

International Student and Scholar Pre-Arrival Guide



RUTGERS
CAMDEN

Welcome

Dear International Student and Scholar:

Greetings from the Center for International Programs at Rutgers University-Camden! We are delighted you have chosen to study with us and we look forward to meeting you in person.

We have compiled this pre-arrival guide to help you to prepare to leave home and travel to Rutgers. It will answer many of your questions, from what to pack in your luggage to how to register for your classes. Please read it carefully and carry it with you on your journey to campus.

When you arrive on campus, we will also provide you with a comprehensive international student orientation program that will prepare you for a successful stay at Rutgers-Camden.

Visit our web site for more information designed for international students and scholars. If you should have any questions, please contact us at ois@camden.rutgers.edu.

Again, we look forward to welcoming you in person and have a pleasant trip!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Atkins
Associate Dean, PDSO

Center for International Programs

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To make an appointment, please email ois@camden.rutgers.edu

Pre-Arrival Checklist

General Checklist

- Pay SEVIS fee and Visa application fees (p. 6)
- Get your Passport and Visa
- Setup your NETID and email (p. 9)
- Plan your travel (p. 10)
- Reserve housing as soon as possible (p.12)
- Receive required immunizations (p. 12)
- Plan to arrive in time for international student orientation, complete the mandatory
- “check-in” with OIS
- Take placement testing if required. (p.13)
- Visit ois.camden.rutgers.edu for more helpful information.

Travel Document Checklist

- Passport with Visa
- Rutgers University-Camden I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1)
- If necessary, bring an international driver's license
- Immunization records

This guidebook will assist you in arranging travel to the United States and beginning your educational career at Rutgers University-Camden. Please read it carefully.



We recommend you keep all documents together with you as you travel. Once you arrive, OIS will make copies of your documentation during international student “check-in”.

Applying for a Visa

The consular interview is an important step in the process of receiving a visa. Often, the initial impression a consular interviewer receives from you is critical to your success. Reviewing the tips provided below may help you during your consular interview.

- Keep your answers concise. Be honest in everything you write on your visa application and say during the interview. Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring other people to speak on your behalf.
- Be able to explain the reasons you want to study in the U.S. and remember that your main reason for coming to the United States is to study, not to work.
- If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to explain how they will support themselves in your absence. If they are accompanying you to the U.S., what are the financial arrangements?
- As a temporary visitor you may be questioned about your intention to return your home country after completing your studies. You should be ready to provide evidence that you do not intend to emigrate to the U.S. and that you intend to return to your home country after completing your studies. Examples of evidence include proof that you or your parents own an apartment or house, a bank account, a voter registration card.

When you receive your U.S. nonimmigrant visa at the Embassy or Consulate in your country, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. You should not open this envelope! The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port-of-entry will open the envelope.

If you are denied the visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring the next time you apply, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing. Maintain a positive attitude! Do not engage the consular officer in an argument.

International students should apply for the visa in their home country, unless circumstances or travel plans make this impossible. If the student applies in a third country, the application may take more time and be reviewed more critically than if it was applied for at home. The U.S. Department of State maintains an authoritative website on the (<https://travel.state.gov/visa/>) and should be studied carefully.

Required Documents for Obtaining a Visa

1. **Certificate of Eligibility** (I-20 or DS-2019).

2. **Completed visa application form and paid visa fee:** The basic U.S. visa application is form DS-156; some F-1 and J-1 applicants may be required to complete additional forms (DS-157 and/or DS-158.) Although forms are available at every U.S. consulate, you may choose to access them online and print them out to take with you to the consulate. Please visit <http://travel.state.gov> for non-immigrant visa applications.

**Please note that Canadian citizens are not required to have a U.S. visa.*

3. **SEVIS I-901 Fee:** All students issued the I-20 (F-1) or the DS-2019 (J-1) by Rutgers University-Camden must pay a SEVIS I-901 fee before applying for a visa. If applicable, you will need a receipt for payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee to apply for a visa. The SEVIS fee may be paid online or by mail. For details, go to www.ice.gov/sevis/i901.

4. **Passport:** Your passport must be valid for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the U.S.

5. **2" x 2" photograph** with your head centered in the frame.

6. **Rutgers University-Camden Admission Letter.**

7. **Financial evidence** detailing source and amount of funding as listed on Form I-20 or DS-2019.

8. **Evidence of continuing ties to your home country** (i.e. family, career, or property). Visa applicants are presumed to be "intending immigrants". Your visa will be denied unless you satisfy the consular officer that you will return home. Unfortunately, there is no single explanation, documentation, or letter that can guarantee visa issuance.

**Official academic transcripts, confirmation of enrollment, and proof of English language proficiency may also be requested.*

Special Advisories

DO NOT enter the U.S. on a visa other than F-1 or J-1 if you intend to study, teach or conduct research at Rutgers upon arrival. Individuals in B-1/B-2 or F-2 status are not permitted to engage in study or employment in the US. B non-immigrants that apply for a change of status to an F nonimmigrant student may not begin attending school until the change of status is approved. Please also note DHS normally takes 3-4 months to adjudicate change of status applications.

DO NOT enter the U.S. with a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form) from a school other than the one that you will attend. If you have already received a visa with one school's name on it and you now wish to change your plans, contact the US consulate where you obtained your original visa to ask for a new visa. If you are a student **it will not be possible to transfer to another US school** until you have completed the mandatory check-in procedure with the campus international student advisor, have provided a local US address as required by SEVIS regulations, and have offered a reasonable explanation as to why you entered on a Rutgers visa document if you intend to study at another school.

DO NOT attempt to enter the U.S. as an F-1 or J-1 visitor more than 30 days prior to the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019. Although you may apply for an F-1 visa up to 120 days prior to the I-20 start date and you may apply for a J-1 visa at any time after receiving the DS-2019, neither the F-1 nor the J-1 visa holder is permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date on the I-20 or DS-2019.

Please remember to "check-in" with the international student advisor no more than 30 days after the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019. Your legal status in the U.S. is dependent upon this mandatory "check-in".

Arriving in the US

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE PORT OF ENTRY: You will be asked by a CBP officer to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. It is important that you tell the CBP Officer that you will be a student or exchange visitor. Be prepared to include the name and address of the school or exchange visitor program where you will enroll/participate.



Documents you should carry on your person:

- Passport with nonimmigrant visa;
- SEVIS Form I-20AB, I-20MN, or DS-2019;
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts)
- Name and contact information for Designated School Official (DSO) or Responsible Officer (RO) at your intended school or program
- Writing instrument (pen).

**Visa exempt nationals presenting a form I-20 or DS-2019, who are entering the US for the first time should have a Form I-797, Receipt Notice or Internet Receipt verifying SEVIS fee payment.*

Reminder: Upon arrival to Rutgers University-Camden, please keep all documents (Passport, Visa, I-20 or DS-2019) together in a safe please with your passport at all times. Carry all of these documents with you each time you travel outside of the country.

Planning for your stay in the US

Clothing: New Jersey has a variable climate; cold winters with periodic snowfalls, hot summers, and some very pleasant periods in between. Jackets, scarves, gloves and boots are essential for the cold weather months (November to March) and waterproof outerwear is essential in rainy weather.

Medication: If you are bringing any prescribed medication, carry a letter from your doctor in your hand-luggage explaining what the medication is. The letter should be translated into English.

Personal Items: Many people enjoy having examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, tapes, maps or other items descriptive of home, both to show interested Americans and to provide a familiar touch.

Linens: If you will be living in on-campus housing, your bed will be larger than standard and will require specialized lines which can be purchased upon arrival in the US.

If you would like to purchase residence hall linens and have them delivered to the Office of International Students & Programs, you can order them from Residence Hall Linens at: www.rhl.org.



NETID: You will be able to setup a Rutgers NETID (electronic username and password) once you have accepted your admission and enrolled. You will use this NETID to access electronic data such as paying your term bill. Visit: computing.rutgers.edu for more information.

Email: Once a NETID account is created you will need to obtain a Rutgers email account. **Please begin using and frequently checking your Rutgers email.**

Mail: Immediately after you arrive you should notify the university, the Office of International Students, and your correspondents of your US address.



Money: If you do not have an ATM card that is able to obtain cash from a US cash machine, it is best to exchange some of your own currency for US dollars and traveler's checks before you leave home.

When arriving in the U.S. you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses for several weeks, but you should not travel with large amounts of cash to avoid the risk of loss or theft. It is also advisable to carry at least US \$150-\$200 in paper currency plus \$10 in coins.

Planning your travel to campus

1. **Decide your arrival date.**
2. **Choose an airport.**
3. **Schedule your flight.**
4. **Arrange your transportation from the airport to your destination.**
5. **Travel Documents**

1. Decide your arrival date

International Student Orientation and the campus orientation for all graduate and undergraduate students are typically held the last two weeks in August.

You must plan to arrive before these dates. OIS will notify you in advance via email regarding the dates for international student orientation.

2. Choose an Airport

If possible, we suggest that you fly into Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania since it is the closest to the Camden campus. You may also fly into Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) in Newark, New Jersey, or John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) in New York, New York, however travel costs from the airport could be more costly.

3. Schedule your flight

You should try to plan your travel in advance, including any connecting flights, to minimize the necessity for overnight lodging. Hotel charges in large cities are high (\$150 per night or more), though lodging in smaller cities is considerably less expensive. Once you arrive at Philadelphia International Airport, you can reach the Camden campus by shuttle, train, limousine, taxi or bus service.

4. Transportation from the airport: There are various modes of transportation from the airport. Plan ahead. See the following page for options from Philadelphia International Airport.

4. Travel Documents: You should carry the following documents on your possession when travelling: (1) Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with nonimmigrant visa (2) Form I-20 signed by DSO/PDSO or DS-2019; (3) Evidence of financial resources.

It is recommended that you also carry the following documents: (1) Evidence of status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts); (2) Name and contact information for DSO/PDSO at your intended school or program

Transportation from the airport

Complimentary Airport Pickup: If you do not have transportation from the airport to the Rutgers-Camden campus, OIS offers a complimentary (free) airport pick-up service from Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). PHL is the closest airport to the Rutgers-Camden campus. We strongly encourage you to arrive at this airport. Our car service will bring you to campus or to a location, such as a hotel, within close proximity to campus .

Please complete the registration online at: http://ois.camden.rutgers.edu/airport_pickup_form

If you will not fly into Philadelphia, you can use the following services:

Shuttle Service: Rapid Rover will drive you wherever you are going in South Jersey. And Rapid Rover's share-ride system is less expensive than a taxi. Call 1-800-322-8062 upon arrival.

Rail Service: The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) offers train service from the airport to its Market East Station in Center City Philadelphia on its R1 airport line. You can transfer to a Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO) train at 8th & Market Street, which will bring you to City Hall in Camden, several blocks from the campus. Take a taxi from City Hall to the Camden Campus.

Bus Service: Bus service is also available outside the Market East Station.

From the Greyhound Bus Terminal at 10th and Filbert Street, you can take the #313 or #315 New Jersey Transit bus to the Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden. Take a taxi from the transportation center to the Camden Campus.



Taxi Service: Taxi service is an option but can be expensive. Taxis generally are used in the US to travel short distances within a city, not to get from one city to another. When using a taxi, get an appropriate rate quote from the driver and pay the exact fare as shown on the meter. A 15% tip is customary.

**You must have cash (small bills and change) to take SEPTA and PATCO.*

Getting Started at Rutgers

Immunization requirements:

Prior to your arrival, immunization information is needed to meet New Jersey law requirements and University requirements. Visit health.camden.rutgers.edu for the required recommendations and the Pre-Entrance Immunization Record.

Students living on-campus will not receive their room assignments or room key until this form has been received.

*Not all immunizations are available in every country. Please notify OIS via email if you are unable to receive an immunization in your home country.

Health Insurance: Full-time Rutgers students are required to show proof of health insurance coverage. Students must either waive (show proof of private health insurance) or enroll in the University-sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan. For more information on how to meet Rutgers' insurance requirement, visit: health.rutgers.edu.

Tuition and Fees: Payment of tuition, fees, and housing (if applicable) is generally due the first week in August (September admission) or the first week in December (for January admission). However, please confirm your term bill due date online at studentabc.rutgers.edu. Sponsored students must submit copies of their award letters to arrange for direct billing.

You can pay your term bill online with a MasterCard, Discover Card, or electronic check.

Housing: We highly recommend that you live on-campus your first year. However, on-campus housing is limited; therefore, we strongly suggest you apply for housing before you arrive to the United States. For more information visit:

<http://housing.camden.rutgers.edu> for more information on housing.

***You will need to setup your NETID before applying for on-campus housing (p. 8).**

Off-Campus housing is also available. Apartment prices range from \$700- \$1100 (not including heat and electricity) per month for an unfurnished 1 bedroom apartment. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements for off-campus housing. Expect to take at least one to two full weeks to find off-campus housing after you arrive.

Orientation and Placement Testing

International Student Orientation:

Orientation is typically held the last week of August for the Fall semester and the third week of January for the Spring Semester. The purpose of the program is to provide valuable information about your visa responsibilities, the campus, and student services.

Your attendance is mandatory at international student orientation.

Additional details will be emailed to you and published on the OIS website.

Placement Testing (undergraduate students): All first-year students are required to complete placement testing. Transfer students may or may not have to take placement tests depending on what courses transfer from prior colleges.

Questions regarding placement testing should be directed to the Office of New Student Programs at new.students@camden.rutgers.edu & [\(856\)225-6689](tel:8562256689).



If you were admitted to Rutgers-Camden but have decided not to attend, please let us know by emailing ois@camden.rutgers.edu.

Academic Matters

International Student Advising: OIS provides services to international students and scholars and their family members at Rutgers University-Camden campus. Throughout your stay, OIS will offer support on many matters -- from immigration questions and understanding U.S. culture to finding help from appropriate sources in the University and the community.

International students are encouraged to meet with the OIS, every semester to ensure that he or she is in compliance with immigration regulations. While OIS can assist in clarifying and simplifying Department of Homeland Security regulations, students are responsible for complying with federal regulations governing their stay in the US. Failure to comply can jeopardize their legal status in the US. Federal law requires that you complete a "check in" with OIS no more than 30 days after the start date on your I-20, but students are encouraged to meet with OIS within the first two weeks of the semester.

Graduate Students: In order for graduate students to register for courses the Admission Acknowledgment Form (AAF) must be submitted. After the Admissions Office has received your acknowledgement form you may select your courses. To view detailed course descriptions please go to www.rutgers.edu/academics/catalogs. Once you have made your course selections, the web registration system can be found at <https://webreg.rutgers.edu/webreg/>. If you need assistance, please contact your program director.

Undergraduate Academic Advising: Each undergraduate student accepted to Rutgers-Camden Campus is assigned an academic adviser to assist in the planning of an academic program consistent with educational and career objectives. Educational planning sessions are available for choosing a major or minor, selecting courses, discussing graduation requirements, and explaining Degree Navigator, the university's on-line degree audit program. For more information on academic advising and to find out who is your advisor visit the following websites:

College of Arts and Sciences: <http://advising.camden.rutgers.edu>

School of Business: <http://camden-sbc.rutgers.edu/>.

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