



Pre-arrival Information for New International Students

2009-2010

**University of Rochester
INTERNATIONAL
SERVICES
OFFICE**

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UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE

Congratulations on your admission to the University of Rochester! The **International Services Office** (ISO) staff looks forward to meeting you and providing any assistance you may need to make your stay here a pleasant and productive one. This booklet provides information to assist you in obtaining your visa and general information about the University of Rochester and the city of Rochester. Helpful suggestions on preparing for your trip to the United States are also included.

About the ISO

We are responsible for issuing visa documents and advising international students on all immigration matters. We serve as an information resource to assist internationals in adjusting to the United States, the University and the Rochester community.

We interact with departments throughout the University to advocate for and address the various needs of internationals. We provide programs and services for more than 1600 international students, 500 international “scholars” (faculty, researchers, post-docs), over 225 spouses and children, from 90 countries. We are the University’s official liaison with the Department of State, foreign and American consulates and embassies, and the Department of Homeland Security for student issues. This office administers the F-1 Student and J-1 Exchange Visitor Programs, under specific government regulations through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

While the ISO has official responsibilities delegated from and authorized by the federal government, we are not part of the Department of Homeland Security or any other government agency. Our staff is dedicated to the University's mission of assisting our international students and exchange visitors to successfully achieve their academic goals in the U.S.; however, we must also follow federal regulations in order to continue to bring future international students and scholars to the University of Rochester. We hope you will assist us in this goal by reading, understanding and abiding by the rules and regulations that will govern your stay in the U.S. as an F or J visa holder.

ISO International Student Staff

Support Staff

Patricia McGrath, Office Manager
Rebecca Taylor, System Administrator
Mary Linda Quinn, Program Assistant

Student Specialists

Cary Jensen, Director
Sylvia Kless, Associate Director and Senior International Student Advisor
Stephanie Beetle, International Student Advisor and Orientation Director
Molly Jolliff, International Student Advisor and Admissions Coordinator
Stephanie Johnson, Program Coordinator and Admissions Assistant

Contact Information

Please email questions@iso.rochester.edu or call (585) 275-2866 to make an appointment or speak with an advisor. When you arrive in the U.S. appointments are preferred but you are always welcome to stop in to one of our office locations during office hours as well.

River Campus Office:

Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 12 pm and 1 pm - 4:00 pm, closed Wednesday mornings.

International Services Office
209 Morey Hall, RC Box 270446
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627-0446 USA
Phone: (585) 275-2866 Fax: (585) 244-4503
questions@iso.rochester.edu
<http://www.iso.rochester.edu>

Eastman School of Music satellite office:

Open during normal school semesters. Hours may vary. Please check online or call for details.

Room #506 Main Building

Phone: (585) 274-1142

ISO Publications

The International Student Handbook is offered to members of the University community as a guide to immigration regulations and procedures, the University and the city of Rochester. Access this valuable resource through our website. As a continuing student you will find this handbook to be an important resource for all kinds of different issues from purchasing and insuring a car to maintaining your immigration status.

“ISO News” is a bimonthly electronic newsletter distributed to all international students and departments via email to communicate information concerning regulations and upcoming programs.

These emails will keep you up to date and informed particularly with changing regulations. Be sure we have your current University email address when you arrive on campus.

Student Visa Categories: F-1 and J-1

There are two primary student visa categories, F-1 and J-1. The ISO will determine which category is more appropriate for you based on information from you and your admitting department. The majority of our students apply for the F-1 visa. The J-1 visa is sometimes required by government sponsors.

F-1

- No residency requirements for changing status in the future
- Source of funding can come from any combination of sources
- F-2 dependents are *not* eligible for employment or full-time study
- Health insurance is not mandatory by government regulation but is required by the University and is strongly recommended for all dependents

J-1

- Potential 2-year home-residency requirement (for J-1 and dependents) before gaining eligibility to change or adjust visa status, including long term employment or permanent residency
- Majority of funding must be from sources other than personal or family funds
- J-2 dependents are eligible to apply for work authorization and may enroll in full or part-time study
- Health insurance is mandatory for J-1 students and dependents

Dependents

Dependents are your spouse or children accompanying you to the U.S. Their I-20 or DS-2019 should be included with your I-20 or DS-2019. Each dependent will need his or her own I-20 or DS-2019 and will have to apply for the corresponding visa category (F-1 students will have F-2 dependents; J-1 students will have J-2 dependents). If you intend to have dependents join you in the U.S. at a later time, please notify the ISO after your arrival. Please see page 18 for more dependent information.

Cancellations

If you decide NOT to attend the University of Rochester, please notify the ISO and return the I-20 or DS-2019.

SEVIS: Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

Every international student admitted to colleges and universities in the U.S. must be enrolled in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the mechanism employed by the U.S. government to track the arrival, enrollment and departures of international students and their dependents. SEVIS is an internet-based system that requires schools and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to exchange data on the immigration and academic status of international students and their dependents. Information pertaining to an F-1 or J-1 student or dependent's stay in the United States is available to U.S. embassies and consulates as well as to the inspectors at the ports of entry to the U.S.

SEVIS Documentation

By the time you receive the I-20 or DS-2019, your information will have already been entered into SEVIS. **Please review the items listed on this document to ensure that your information was entered accurately.** The details listed on the I-20 or DS-2019 are shown exactly as they are reported through SEVIS. If you discover an error, please notify the ISO immediately! Any errors should be reported and addressed *before* you visit your local U.S. consulate.

SEVIS requires the following details: official name, date of birth, country of citizenship, country of birth, city of birth (J-1 applicants only), foreign address, source and amount of financial resources, academic program, level of study, and program start and end dates. **Your name on the I-20 or DS-2019 must match the passport exactly and cannot be changed to reflect a preferred alternative name or spelling.** Similar information and corresponding documents must also be provided for all dependents accompanying the student to the U.S. After arriving in Rochester, there will be additional SEVIS reporting requirements, which both the student and the University will be responsible for monitoring.

Obtaining Your U.S. Student Visa



Paying the SEVIS Fee

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires a \$200 SEVIS Fee payment for each new F-1 student issued an *initial* I-20, or \$180 for each J-1 Exchange Visitor issued an initial DS-2019 prior to a visa interview or travel to the U.S. Generally, this fee is for all new applicants, who must show proof of payment with their visa application. You can pay the Fee and print a receipt online at www.FMJfee.com. The website will also answer all your questions including who has to pay the fee, how to pay the fee and how to request a refund. The SEVIS Fee is subject to change, please refer to the website for up to date information. **Pay the fee online at least three days prior to your visa interview. If you are not required to apply for a visa pay the fee 3 days before traveling to the U.S.**

Documents for Visa Interview

Having received your I-20 or DS-2019 from the University of Rochester, and obtained the SEVIS Fee receipt, you will then need to make an appointment with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country to complete a visa application as soon as possible. A valid visa serves as an admission ticket and will allow you to enter the United States at an appropriate port of entry. For a list of U.S. embassies and consulate offices worldwide, along with links to directions, application forms, hours, fees, etc., please see the ISO website.

All applicants must provide the following:

- A Certificate of Eligibility, Form I-20 or DS-2019, obtained from the University of Rochester. Be sure to sign the document in *blue* ink, directly below the school officer's signature.
- Application Forms DS-156 and DS-158, plus a passport-sized photograph. Some applicants will also be required to complete Form DS-157.
- A passport valid for at least six months after the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Proof of financial support, as listed on the I-20 or DS-2019. These documents should match the funds listed in both amounts and sources.
- Original letter of admission to the University of Rochester and other program documentation.
- Proof of ties to your home country (See section on visa application tips for more information).
- Transcripts and diplomas from any previous institutions attended.
- Scores from standardized tests required by the university (i.e. TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT, etc.).
- Visa processing fee.
- SEVIS Fee (I-901) payment confirmation and/or receipt.
- **Check with your local consular office for other visa application requirements.**

Applicants with dependents must also provide:

- Dependent I-20 or DS-2019 and appropriate application forms.
- Proof of the student's relationship to dependent (e.g., marriage or birth certificate).
- Proof of funding to support your dependent in the U.S.

Visa Interview Requirements

F-1 and J-1 visa applicants are required to complete a personal interview with a consular officer. **We recommend that you contact the embassy or consulate early to request an appointment.** Check the consulates website to see if an appointment can be made online. Allow plenty of time to process the application and receive the visa before you plan to travel. Some students will be subject to a Security Clearance. This can delay your visa processing for several weeks or months. Please read more information on delays and interview tips offered later in this booklet.

PLEASE NOTE: Canadian Citizens Canadian students do not need a visa to enter the U.S., but you will be asked to present appropriate documents at the U.S./Canada border. Students should present a valid passport or other proof of Canadian citizenship, proof of admission to the University of Rochester, the I-20 or DS-2019, proof of financial support and SEVIS Fee receipt (I-797) or payment confirmation. It is essential that you enter the U.S. in the appropriate status, so be sure to have complete documentation with you. Upon entry, you will be issued an I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) indicating F-1 or J-1 status. Landed Immigrants in Canada from former British Commonwealth Countries are required to obtain a U.S. visa. Please check with a U.S. consulate in Canada to determine if you are subject to this requirement.

Tips to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa

Adapted from NAFSA: Association of International Educators

- ☆ **Ties to Your Home Country:** Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants unless they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your current place of residence (examples include: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc.). You may be asked about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects **in your home country**. Each person's situation is different, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate or letter that can guarantee visa issuance.
- ☆ **English:** Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English, not in your native language. It may be helpful to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do *not* prepare a speech. It is also important that you speak on your own behalf; the consular officer wants to interview you, not a family member. If you are attending an English Language program at UR, be ready to explain why knowledge of English will be useful to you in your home country.
- ☆ **Academics:** Be familiar with the academic program to which you have been admitted and how it fits into your career plans. You should be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career, focusing on how you will use those skills *when you return home*.
- ☆ **Be brief:** Consular officers are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview, since there are so many applicants to be seen. In general, they can allow for only 2 to 3 minutes per interview and must make a decision during that time. As a result, the initial impression you create is very important, so be sure to keep your answers short and specific.
- ☆ **Supporting Documentation:** It should be clear, at a glance, to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated, especially during such a short interview. Remember to bring *original* versions of all supporting documents, if available, with you to the appointment.
- ☆ **Not All Countries are the same:** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants often have more difficulty getting visas. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.
- ☆ **Employment:** Your main purpose for coming to the U.S. is to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students may work part-time during their studies, such employment is incidental to the main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S. Volunteer work and taking a class for *recreational* study are permitted activities. *F-2 spouses are NOT allowed to begin a program of study or take classes to count towards a program of study.*
- ☆ **Dependents remaining at home:** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the U.S. in order to support them, your student visa will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa. *Please note:* Indicating that your spouse will remain at home while you study in the U.S. is *not* likely to convince the consulate that you do not intend to immigrate. Other evidence will be needed.
- ☆ **Maintain a positive attitude:** Do not engage the consular official in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and obtain in writing an explanation of the reason you were denied.

Visa Application Decisions

Approvals

After successfully meeting the requirements outlined, your application for a student visa should be approved by the interviewing consular official. The appropriate visa stamp will be placed on a page in your passport. It may take the consulate a few days to process the approval and return the updated passport to you. Due to current government regulations, if your application is approved before your academic program is scheduled to begin, **you will not receive the visa stamp more than 120 days before the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.**

Delays

Students from certain countries or those majoring in “sensitive areas of study” as determined by the U.S. government may be required to undergo a “security clearance” or a delay for “administrative processing” before the visa can be issued. Such clearances can add weeks, or even months, to the amount of time needed for visa approval – please plan accordingly. Sensitive fields are primarily those in the sciences, technology or engineering. To review security clearance criteria please visit: <http://www.iso.rochester.edu/visadelays.htm>. If you become subject to this requirement and your visa application is delayed due to further review, please notify the ISO or your department representative as soon as possible.

Denials

If the interviewing officer does not feel that you have shown sufficient evidence to warrant a student visa, he or she will issue a denial. Before leaving the interview request a written explanation for the denial. Please notify the ISO and fax a copy of the denial notice to the ISO at (585) 244-4503.

The most common reason for a visa denial is a failure to prove “non-immigrant” intent to the consular officer. During the interview, you must present evidence that you do not intend to abandon your home country and that you have significant economic, professional, and personal ties or reasons to return home once your program is completed.

If you choose to reapply, you will need to provide new information or documents when you submit the application. The consulate will not reconsider your case if additional materials are not available for review. Depending on the timing of a second interview, you may need an updated I-20 or DS-2019. Be sure to check with the ISO. If your student visa is denied and you will not be using your I-20 or DS-2019 please return it to your department or the ISO.

International Students Already in the U.S.

Some students may already be in the U.S. either as a student or under a different visa program. In order to begin studies you must determine if your current immigration status will need to be changed or transferred to allow you to be a fulltime student at the University of Rochester. Please see descriptions of the two categories below and contact the ISO with any questions.

Change of Status

Students in the U.S. on a type of US Visa other than F-1 or J-1 student visa

If you indicated that you intend to remain in the U.S. and change your immigration status from another visa type to F-1 or J-1 status, your I-20 or DS-2019 has been issued to indicate that a Change of Status is requested. You will need to compile the necessary documents and file your application with the appropriate U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) center. Please contact the ISO for guidance on these procedures and visit www.uscis.gov and <http://www.iso.rochester.edu/COSandTransfer.htm> for the necessary information and application forms. You will not need to complete the Change of Status application procedures if you decide to return to your home country and apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa directly through the embassy or consulate.

Beginning full-time study

Your ability to begin a full course of study at the University of Rochester may be limited while a Change of Status application is pending, based on the regulations of your existing status. Some non-immigrant classifications permit full-time study (H-4, G-4, L-2, etc.), even if the change to student status has not yet been approved. Other classifications have strict provisions against pursuing an academic program. Specifically, all F-2 dependents and B-2 visitors are not permitted to enroll as a full-time student or take any coursework towards a degree. **Consequently, students in F-2 or B-2 status should not plan on beginning their studies at the University until they have successfully changed to F-1 or J-1 status.** Students in other visa categories are advised to contact the ISO to determine whether they are eligible to begin their studies while a change to student status is being processed.

Traveling outside the U.S.

Any travel outside the U.S. while a Change of Status application is pending will automatically be considered as an **abandonment of the application**. Therefore, if you must travel after submitting the application to the U.S. government, be sure to allow enough time abroad (preferably in your home country) to apply for the F-1 or J-1 student visa stamp. Please contact the ISO to review your particular travel needs.

Please note that successfully changing your status to F-1 or J-1 will not eliminate the need for a relevant visa stamp if you travel outside the U.S. at any point during your academic program. In such a case, you will need to allow ample time to apply for the F-1 or J-1 visa stamp before you may re-enter the U.S. and resume your program of study (except for students eligible for automatic revalidation who travel to Canada or Mexico for 30 days or less).

Immigration Transfers

Students currently attending another U.S. institution, including U.S. high schools, in valid F-1 or J-1 immigration status and who wish to study at the University of Rochester are considered immigration transfer students, regardless of whether they will transfer academic credits. These individuals are responsible for maintaining their immigration status during the transition period between schools. Once a student's SEVIS record is transferred the student must report any information changes (such as a change of address) to the ISO at the University of Rochester.

Please note that if you will be outside of the U.S. for more than five months or there is five month time period between the end of your program at the previous school and the start of your program at the University of Rochester you will not be regarded as an Immigration Transfer Student. You will need to follow procedures as a new international student, including obtaining a new visa.

Completing the Immigration Transfer

Transfer students, along with all new international students, are required to present all immigration documents at the ISO **within one week** of their arrival in Rochester. At this time, your transfer will be completed through SEVIS and an updated I-20 or DS-2019 will be issued. Failure to fulfill this check-in requirement in a timely fashion may cause problems when traveling or registering for your first semester. You must arrive in Rochester and complete your transfer within 5 months from the end of your previous program. The end of your previous program is determined by either the completion date of your degree or the SEVIS release date from the old school, whichever is earlier.

Employment in between academic programs

Transfer students are permitted to work on-campus during academic breaks, in accordance with standard F-1 and J-1 regulations. However, once your SEVIS record is transferred to the University of Rochester, you are no longer able to work at your previous institution; any on-campus employment at this point must be done at Rochester. You must report to the ISO and complete the Immigration Check-In before starting any on campus employment. Off campus employment would have to be authorized by this ISO prior to employment.

Traveling outside the U.S. before attending UR

As long as you have the new I-20 from the UR, immigration transfer students do not have to wait until 30 days prior to the start date to travel to the U.S. If you are outside the U.S. for less than 5

months and there is less than 5 months between your old program and your new program you can travel back to the U.S. anytime.

If your current visa stamp has expired or will expire before you return, you will need to apply for a visa renewal, usually in your home country, before you are permitted to re-enter the U.S. It is recommended that you schedule your visa appointment as early as possible, to reduce the impact of processing delays. You must still present all relevant documents and fulfill the interview requirement before a renewal can be granted. If you are subject to security clearance, the consulate may also require that you be cleared again before the visa is issued, especially if your academic program has changed dramatically.

If you have been out of the U.S. for less than five months and your current visa stamp, listing a previous school, will still be valid when you travel to Rochester, you are free to travel as normal. You may reenter the U.S. on a valid visa listing your old school by simply presenting your new University of Rochester I-20 or DS-2019 to the immigration inspector at the port of entry. Do not attempt to enter the U.S. using the I-20 from a previous program. You must still be prepared to show additional documentation, such as proof of financial support, if asked.

Preparing for Your Trip

Once your visa has been approved, you will need to coordinate your trip to the U.S. You are expected to arrive in Rochester *no later* than the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019. For students wishing to travel earlier, you will be permitted to enter the country **up to 30 days** before that date. Please keep this in mind when booking your flight and making other arrangements. Many international students use this time to get settled in Rochester before their academic program begins. You should make reservations and buy your airline tickets as far in advance as possible but be sure you have your visa to travel and the date your school is requesting. It is recommended that you plan to fly directly to Rochester from your port of entry (For example, Rochester is over 300 miles from New York City, which is a one-hour flight, over a six-hour drive, and a seven-hour train ride). Be sure to ask the airline if there are any restrictions on the number, size, or weight of baggage items.

Documents for Travel

It is essential that you have the appropriate documents with you when you enter the country. As a safety precaution, please **carry these items on your person** when you travel, not in your checked baggage. It is best to bring original versions of these documents, whenever possible.

Required Immigration Documents: (Be prepared to show these documents at the U.S. border):

- Original UR I-20 or DS-2019;
- Valid passport, with appropriate visa stamp;
- Letter of Admission from the University of Rochester;
- Proof of financial support, which match or exceed the figures listed on your I-20 or DS-2019;
- SEVIS Fee receipt confirmation either printed from online or the mailed I-797 Form;
- Appropriate documents for all dependents: passport, visa stamp, I-20 or DS-2019, proof of relationship (proof of marriage for a spouse; birth certificates for all children);
- Note: your I-94 Admission Card will be completed and issued upon your arrival to the U.S.

Suggested Documents: (You may find these items to be helpful once you arrive in Rochester):

- English translations of personal medical records, for yourself and any dependents;
- International driver's license or certified English translation of your valid license (if you plan to drive in the U.S.);
- Evidence of adequate health insurance coverage, if you are currently covered;
- Completed University forms and other information required by various University offices.

Travel to Canada and Other Countries



Many students travel to Canada and/or other countries during their studies in the U.S. If you anticipate traveling abroad, you may want to apply for the required visas before leaving your home country. It could be far more convenient than traveling to another city in the U.S. to complete this process. The nearest Canadian Consulate is located in Buffalo, NY, which is a one-hour drive from Rochester. Other foreign consulates and embassies are located in New York City and Washington, DC. However, before applying for such tourist visas, you should contact the consulate to establish whether processing times might cause delays in your trip to Rochester. To avoid paying unnecessary application fees, you should also consider whether the visa would be likely to expire before you are able to travel.

University Requirements

Contact information for these offices is listed in the index at the end of this booklet

As an international student, there are important immigration regulations that must be properly addressed before you are able to study in the U.S. This booklet and the staff of the ISO are available to help with these procedures. However, as an incoming University of Rochester student, you will need to attend to University requirements, as well, which will help you prepare for life on campus. You should maintain close contact with several campus offices during this process (see index in the back of this booklet).

University Billing

The Office of the Bursar handles billing and tuition payment issues for all University students. They can help explain available payment plans, billing procedures, and methods of payment. Please note that if the necessary forms and information are not submitted to the Bursar's Office, you may be prohibited from timely course registration, which can cause immigration complications.

Health Care Coverage

University Health Services provides confidential basic health care services to all full-time UR students. All incoming students are required to provide personal health information, including immunization history and details on any existing health insurance policy. **Students are strongly encouraged to maintain appropriate health insurance coverage for all dependents.** For additional information, please see the section in this booklet, *Health Care in the U.S.*

Housing

On Campus

Many students enjoy living on campus in University Housing because of the camaraderie that develops within the residence halls and university apartments. Students living on campus also enjoy an easy to commute to classes. The Universities Office of Residential Life oversees various aspects of undergraduate and graduate student living, including residence hall operations and room/roommate assignments. Undergraduate students in the College are required to live on campus their freshman and sophomore years, and all undergraduates living on campus will need to complete the appropriate contracts with this office. Certain designated dorms are open during winter and spring breaks; undergraduates may want to request one of these if anticipating staying over breaks. Information regarding undergraduate housing can be found in the Enrolling Student Packet. To read more about Campus Housing, please visit <http://www.rochester.edu/reslife/index.html>.

Graduate students are eligible to apply to reside in one of our four University Apartment areas. Areas are either within an easy walking distance to campus or are accessible to campus via the free university shuttle system. To inquire about University Apartments graduate housing, please call the University Apartments Office at 585-275-5824 or email uapts@reslife.rochester.edu. **To be considered for the limited graduate spaces available you should contact Graduate/Family Housing as early as possible.** Students in the Eastman School of Music should contact the local

Residential Life office in the Eastman Commons Student Living Center, as housing requirements and procedures may differ.

Off Campus

For students who do not receive a housing assignment or choose to live off-campus, plan to arrive in Rochester 2 – 4 weeks prior to the start of your program to locate suitable housing, purchase furniture, and become familiar with transportation to and from campus. When renting an apartment, most tenants are required to pay the first month's rent and a security deposit (equal to one month's rent) at the time that they sign the lease. If the apartment is not damaged while you are living there, the security deposit should be returned in full when you move out. You will need to have sufficient funds available when you arrive in order to cover these costs and to purchase necessary items, such as furniture, linens, and books. Students who expect to receive an assistantship or fellowship to pay for items like these should understand that the first stipend check often cannot be issued for at least a month. Therefore, you will need immediate access to adequate funds before your arrival. We suggest you plan on having at least US \$2000 upon arrival.

The Off Campus Living Program, a part of the University Residential Life and Housing Services Office, can advise students about off campus housing options, help negotiate the housing search and rental lease process, and can assist with any off campus issues that may arise. Individual landlords list rental properties on the Off Campus Connection search site: <http://ochousing.reslife.rochester.edu>. Please note that properties listed through the Off Campus Connection are not inspected, approved or regulated by the University.

Visit <http://www.rochester.edu/reslife/non/index.html> for University of Rochester off campus resources, call 585-275-1081 or email offcampus@reslife.rochester.edu for more information. Graduate departments mail housing information and graduate housing applications directly to their students.

Personal Items

Financial Support

Please keep in mind that you will need immediate access to US funds as you get settled in Rochester. The actual amount a student needs will vary greatly. Relevant factors include whether he or she will live in campus housing, have access to a University dining plan, bring dependents, have a need to purchase furniture or transportation, etc. Graduate students whose financial package includes an assistantship, fellowship, or other cash award should understand that these funds might not be immediately available upon your arrival. Due to payroll requirements, it can often take 3 - 4 weeks to receive the first check. Therefore, you must be prepared to cover your initial expenses without relying on this award.

Packing for Rochester Weather



The weather in Rochester varies quite a bit throughout the year. The summer months, June through much of September, are often very warm and breezy, with daytime temperatures between 70° F and 85° F (21° to 30° C). Temperatures can drop below 10° F (-12° C) during the winter months, November through March, with even lower wind chills and frequent snow accumulations. Other months are moderate in temperature. During the coldest months, you will need a warm, heavy coat (preferably resistant to wind and water), waterproof boots and gloves. You can purchase these items here if you prefer not to transport them from overseas. Additionally, it is worth noting that most American students generally wear informal and comfortable clothing in the classroom (such as: jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, etc.)

Tips for Airline Travel

- **Always hand-carry your passport, other important documents, some money and travelers checks.**
- You should plan to carry a small flight bag with medications you may need, valuable belongings, a change of clothing, and any essential personal hygiene items. You should not pack these items in your checked baggage, just in case your baggage is lost or misdirected during your flight.
- Be careful at airports – do **not** leave your bags unattended or with strangers!
- Carry some U.S. currency with you when you travel. You may need to make a telephone call, purchase a meal, pay for taxi fare, or rent a baggage trolley when you arrive.
- Expect the unexpected. Check in for all flights well in advance of your scheduled departure time. If you are planning on spending the night in a hotel you should guarantee your reservation with a credit card in case your flight is delayed. When checking baggage internationally, be aware that you must personally reclaim your luggage and carry it through customs upon arrival in the U.S. If you are connecting to another flight, a domestic flight to Rochester, you can then recheck your luggage with the airlines afterwards.

Shipping

You may want to ship items from your home country, rather than bringing them with you when you travel. We suggest that you coordinate delivery with your department or have someone ship these items after you arrive and have a specific shipping address, as the ISO cannot accept such packages. Be sure to research all your local shipping options, including International Parcel Post, to ensure that your packages will clear U.S. customs inspection and that you get the best price for this service.

Arriving in the U.S.

You will be permitted to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019. When you arrive you will have to perform specific inspection procedures at the port of entry.

At your port of entry, an Immigration Officer will ask to examine your travel documents (passport, visa, I-20/DS-2019, financial documents, etc.) and will then determine whether you are permitted to enter the country and for what period of time. This indication will be made on your I-94 card. You will need to obtain clearance from a U.S. Customs Officer, who may or may not perform an inspection of your personal belongings when you arrive. You may also be required to have your photograph taken and/or your fingerprints scanned, in accordance with the recently implemented US-VISIT system. For further information on these regulations, you may visit the website for U.S. Customs and Border Protection at: www.customs.gov.

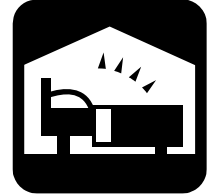
Do not enter the U.S. on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) or under a visa waiver program. A change of status from B-2 to F-1 in the U.S. is rarely approved, requires a "Prospective Student" notation on the B-2, and takes several months, during which time you will be in violation of your visitor status if you begin classes. A change of status under a visa waiver is not a possibility.

Special Registration

In addition to registering with the US-VISIT system at the port of entry, some non-immigrants may be required to undergo further registration through a program called Special Registration, based on a variety of factors including country of citizenship or birth. If you are subject to Special Registration, you will be given instructions on a special departure procedure you must follow, and your I-94 card will be notated with a "FIN Number." **Please notify the ISO upon your arrival if you believe you have been registered under this program.**

Local Hotels

Ask for the special University discount rate at the hotels listed.



Staybridge Suites www.staybridge.com

1000 Genesee St. Rochester, NY 14611 Phone: (585) 527-9110

Location: New hotel within walking distance to River Campus

Clarion Riverside Hotel www.clarionriversidehotel.com

120 East Main St. Rochester, NY 14604 Phone: (585) 546-1341

Location: ¼ mile from Eastman School of Music, 8 minutes from River Campus

Fairfield Inn by Marriott Rochester Airport www.marriott.com/ROCFA

1200 Brooks Ave. Rochester, NY 14624 Phone: (585) 529-5000

Location: Directly at the Greater Rochester International Airport, 2 miles from River Campus

Holiday Inn Rochester www.HIRochesterAirport.com

911 Brooks Ave. Rochester, NY 14624 Phone: (585) 328-6000

Location: Adjacent to the Rochester Airport, 2 miles from River Campus

Additional Information

Special Note on U.S. Social Security Numbers:

U.S. Social Security Administration requires students in F-1 status to have proof of employment to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). If you are a student who has been awarded an on-campus fellowship, stipend, or assistantship you must wait to apply for a SSN at least ten days after your arrival at the University. For all other students, you may only apply for a SSN once you have obtained on campus employment. The ISO will assist all students who have an on-campus job or job offer letter in obtaining their SSN by providing application forms and eligibility letters. The ISO also seeks out businesses that are familiar with the SS regulations and will offer their services without SSNs. We also provide information regarding the Individual Taxpayer Identification Number for students ineligible for a SSN. This number can sometimes be used in place of a SSN. For more info, please contact ISO or view our SSN handout materials on our website <http://www.iso.rochester.edu/Forms/SocialSecurity.pdf>

Employment Options

F-1 visa holders: Students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester/quarter and full-time (40 hours) during vacation periods. Off campus employment is not permitted until you have been in F-1 status for one academic year. Off campus permission must be authorized by the ISO and USCIS (when applicable) **before** beginning any off campus employment. F-2 spouses are not allowed to accept employment on or off campus.

J-1 visa holders: Students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester/quarter with permission from your J-1 sponsor. Students may apply for permission to work off campus from their J-1 sponsor (the agency or institution issuing your DS-2019). J-2 spouses may apply for permission to work from the U.S. government. The ISO staff will assist you with the application process. **Working without authorization is a severe violation of your status and is a deportable offense.** The ISO will provide information on what types of work options are available in the U.S. while you are in student status and will assist you in applying for the authorizations you will need to work.

Taxes in the U.S.

Most of the items you will purchase in the U.S. are subject to a state sales tax. Additionally, wages from employment, graduate stipends and other income may be taxed by *both* the U.S. and New York State governments, depending on the nature and source of the income and the tax treaty, if any, that your home country has with the U.S. To help you navigate through the U.S. tax system, you will be given access to the University's GLACIER Online Tax Compliance System. GLACIER is web-accessible, secure and user friendly. A unique password and detailed instructions on how to access GLACIER will be emailed to you **after you arrive in the U.S.** Additional information about taxes and GLACIER is also available at the ISO website under the Students/Tax Info links.

Health Care in the U.S.

Health care services offered in the U.S. are of very good quality but are *extremely* expensive. The United States does not provide socialized medical care and there is no national system of health insurance coverage. Individuals must obtain health care coverage for themselves and their families through non-government providers.



Full-time students at the University of Rochester pay the mandatory health fee that covers the cost of visits by the student to the University Health Service and the University Counseling Center. Students must also have health insurance for services not covered by the mandatory health fee.

If your family will be with you in Rochester, we strongly advise purchasing health insurance for your family. Health insurance can drastically reduce health care costs when you or your family members need medical care. Without health insurance, health care services can cost thousands of dollars. We also recommend that you bring copies of your medical records and the medical records for any dependent family members who will be with you in Rochester.

University Health Service (UHS)

The University Health Service provides a full-range of confidential, high quality primary health care services for full-time students. Students come to UHS for the treatment for illnesses and injuries, management of ongoing medical problems, preventive medical care, and care and advice for any health concern. Visits to UHS are confidential. The UHS clinical staff includes registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and physicians, all of whom have a special interest in the care and treatment of college students.

Health History Form & Immunization Requirement

All students must complete the Health History Form. This form requires students to provide information about their health status and specific immunizations required for students to attend college in New York State. The form is sent to students after they have accepted admission to the University. The deadline for completing this form is June 30 (December 31 for students beginning in January). Students who cannot complete the form by the deadline must submit the form by the start of classes. Students who are unable to complete the immunizations before coming to Rochester can schedule an appointment to receive the immunizations at the University Health Service (UHS); there will be a charge for immunizations received at UHS. Submitting the Health History Form is mandatory; students will be charged a late fee if the form is not submitted by the start of classes.

For more information about the immunization requirement, check "Student Services" on the University Health Service website at www.rochester.edu/uhs. If you have questions about the immunization requirement or the Health History Form, contact the Health History Coordinator at hfh@uhs.rochester.edu.

Paying for Health Care

All full-time students at the University of Rochester are required to pay the **mandatory health fee**. Students must also have **health insurance**. Students can enroll in the Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance offered by the University or remain on their own (or their parent's or spouse's) insurance. A family insurance plan is available for students with dependent children. The charges for the mandatory health fee and health insurance will appear on your tuition bill. ¹

- **Mandatory Health Fee:** The mandatory health fee covers the cost of visits by the student to the University Health Service and the University Counseling Center for the year (September 1 through August 31). A student's spouse and children over age 16 can come to the University Health Service for care; they will be charged a fee at the time of their visit. The mandatory health fee for 2009-2010 is expected to be \$576. This fee will be charged to the student's tuition bill.
- **Health Insurance:** Health insurance covers services not covered by the mandatory health fee, such as diagnostic laboratory tests and x-rays, hospitalization, and surgery. Many plans include full or partial coverage for these services. The specific benefits will depend on your insurance policy. International students are strongly encouraged to enroll in the Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) health insurance offered by the University. This insurance provides good coverage for students. The fee for this BCBS health insurance for 2009-2010 is expected to be \$1,152.

Completing the Health Insurance Selection Process: Each year, all full-time students must complete the Health Insurance Selection Process to let the University Health Service know about their insurance coverage. The link to this online process is on the University Health Service home page (www.rochester.edu/uhs).

Students who have health insurance that is comparable to the BCBS insurance offered by the University may substitute their health insurance in place of the University policy. The mandatory health fee is still required, even if you have your own insurance. Before deciding to remain on your own insurance, you should verify that your current policy will provide you with good coverage while you are in Rochester. When you complete the online selection process, you will be asked to enter information about your insurance plan (i.e., name, address, and phone number of the company). It is a good idea to bring evidence of your coverage with you when you come to the University of Rochester. Carrying your insurance card with you is also recommended.

Coverage during the summer of 2009: If you are arriving in Rochester during the summer before you begin classes in September, you should consider purchasing health insurance to cover you until the 2009-2010 coverage begins on September 1. You can enroll in the BCBS insurance offered by the University if you are registered as a full-time student for the summer and will be continuing in the fall. If you have questions about your registration, you can check with your department for assistance in registering.

If you have questions about health insurance, you can contact the UHS Insurance Advisor at insurance@uhs.rochester.edu or 585-275-2637. You may find it helpful to check the UHS web site (www.rochester.edu/uhs) for more information about health insurance.

¹ This information about paying for services applies to all full-time students. Students who are part-time or who are participating in a short-term (less than one academic year) or non-degree program are not subject to the same requirements as full-time students. Please contact your department for more information.

Health Care for Families of Students

Health insurance coverage for your family is very important while you are living in the United States. The cost of health care in the U. S. is very expensive. If you or your family member needs x-rays, laboratory tests, surgery, or hospitalization, health insurance will help pay for the cost. Some health insurance plans will cover the full cost; other plans will cover some of the costs. You will be financially responsible for charges not covered by your health insurance. As you plan your health care expenses, you should also plan for the cost of visits to the doctor by your family. Visits to a doctor are not usually covered by health insurance. **NOTE: J-1 Exchange visitors are required by law to carry health insurance for themselves and any J-2 dependents.**

The University Health Service offers two health insurance options for students who are married and/or have dependent children:

- *A married student with no children:* You can enroll yourself and your spouse in the Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance and the mandatory health fee. The cost for your spouse is the same as your cost. If you choose this option, your spouse will receive the same benefits as you do. The cost of visits to the University Health Service will be covered by the mandatory health fee.
- *Students with at least one child:* You can enroll yourself and your family in a family insurance plan. The cost for the family insurance offered through the University Health Service for 2009 is \$1,010.80 per month, with an increase each January. This plan provides coverage for the student, spouse, and children. Students choosing the family insurance must also pay the mandatory health fee, which covers visits to the University Health Service for the student. The fee does not cover the cost of visits to the University Health Service by family members.

Unfortunately, the cost of family health insurance through other insurance companies is also expensive. The cost can range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year. When you are choosing health insurance, check to see what is covered and what is not covered. An insurance plan that is less expensive may not provide the benefits you need.

Contact Information:

University Health Service

Web site: www.rochester.edu/uhs
Box 270617, University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14642 USA

UHS Insurance Advisor:

For questions about health insurance or the mandatory health fee
E-mail: insurance@uhs.rochester.edu
Phone: (585) 275-2637
Fax: (585) 756-0263

Health History Form Coordinator:

For questions about the immunization requirement and the Health History Form.
E-mail: hhf@uhs.rochester.edu
Phone: (585) 275-0697
Toll free: (888) 363-2519
Fax: (585) 756-0263

Medical Evacuation/Repatriation Insurance

Due to government and University requirements all international students and scholars are subject to mandatory enrollment in the University's group policy, offered through MEDEX International. You will be automatically enrolled in this policy at a cost of \$30 per year, which is directly applied to your term bill. Details on the services provided by Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance will be provided during your International Student Orientation Program or when you complete your Immigration Check-In. Students with dependents have the option of adding family coverage for an additional \$35 per year. Dependent enrollment forms and more information are available at the Haylor, Freyer & Coon website, <http://www.haylor.com>.

Cultural and Language Adjustment



Rochester International Council

The Rochester International Council is a community volunteer organization that offers international students hospitality and opportunities to participate in American family life. Programs include:

Friendship Volunteer Program – Friendship volunteers (local individuals or families) are matched with international students in order to offer practical assistance and social interaction. They may help you shop for clothing, food and household items, open a bank account, practice English, and understand American culture. Your hosts may invite you to their home for dinner and conversation, to share the holidays and special events or take you to places of interest including museums and historical sites. They will not impose their political or religious beliefs on you.

If you would like to be assigned a Friendship Volunteer, complete the “Application for Friendship Volunteer” online at www.rifc/hostappl.html. Applying early will increase your chances of being assigned a Friendship Volunteer, although assignments for a Friendship Volunteer may also be made after you arrive in Rochester. You may do so by visiting the Rochester International Council office, which is conveniently located down the hall from the ISO in Morey Hall.

Rochester International Council also has an International Wives’ program, a Global Perspectives program, which allows international students to share their cultures with local school children, and many social activities throughout the year. Please contact them directly if you would like further information (*see index*).

Free English Conversation Classes

Experienced English as A Second Language teachers volunteer their time to assist students and spouses with speaking and understanding the English language. All are welcome. Unfortunately, no childcare is available. Classes are offered from September through May. Specific dates and times are announced each academic year. Please contact the ISO for more information.

English as a Second Language

Various English language programs are offered through the College, the William E. Simon School of Business, and the Eastman School of Music. The Office of Special Programs coordinates such programs for the College by offering part-time English as a Second Language courses during the academic year, placement tests to determine English proficiency, and an intensive summer program. If you are interested in these programs, please contact the Office of Special Programs directly (*see index for details*). Students in other divisions of the University should contact a department or admissions representative for information about available opportunities for English language training.

Additional ISO Programs for Dependents

Dependent Orientation is an opportunity for us to share resources available to you on campus and in the community and to explain specific regulations you must follow to remain in your dependent status in the U.S. (for example, F-2’s are **not** allowed to work or study in a program).

Dependent Tea Time is an informal gathering for international spouses to meet one another and share questions, stories, creative ideas, and experiences about life here in the US and in Rochester. It is a safe and inviting space to meet new people.

Dependent Newsletter is a way for the ISO to inform dependents of what is going on in and around the University of Rochester every month.

Campus Contacts

Office of the Bursar

Office of the Bursar
330 Meliora Hall
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627 USA
Phone: (585) 275-3931
Fax: (585) 461-3356
Email: bursar@admin.rochester.edu
Web site:
www.rochester.edu/adminfinance/bursar

University Health Service

University Health Service
Web site: www.rochester.edu/uhs
University of Rochester
Box 617, 250 Crittenden Blvd
Rochester, NY 14642 USA

Health History Form
Email: hfh@uhs.rochester.edu
Phone: (585) 275-0697
Toll free: (888) 363-2519
Fax: (585) 275-5353
(For questions about the immunization
requirement and the Health History Form.)

UHS Insurance
Email: lstrang@uhs.rochester.edu
Phone: (585) 275-2637
Fax: (585) 506-0149
(For questions about health insurance or
the mandatory health fee.)

Rochester International Council

229 Morey Hall
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627 USA
Phone: (585) 275-8779
Fax: (585) 756-8086
Email: jw@rifc.org
Web site: www.rifc.org

Offices of Residential Life

Undergraduate Housing
Office of Residential Life
020 Gates, SBA Hall
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627-0468 USA
Phone: (585) 275-3166
Fax: (585) 506-1886
Email: housing@reslife.rochester.edu
Web site: www.reslife.rochester.edu

Graduate/Family Housing
University Apartments Office
020 Gates, SBA Hall
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627-0468 USA
Phone: (585) 275-5824
Fax: (585) 506-1886
Email: uapts@reslife.rochester.edu

Eastman School of Music Housing
Residential Life - Eastman Commons
100 Gibbs Street
Rochester, NY 14605 USA
Phone: (585) 274-1251
Fax: (585) 274-1047

Off-Campus Housing
020 Gates Wing, SBA Hall
Rochester, NY 14627 USA
Phone: (585) 275-2259
Fax: (585) 506-1886

English as a Second Language

Office of Special Programs
University of Rochester
PO Box 270358
Rochester, NY 14627 USA
Phone: (585) 275-2344
Fax: (585) 461-5901
Email: esl@rochester.edu

International Services Office

209 Morey Hall, PO Box 270446
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627 USA
Phone: (585) 275-2866
Fax: (585) 244-4503
Email: questions@iso.rochester.edu
Web site: www.iso.rochester.edu