to the school. This is a very serious violation and can be very difficult or impossible to correct. F-1 transfer students must check-in and complete the intake interview within 15 days of the start of classes.

To check-in with International Services, please visit our office. We will confirm your arrival at Stony Brook University and answer any questions you may have. Many students will have their intake interview at check-in, but time constraints will limit the number of student intake interviews that can be completed that day.
Intake Interview
All new and transfer international students will see an International Student Adviser for an initial “intake interview” at the beginning of their first semester at Stony Brook. This allows us to review your original immigration documents, collect photocopies for our records, and document your arrival in SEVIS.

You will need to bring the following original documents to the intake interview, as well as a photocopy of each:

- Passport
- Form I-94 (copy front and back)
- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 (stamped at port of entry).
- If transferring, copies of all Forms I-20 or DS-2019 issued on your behalf
- If you are beginning study following a change of status granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a copy of the Approval Notice, Form I-797
- Your complete local residential address, even if temporary
- Contact information for an immediate family member that we could use in case of an emergency

Transfer students must report to International Services for an interview within 15 days of the first day of classes. When the intake interview process is completed, a “block” is lifted from the University database, allowing registration.

Mandatory Orientation

Orientation programs play a crucial role in the transition to life in a new environment and cultural setting. These programs have been carefully planned to help you succeed at Stony Brook University. Attendance is mandatory, so plan to be on campus every day of the orientation week.

You are required to attend the entire orientation program for international students, even if you are transferring from another school in the United States or if you have attended Stony Brook University in a different immigration status in the past. You are also required to attend the New and Transfer Undergraduate Student orientation, or Graduate School, Teaching Assistant and Academic Department orientations, as appropriate.

Note: You must obtain permission from International Services to arrive after the first day of orientation since a new or updated SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 may be required for entry into the United States. Students who cannot arrive by the reporting date should contact International Services to obtain permission for a later arrival date. If you must request permission for late arrival, e-mail International Services at Stony Brook as soon as possible:
Write, “Late arrival” and your full name in the subject line. In your message, include the reason you will need to arrive after orientation begins, and the date that you expect to be able to arrive. If you cannot arrive on time for orientation, we may recommend that your admission be deferred to next semester.

Keeping Documents Safe
After arrival, you should make copies of all travel documents and keep them in a safe place, separate from the originals. The documents to be photocopied for safekeeping include:

- Passport identification page (your picture, the passport number, and personal information)
- Passport page with U.S. visa used for entry
- Passport page with expiration date of passport
- Both sides of the Form I-94
- SEVIS Form I-20 or Form DS-2019

Remember to keep the original Form I-94 card and all Forms I-20 or DS-2019 with your passport while you are in the United States. While your visa stamp allowed you to enter the United States, the valid passport, Form I-94 and Form I-20 or DS-2019 are the physical evidence used to determine that you are allowed to remain in the United States.

In the event any of these documents are lost or stolen, you will need to file a police report. If the documents are not recovered promptly, you will need to replace them. Contact your embassy to request a new passport. Meet with an International Student Adviser to request a replacement Form I-20 or DS-2019; you will need to provide a copy of the police report for our records. We will help you apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service to replace the Form I-94. The replacement fee is currently $320.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

English Language Requirements and English Courses
All students are required to demonstrate proficiency in English prior to admission. Doctoral students must also demonstrate proficiency in spoken English to fulfill the university’s teaching practicum requirement. For English proficiency requirements for international students, see the separate information sheet.

Students who do not meet English proficiency requirements, or who would like to improve their English skills prior to enrollment in a degree program, are encouraged to enroll in the University’s Intensive English Center. Summer programs are available. For further information, contact:
The Intensive English Center
Frank Melville, Jr., Memorial Library, Room E-5320
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3390
Telephone (631) 632-7031; Fax (631) 632-6544
Website http://www.sunysb.edu/iec/

Notice of Withdrawal
If you will not be joining us this semester, please withdraw your acceptance by notifying the University in writing and returning Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.

- Graduate students should send withdrawal letters directly to their departments and return their Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 along with a copy of the withdrawal letter directly to International Services. Contact your department if you need to defer your admission to the next semester.
- Undergraduate students should send withdrawal letters and the Form I-20 or DS-2019 to Undergraduate Admissions at 118 Administration Building; Stony Brook University; Stony Brook, NY 11794-1901. The telephone number is (631) 632-6868.
- Note that in order for us to issue a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 for admission in a subsequent semester, the previously issued document must be returned.

Refunds for tuition payments are only authorized once written notice of withdrawal is received in a timely manner by the Registrar’s Office. Time limits for withdrawal and for refund of eligible payments are noted on the academic calendar posted on their website: http://www.sunysb.edu/registrar

Withdrawing from the University during the course of a semester requires that F-1 and J-1 students leave the United States or apply for another immigration status immediately. Please seek advice from an International Student Adviser before withdrawing from classes.

Tips for Academic Success
- Attend orientation programs.
- Seek academic advising from an Academic Adviser (undergraduate students) or Graduate Program Director in the academic department (graduate students) prior to registering for classes. Inappropriate course choices can lead to academic problems.
- Read the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin or Graduate Bulletin very carefully, to know and understand the academic rules and regulations of the University. These are available on the University website: (Undergraduate) http://www.stonybrook.edu/ugrbulletin/ and (Graduate) http://www.grad.sunysb.edu/about/grad_bulletin.shtml
International Student Advisers are available to assist students in understanding aspects of U.S. University education that may be unfamiliar to you. Contact us with any questions you may have.

Study hard and complete your assignments on time, but… have fun, too! Participating in arts, sport events and other activities should be an important part of your experience at Stony Brook University. We encourage you to get involved in campus life.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Payment of Tuition, Fees and Other Charges
As a Stony Brook University student, you have many payment options – cash, check, credit card, demand draft and wire transfer. Demand Drafts are common payment methods for international students. Your home bank can initiate a draft made payable to “Stony Brook University”, which you will pay when you arrive at the University. International students are not expected to pay their balances until they arrive at the University. Billing rates and payment information may be found on the Bursar’s website at www.stonybrook.edu/bursar. Apartment rent is billed monthly and if you overpay, a refund can be requested or applied to future month rent charges.

The University will no longer be sending paper bills effective with the January 2010 semester. You are able to view your semester charges after course registration is completed for the term through your SOLAR account. You may enroll in the University’s semester payment plan option “Time Option Payment Plan” (TOPP) through your SOLAR account.

If you need the banking information for wire transfer please contact the Bursar’s office. Their contact information is on the web page: www.stonybrook.edu/bursar

Financial Aid Information
Financial assistance for international students is limited. Most financial aid from New York State or the federal government is not available to nonimmigrant students. Very few scholarships or fellowships are available to international students other than those awarded through graduate programs. No long-term loans are available through the University. Because immigration regulations place restrictions on work in the United States, students should not plan to finance their education through work in the United States.

As a nonimmigrant student, you were issued a SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 on the basis of financial affidavits and proof of financial ability to cover the costs of your proposed program of study. If there is an adverse change in your financial circumstances, do not come to the University with inadequate financial support. Please contact International Services for advice regarding your individual circumstance.

Graduate Assistantships
Academic departments make decisions about graduate teaching and research assistantships, fellowships, and tuition scholarships based on the funds budgeted
to the department by the University and on funds available through faculty research grants. These awards are merit-based, and as such are not provided to every student.

Proficiency in spoken English is required for those who are offered teaching assistantships. Please see the enclosed information regarding SPEAK test requirements if you have been awarded a teaching assistant position.

Graduate students accepted without verification of a financial award should assume that they are not recipients of university financial assistance.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

**Health Insurance**
The University requires that all students have adequate medical, hospitalization, and medical evaluation and repatriation insurance. All international students are required to purchase the *mandatory International Student and Scholar Health Insurance (ISSHI) policy through the University.* The ISSHI policy cost is automatically billed to F-1 and J-1 students as a required fee. Coverage is effective upon your date of arrival in the United States, provided the insurance is purchased within the first 30 days of arrival.

Students offered graduate assistantships may be offered some employment-based insurance options. Insurance coverage will be discussed in detail at graduate orientation.

F-2 and J-2 dependent spouses and children must also have insurance coverage and must purchase the university international insurance plan through a separate enrollment form. J-1 students are required by federal regulations to carry insurance. Failure to enroll and maintain J-2 dependents’ insurance is a violation of status, requiring termination of the student program in SEVIS, and prompt departure from the United States.

Please refer to the Health Insurance handout for information on ISSHI. You may contact the Student Health Insurance office by phone (631) 632-6054, or by email: ledelson@notes.cc.sunysb.edu. There is basic information on the campus website: [http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/shs](http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/shs)

**Health Requirements and Health Report**
All students must complete and return the University’s health report form and submit a report of a physical examination within the past year. Proof of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella is required before registering for classes. Additionally, you must present the results of a recent tuberculin test and evidence of a tetanus/diphtheria inoculation within the last ten years. Student Health Services will place blocks on students’ course registration if these requirements have not been met.

*We recommend that you have a physician in your home country complete your health form.* It is possible to have a physical exam and receive inoculations after coming to Stony Brook, but this type of care is very expensive.
and is not covered by your SUNY international student insurance plan. For more information, contact the Student Health Center (631) 632-6740. Information is also available on their website: http://www.sunysb.edu/stuaff/health.

Telecommunications

You are encouraged to contact your family as soon as possible after arrival to assure them you have arrived safely in the United States.

Students living on campus have access to telephone service. However, students living in the West Apartments will have to purchase their own phone equipment.

E-mail accounts can be arranged through the Computing Center in the Engineering Quad, or through the SINC site in the main library: Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library, Room S-1460. The Instructional Computing website is: http://tlt.stonybrook.edu/Facilities/ComputerLabs/Pages/default.aspx. Undergraduates may also sign up for an account during New and Transfer Undergraduate Student Orientation.

Host Family Program

The Host Family Program is a community hospitality organization for international students. Host families provide new students with friendship, companionship and guidance while they are learning to adjust to a new culture and a new environment. The Host Family Program provides a great opportunity to get to know an American family and to share your culture with them. Host families do not assume any financial responsibility or provide housing for students.

Stony Brook International Clubs

Stony Brook University has many student clubs and organizations that are prepared to welcome you. A complete list of these clubs and organizations is available at http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Clubs/

QUICK REFERENCE

International Services – The Graduate School
Suite 2401, Computer Science Building (2nd floor)
Stony Brook, NY 11794-4433 USA
Telephone: (631) 632-4685; Fax: (631) 632-7243
e-mail: internationalservices@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
Website: http://www.stonybrook.edu/international

EMERGENCY: 911

University Police: (631) 632-3333 from off-campus phone
911 from on-campus phone

Airport Ground Transportation
SuperShuttle (800) 258-3826
Long Island Air Limo (631) 234-0223
Spartan Limo (631) 928-5454
Winston Limo  (800) 424-7767
Quality Transportation  (631) 585-8900
Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)  (718) 217-LIRR (5477)
LIRR website:  http://www.mta.info/lirr

Important University Numbers
Campus Residences  (631) 632-6750
Graduate School  (631) 632-4723
Meal Plan Office  (631) 632-6517
Off-campus Housing  (631) 632-6770
Student Health Center  (631) 632-6740
Student Health Insurance  (631) 632-6054
Undergraduate Admissions  (631) 632-6868

Temporary Accommodations in the Local Area:

Danford’s Inn  Tel:  (631) 928-5200
25 East Broadway  Fax:  (631) 928-3598
Port Jefferson, NY  11777  http://www.danfords.com/

Heritage Inn  Tel:  (631) 473-2499
201 West Broadway, Route 25A  Fax:  (631) 474-0627
Port Jefferson, NY 11777  http://portjeffheritageinn.com

Holiday Inn Express  Tel:  (631) 471-8000
3131 Route 347  Fax:  (631) 471-8623
Stony Brook, NY  11720  www.stonybrookny.hiexpress.com
(A complimentary shuttle service is available to the University, Islip airport and local train stations.)

Holly Berry Bed and Breakfast  Tel:  (631) 331-3123
415 West Broadway, Route 25A  Fax:  (631) 476-6855
Port Jefferson, NY  11777

The Golden Pineapple Bed & Breakfast  Tel:  (631) 331-0706
201 Liberty Avenue  Fax:  (631) 476-6855
Port Jefferson, NY  11777  http://goldenpineapplebandb.com/

The Hampton Inn  Tel:  (631) 732-7300
2000 North Ocean Avenue  Fax:  (631) 732-5522
Farmingville, NY  11738  http://www.grad.stonybrook.edu/international/pre-arrival/hamptoninnrates.pdf

Three Village Inn  Tel:  (631) 751-0555
150 Main Street  Fax:  (631) 751-0593
Stony Brook, NY  11790  http://www.threevillageinn.com
Notes