



# HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

Worlds of Experience. Lives of Consequence.

## Supplement for International Students



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# Welcome

## Your Journey Starts Here!

As you prepare to pack your bags and start an exciting new life, know that all of HWS's international community shares the common experience of leaving home to study in the United States. This tight-knit community is more than willing to offer insight and support throughout this process to make your transition smooth and enjoyable.

**David Gage '91**  
**Director of International**  
**Student Affairs**  
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**Phone: (315) 781-3734**

At Hobart and William Smith, we ask that incoming international students join us a little sooner than their American counter-parts for a special three-day Orientation, August 22-25, designed specifically for international students. This will be followed by a mandatory three-day campus-wide Orientation for all incoming students. It is a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with the new culture, get assimilated with the campus and get answers to your questions.

Because HWS are required to comply with U.S. government reporting requirements, your attendance during this entire six-day Orientation program is mandatory. During Orientation, we will check to make sure that all your immigration paperwork is in order as well as help you gain a better understanding of what your F-1 or J-1 status means and how to maintain it, answer any questions you might have about adjusting and introduce you to upperclass international students, staff and faculty members.

After Orientation, should you find yourself with questions, the International Student Affairs Office (ISAO) is located in the basement of Smith Hall, Room 4. The ISAO staff addresses the needs of international students and provides programs and services related to immigration matters. The ISAO sponsors and co-sponsors events designed to promote cross-cultural sharing between the many groups from the HWS and Geneva communities.

In our experience, the better prepared you are before you arrive, the more you will benefit from your time at the Colleges. This supplement is designed to help you prepare for the adventure of studying in the United States, but as questions arise, feel free to contact me regarding visas and immigration issues, employment, travel and a host of other matters that may arise. Additional information about international student life is online at [www.hws.edu/admissions/international\\_student.aspx](http://www.hws.edu/admissions/international_student.aspx).

I look forward to seeing you in August,

**David Gage '91**  
**Director of International Student Affairs**  
**E-mail: [gage@hws.edu](mailto:gage@hws.edu)**  
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## What is Orientation?

You'll arrive on Monday, August 22, and check in immediately upon arrival at the Intercultural Affairs Center located at 288 Pulteney Street. During the first half of the week, you'll have an opportunity to get to know other international students, learn more about your rights and responsibilities and get settled on campus and in the local area. Starting on Friday, you'll be assigned to a smaller group of other new students led by two upper-class students and join the three-day Orientation outlined in the Student Guide (see [hws.edu/orientation](http://hws.edu/orientation) for more details).



## ORIENTATION Classes of 2015

## In Case of an Emergency

If you should have a need to contact the Director of International Student Affairs David Gage while traveling outside of the United States please call (315) 781-3734 or (315) 781-3333 (after hours), U.S. Country Code 1.

## What You Need To Know

### Immigration Basics

As with all countries, the United States has laws and regulations governing foreigners who are temporarily within its borders. Immigration regulations are administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Working with DHS can be very complicated, detailed and time-consuming. Immigration regulations can change frequently and are difficult to interpret. It is important that you do not rely on information obtained from friends and other students. It is important for you to understand the rules as they apply. **The DHS does not consider ignorance of the law a legitimate reason for failing to obey it.**

DHS requires that a copy of your passport, I-94 and other immigration documents be kept on file by the International Student Affairs Director, as well as your local address and telephone number. The International Student Affairs Director is available to help you process your immigration forms and documents, but he must work within the federal immigration laws.

When making a request, please make sure that you allow plenty of time for your request to be processed and plan to be patient. **You should allow at least one week for processing signatures, letters or other types of paperwork. Special consideration will be given for emergency situations.** Have your documents, such as your passport, I-94 card, I-20 or DS-2019 with you when you go to the International Student Affairs Office for immigration assistance.

**Reminder: The Director of International Student Affairs cannot remember when each student's documents expire. It is YOUR responsibility to keep track of all immigration documents and keep them current.**

### Passport

Be sure to keep your passport in a safe place. It is your most important document. Most passports are good for a limited period of time. Your passport must be valid at all times while you are in the United States.

The expiration date of your passport should be valid six months beyond the date you enter the U.S. If your passport expiration date is close to the date you will begin classes, obtain a new passport before leaving home.

It is your responsibility to remember when your passport will expire and to contact the nearest consulate or embassy for your country. To find the nearest consulate or US embassy check <http://usembassy.state.gov>.

Your passport can only be extended by your government and it usually takes several weeks for a passport to be renewed, so be sure to allow enough time. You may extend your passport in the U.S. at your home country's embassy or consulate. If your passport expires, you are in this country and are subject to deportation.

## **Visas**

The visa stamped in your passport at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate is for permission to enter the United States for a specific purpose and period of time. Students are usually given an F-1 visa. J-1 visas are given to researchers, scholars and exchange students who are sponsored by agencies or universities.

Since the visa stamp is only important for entry and re-entry to the United States, there is no need to worry if it expires while you are here if you are maintaining your student status. Because a visa is only a permit to apply for entry into a country, it is not possible to obtain a U.S. visa while you are in the U.S. To apply for a visa, you must go to a U.S. consulate or embassy in a country other than the United States, usually your home country.

## **I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record)**

Form I-94, also called the Arrival/Departure Record of Stay Permit, is the small white card given to you at the port of entry to the U.S. This form is very important since it officially determines how long you can remain in the U.S.

Students on the F-1 and J-1 visas usually have their I-94 stamped “D/S” (Duration of Status), which means that the student can remain in this country for the length of time required to complete his/her studies as long as the student follows all of the regulations of the student visa. The eleven-digit number written on your I-94 is your DHS admission number, which is used by the DHS to monitor entry into and departure from the U.S. The I-94 cards are turned in when leaving the U.S. and a new I-94 is completed with each subsequent entry.

If you are on a visa other than a F or J or if you have a specific date stamped on your I-94 card instead of the “D/S” designation, you must apply for an extension, a Change of Status or exit the U.S before the expiration date or you will be considered out of status and a visa overstay, which can have serious DHS consequences.

## **SEVIS**

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

## **Form I-20 or DS-2019**

You should have received a Form I-20 A-B or DS-2019 from Hobart and William Smith as proof of your acceptance. Use this document when applying for an F-1 or J-1 Student Visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad. Present the I-20 or DS-2019 with your passport and visa at the Port of Entry, where the document will be stamped and given back to you. This is your Certificate of Eligibility, and it must be signed by the Director of International Student Affairs before you leave the United States. You should keep copies of all I-20 or DS-2019 issued to you.

## **Immigration Status**

This is often confused with “visa” but your immigration status is determined at the time of your entry into the U.S. by an immigration official and is noted on the Form I-94. You may have many visa stamps in your passport but, upon entry into the U.S., an immigration inspector will admit you in only one immigration status which is noted on the I-94 card.

# **Obtaining Your Visa and Form I-20 or DS-2019**

## **How to Obtain a Visa**

Although U.S. embassies will not issue a student visa prior to 120 days before the start date on the I-20 or DS-2019, you can schedule an appointment prior to the 120-day period. Since processing times have become longer due to increased security clearances, you should check with the local U.S. embassy or consulate to learn the estimated waiting time and allow plenty of time to obtain the visa. A list of consulates and embassies can be found at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

All F-1 students must pay a SEVIS fee of \$200. Students with a J-1 visa pay a SEVIS fee of \$180. The fee can be paid online or by mail. For complete directions, see <http://www.fmJfee.com>.

Unless you are a sponsored J-1 student or already in another visa category, the Office of Admissions will send you a Form I-20 or DS-2019 when you are admitted and have submitted proof of your ability to finance your education. Take the I-20 or DS-2019 form, your acceptance letter, passport, copies of sponsorship letters and bank statements to prove financial support, and a receipt for your SEVIS fee payment to the United States embassy or consulate nearest your home. Once you have acquired the visa stamp in your passport, you are ready to enter the U.S.

**Note: Students may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date on their I-20 or DS-2019.**

**If you are a Canadian or a British Commonwealth citizen**, you do not need visas to enter the U.S. as a visitor, but you must request F-1 or J-1 status and present your I-20 or DS-2019 forms for processing at the point of entry even if the official does not ask for it. You should also be prepared to show evidence of financial support and proof of citizenship. Without a stamped I-20 or DS-2019 and an I-94 card with the F-1 or J-1 designation on it, you are considered a tourist in the United States and will not be legally able to study and take advantage of the special privileges allowed those in Student Status until you have been in an immigration status appropriate for studying for at least nine consecutive months.

**Note: If you will not be entering the U.S. on an F-1 or J-1 visa, do not use an I-20 or DS-2019 form to obtain a visa. If you received an I-20 or DS-2019, please return it to the Office of Admissions with an explanation of the type of visa you hold.**

If your visa document (I-20 or DS-2019) does not arrive in time for you to secure the proper visa, **do not enter the United States on a B1/B2 Visitor Visa**. Obtain a B-2 “prospective student” or “prospective exchange visitor” visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate post in your country. Be certain the consul writes “Prospective Student” (for F-1) or “Prospective Exchange Visitor” (for J-1) in your passport on the visa page. You will need to present your letter of acceptance and evidence of financial support to request this visa.

In general, it is best to avoid using the B-2 visa since you will have to pay a fee and do a time-consuming change of status through DHS (Department of Homeland Security) after you arrive. You may not begin your studies until the change is completed, so this could also delay the start of your studies until a subsequent term.

**Note: You must attend the school named on the I-20 or DS-2019 presented at the port of entry in order to be in status. Also, do not enter the U.S. on a “W-T” (waiver) as this classification cannot be extended or changed and you will lose your legal immigration status as a student.**

## Important Facts About Studying in the U.S.

### **Students Transferring From Another College in the United States**

If you are an F-1 student transferring from a U.S. institution and will not be leaving the country prior to enrollment at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, follow the procedures required by DHS. Bring your completed I-20 or DS-2019 to the International Student Affairs office as soon as possible after your arrival on campus. Sign the document and leave it to be processed by the Director of International Student Affairs, who will notify you when you may pick it up.

If you leave the U.S. before beginning your studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, use the new I-20 or DS-2019 issued by the Colleges when you arrive at the port of entry. Keep the I-20 or DS-2019 from your old school with your immigration records, but do not use it to enter the U.S. It is not necessary for transfer students with an unexpired student visa and who have maintained their status to obtain a new visa, even though the former school’s name is listed.

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

There are two types of entry visa issued to nonimmigrant students who intend to study full-time at Hobart and William Smith Colleges—the F-1 student visa and the J-1 exchange visitor visa.

*Source of Funding:* J-1 Exchange visitor visa status is available to those students who are supported substantially by funding other than personal or family funds. Such funding may include that which comes from the U.S. government, the student's home government, an international organization, or Hobart and William Smith (the tuition exchange waiver). If you are supported by personal or family funds, then you are ineligible for J-1 immigration status and must come to the U.S. to study in F-1 immigration status.

*Foreign Residence Requirement:* Students in J-1 immigration status and the J-2 dependents may be subject to a "foreign residence requirement." J-1 students who receive direct or indirect U.S. or home government funding or who are studying in fields for which personnel are considered in short supply in their home countries (most developing nations have "country skills" lists of varying lengths), are ineligible to apply for a change to another non-immigrant status (except A or G) or permanent residency in the U.S. until they have satisfied the "two year home country physical presence requirement." Only those in J-1 status with government funding or whose skills are on the country skills list are subject to the foreign residence requirement, which mean upon completion of the program of study they must reside in their country of last legal permanent residence for two years before they are eligible to apply for entry into the U.S. on an immigrant visa or on specialized work visa (H or L). There is no foreign residence requirement for students on F-1 student status. Refer to the Department of State's Web site for additional information on the Exchange Visitor Program.

*Medical Insurance:* Students in J-1 status and their J-2 dependents are required to have comprehensive medical coverage in order to fulfill U.S. government regulations governing the J Exchange Visitor status. Currently the medical insurance offered by Hobart and William Smith Colleges does not cover all requirements for those in J immigration status. The U.S. Department of State specifies that program participants and their dependents have medical coverage with the following minimum requirements (22 CFR 62:14): medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness; repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7, 500, medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$10, 000, and a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness. For more information, please contact Amy Teel in the Center for Global Education at 315-781-3307.

### **Duration of Status for F-1 or J-1 Students**

An F-1 or J-1 student is admitted to the U.S. for a period known as "Duration of Status" which is recorded upon entry documents I-94 and I-20 or DS-2019 with the notation "D/S." Duration of Status refers to the period a student is pursuing a full course of study, plus any authorized practical training following completion. The dates on the I-20 or DS-2019 determine the initial parameters of the duration of status. A student can be admitted to the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the report date on the I-20 or DS-2019 and may remain 60 days for F-1 and 30 days for J-1 after completion of program or practical training. Certain factors may reduce grace period to 15 days or 0 days. An authorized withdrawal from classes is allowed a 15-day period for departure. A student who fails to maintain status is not eligible for an additional period for departure.

### **Temporary Departure from the U.S.**

**If you plan on leaving the U.S. temporarily to visit your homeland or some other country, the Director of International Affairs must validate your I-20 or DS-2019 for re-entry into the U.S.** You may not be allowed back into the U.S. without the validated immigration documents, a current visa and a passport which is valid for at least six months after you re-enter the country.

Most students with valid status may travel to Canada, Mexico and many of the adjacent islands if they have a valid passport, a valid I-94 and a valid I-20 or DS-2019. If you re-enter the U.S. in fewer than 30 days, an unexpired U.S. visa is not required. However, Canada, Mexico and the Island nations do require entry visas for citizens of certain countries.

It is always best to check with the embassy or consulate of any country you wish to visit. Since certain countries are ineligible for this benefit and travel regulations are subject to change, you should check with the Director of International Student Affairs if you intend to travel with an expired visa.

Students who apply for a new visa in contiguous territory forfeit the right to re-enter with an expired visa. If the new visa is denied, the student would not be able to re-enter the United States to study until a valid visa is obtained in their home country.

## **Information on U.S. Social Security Numbers (SSN)**

If you will be employed in the United States, including at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, you must obtain a U.S. social security number, which is used by the U.S. government to identify wage earners for tax purposes.

To apply for a Social Security Number (SSN) you must obtain a “proof of work” form confirming your student or exchange visitor status, that you are authorized to engage in on-campus employment and the nature of the employment as well as identifying the department/office for whom you will be working before being able to apply to the Social Security Administration for a SSN. You must also present your passport, your I-20 or DS-2019 form and your I-94 form. The Social Security Administration office is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. (closed on federal holidays).

Social security numbers will not be issued to foreign nationals who are not authorized to work. A social security number is not required for opening a bank account, registering for school, filing a U.S. tax form or applying for a driver’s license. If you are required to file a tax return and are not eligible for a U.S. social security number, you will have to apply to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for a Tax Identification Number (TIN) on form W-7. This form may be obtained from the Colleges payroll department.

We will be having a session on Social Security cards and on-campus employment during the 3-day Orientation for international students.

## **Before You Arrive**

Before you can board a plane and start your study abroad adventure, there are some formalities you will need to take care of in addition to obtaining your visa. The earlier you start thinking about the things you need, the smoother your preparations will go. This list will help you consider some of the things you will have to do.

### **Obtain Medical Insurance**

Hobart and William Smith require that all students use the medical insurance provided by the Colleges. All J-1 student-visa holders (exchange students) are required by US law to have their own medical insurance or purchase a supplemental plan through the Center for Global Education. While F-1 students are covered by Hobart and William Smith’s medical insurance, you might consider buying additional medical coverage.

### **Secure Important Documents**

You need to bring all documents relating to your legal, medical and academic history with you. Such documents include medical and dental records, certificates of immunizations, information about medical conditions and treatments, prescriptions for medication and eyeglasses or contact lenses, and official transcripts from secondary school and college (if you are a transfer student).

Always carry your passport and I-20 or DS-2019; do not check them in your baggage. If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States. In addition, it is strongly recommended that you carry on hand the name and contact information for the Director of International Student Affairs David Gage (315-781-3734) and a 24-hour emergency contact number (315-781-3333). You should also always have evidence of financial resources and evidence of student status.

Make sure you photocopy all documents and leave some copies with a person you trust in your home country. It is also helpful to translate these documents into English before you leave your home country.

### **Pack**

Pack as light as possible. Remember that you might have to carry all of your things at different times during the journey.

If you are studying abroad for only a semester you may not need to bring your entire wardrobe. If you have traditional, national clothing, consider bringing it to wear at events sponsored by the International Student Association or other cultural events. Winters tend to be cold in Geneva, however you can purchase a warm jacket, a scarf, gloves, hat and boots locally, rather than carry them from home.

You may want to leave room in your suitcase for souvenirs. At the same time, there might be things you want to bring because they will make you more comfortable and will make your transition to a new environment easier. Some exchange students and international students also like to bring small gifts from their home country to share with new friends abroad. This might be a means for you to share and explain your culture to your new acquaintances.

We encourage you to take advantage of the option to ship your packages ahead using the box number that will be provided to you this summer. You may also consider purchasing larger items upon your arrival—there will be time during Orientation to visit local shopping centers.

You must either bring your own bedding (linens) or plan to purchase bedding once you arrive in Geneva. Many international students in the past have had success using vacuum-seal storage bags to transport bedding from home. Please know that if you do not bring bedding with you, the Office of International Student Affairs will provide bedding and basic toiletries.

## Traveling Tips

*This year we are asking all international students to arrive on Monday, August 22, so that we may begin our 3-day orientation on Tuesday, August 23.* We will send you more specific information soon, but you should book your flight now. The Colleges provide a complimentary pick-up from both the Rochester and Syracuse airports if you arrive on the designated arrival date (Aug. 22) by yourself.

Long-distance traveling can be really exhausting, so try to get a good-night's sleep before the trip, eat light and drink plenty of water. It will still be quite warm here at the end of August, but may get chilly at night so please bring a sweater or sweatshirt with you.

Label your luggage with both your home address and the address in the United States (if you don't have an address yet, use that of the international student office: Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 288 Pulteney Street, Geneva, NY 14456).

Keep your passport, important documents, flight tickets, and money or traveler's checks with you at all times. You might also want to pack everything you need (including any medications) for a one-night emergency stay into your hand luggage in case you get stuck at the airport or your luggage gets lost. It is quite typical for your luggage to arrive later than you do. Late luggage is generally found and delivered to campus within 48 to 72 hours. In case this happens to you, please pack essentials and a change of clothing in your carry-on baggage.

You should also carry a small amount of U.S. dollars with you so that you can buy food or other small things you might need while traveling. However, it is not a good idea to carry large sums of money. We recommend that you buy traveler's checks or get a credit card that allows you to withdraw money from a cash machine when you need to. Upon arrival on campus, the Director of International Student Affairs can help you to set up an account with a local bank. It is highly recommended to have an U.S. bank account because it will make payments much easier. You can create a bank account free of charge. More information about local banks is listed in the Guide for New Students which is available at [hws.edu/orientation](http://hws.edu/orientation).

## What to Expect When You Arrive

Upon arrival in the U.S., the first thing you'll do is complete your entry paperwork. If you're arriving by air, flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms and Arrival-Departure Forms (I-94). These must be completed prior to landing. If you're arriving by land or sea, the CBP Officer at the port of entry will provide the necessary Customs Declaration Form and the Arrival-Departure Form (I-94) to be filled out upon arrival.

As you arrive at the port of entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available for presentation: your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, Arrival-Departure Form (I-94) and the Customs Declaration Form. Your documents will be examined and processed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at the port of entry. Your passport will be returned to you along with an I-94 card (Arrival/Departure Record) designated "D/S" which means "duration of status" and refers to the time you are engaged in a full-time course of study as indicated on your visa document. The DHS official will stamp and return your I-20 or DS-2019 to you.

## Maintaining Status with DHS

You are considered in F-1 or J-1 student status for the entire length of time during which you are enrolled as a full-time student in an educational program if adhering to the conditions of the visa designated on the I-94 card, plus any authorized period of practical training and an additional 60 days for F-1 or 30 days for J-1 to prepare for departure. Be sure to pay close attention to the conditions described below:

- Report to the Director of International Student Affairs for SEVIS registration upon arrival at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
- Attend only the school authorized. This means that you must only attend the school whose I-20 or DS-2019 you last used to enter the U.S. or the school whose I-20 or DS-2019 you used to transfer schools. If you decide to withdraw from the Colleges before completing your program, you are not allowed to remain in the U.S. with in-student status unless you transfer to another institution.
- Complete a full course of study for each academic term and make normal academic progress towards completion of program. Attendance and/or full-time enrollment is not required during the summer. At Hobart and William Smith Colleges 4 credit hours per semester is required and exceptions can be made on the recommendation of the Office of International Student Affairs for valid medical or academic reasons as defined by the DHS. Be sure to speak with the Office of International Student Affairs about any exceptions BEFORE dropping below full-time status in order to avoid the serious consequences that may result from being out of status.
- Transfer or extend program in a timely manner. Duration of Status expires if a student takes longer than expected to complete a given academic level (bachelors, masters or doctorate). The amount of time permitted for completing studies at a given level is determined by the date on the initial I-20 or DS-2019 issued at the beginning of each academic level. Students must pay close attention to the expected completion date noted in item 5 on the form I-20 or DS-2019 for each level. If more time is needed, an application for extension of stay must be filed with the DHS. There are certain requirements to meet in order to be eligible for an extension, so you will need to consult with the Office of International Student Affairs at least 45 days before the completion date.
- Keep continuity in the program of study (In general an absence from the U.S. of more than 5 months terminates status. However, an authorized study abroad program does not break continuity).
- Refrain from unauthorized work. When you apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa, you must prove that you have full financial support. The law assumes that you will not be employed in the U.S. and therefore will not accept employment that could be filled by a U.S. worker or student. There are some exceptions to this policy provided that full-time enrollment during the year is maintained and the appropriate permission is obtained, but you should always check with the Office of International Student Affairs before accepting employment, especially if it is off campus.
- When traveling abroad, always return in proper F-1 or J-1 status.
- Maintain a valid passport for 6 months into the future (Some countries have agreements with the U.S. that recognize the passport as valid for 6 months after the expiration date).
- Report any address changes to the Office of International Student Affairs within 10 days of the change. DHS regulations require that the Director of International Student Affairs maintain a record of the current address where you are living. Therefore, you must always notify the Office of International Student Affairs immediately of any change of address. Addresses with a post office box number or addresses of your academic department are not acceptable to the DHS.
- Comply with Special Registration requirements if applicable (NSEERS).
- File timely requests of change of status, practical training and other benefits.
- Obey all State and Federal laws.
- Depart from the U.S. in a timely manner.
- Do NOT enter on a tourist visa (B-1 or B-2).

**Note:** If you fail to maintain full-time enrollment, then you are not eligible for any of the benefits of the student visa, such as on- and off-campus employment, practical training, remaining in the U.S. during summer vacation, transfer to another school or change of level, or registration for further courses. You will be considered “out of status” and must apply to DHS for reinstatement to valid student status. Eligibility for benefits will be regained only if and when the DHS approves the reinstatement. If you have any questions regarding reinstatement, see the Director of International Student Affairs immediately.

## Getting Settled at HWS

College is an exciting time for everyone and it is a transition for all students. If you are an exchange student, you already went through the transition process once. Nevertheless, studying abroad brings with it a range of new experiences. Every college is a little different, and if you have never studied in the United States before, many things might be confusing.

## Culture Shock

Studying abroad is a learning experience in every sense of the word. Besides your scholastic learning, you will get to know the American culture. By experiencing and understanding a different way of life, you will also realize things about your own culture. This is your chance to broaden your view and reflect on and mature your own values.

The process of learning about a new culture and finding your own place in the new environment can be confusing and tiring. Culture shock is a normal phenomenon on your way to adjusting. The best way to deal with a new situation and find out about something you don't understand is to ask questions.

When the excitement about being in a foreign country wears off, cultural differences can become overwhelming. You may think your language skills are inadequate; you may struggle with course work; you may be troubled by unfamiliar food; you may have difficulties interpreting other people's behavior; you may be offended by the way people act or dress or by their body language. All of these reactions are normal.

There are a variety of symptoms of culture shock. Some people feel tired and nervous; some are frustrated with or even hostile toward the American culture; some get angry and irritated very easily; some isolate themselves or socialize only with other international students and people who speak their language. You might also feel very homesick and question why you decided to go abroad in the first place.

One way to prepare yourself to deal with culture shock is to clarify for yourself why you want to study abroad. Knowing your personal expectations and goals will help you overcome periods of doubt. But, once you're here, the best way to overcome culture shock is to get involved. Join a club or sports team, attend a religious or cultural event or volunteer in the local community. Check the HWS Daily Update (<http://www.hws.edu/dailyupdate/>) to learn more about upcoming events and opportunities to get involved. Ask for help if you are struggling! Members of the staff in the Center for Global Education and in Intercultural Affairs have all experienced culture shock first hand. You will find them very sympathetic.

## International Students at HWS

We currently have 87 full-time matriculated international students in a degree program (spring 2011) as well as 21 more on exchange each semester. There are students from Australia, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

There is an International Student Association (ISA) on campus, which celebrates the diverse cultures found around the globe. Other cultural clubs with international perspectives represented on campus include Asian Student Union (ASU), Latin American Organization (LAO), and Caribbean Student Association (CSA). These and other campus groups host a variety of cultural activities and programs throughout the year. Learn more at [www.hws.edu/admissions/international\\_student.aspx](http://www.hws.edu/admissions/international_student.aspx).

### School Breaks

Since not everyone is able to return home during school breaks, international students are allowed to remain on campus during those times. The Residential Education Office will e-mail you throughout the semester to find out your plans for breaks. Your immediate response is necessary as it is the only way to ensure that you will get permission to remain in your room or elsewhere on the campus during school breaks.

Students are not allowed to remain in their rooms during fall, winter and spring breaks, although international students

who make timely arrangements will be housed elsewhere on campus. During summer vacation, students who remain on campus must move into temporary housing. Once again, an e-mail from the Residential Education office is the first step in determining where students will be staying. Currently, F-1 international students are allowed to stay on campus during the summer holiday free of charge, but that policy is subject to change. J-1 international students may stay on campus during the summer **only** if they will be continuing their studies at HWS during the following fall term.

The dining hall is not open to students during the summer months so students will need to provide their own meals. Most summer housing will feature a kitchen, but in the event that one doesn't, appropriate accommodations will be made for those students who wish to prepare their own meals. The Office of International Student Affairs must also know your plans and should also be notified whether you will or will not be staying on campus.

If you intend to go home for summer break, there are two options for storing your belongings. You can store your belongings in a private mini-storage facility in Geneva, although they can be pricey and you must provide your own transportation to get your belongings to the storage location. In the Living in Geneva section of the Guide for New Students (available online), you'll find contact information for several storage companies.

Alternately, you may be able to store your belongings on campus. International students must attend a mandatory meeting in May regarding storage and transportation where you will be advised on how to store your belongings if you choose to keep them on campus. Please understand that the Colleges are not responsible for any damage or theft involving items stored on campus over summer break.

### **Working Restrictions**

In the Finances section of the Guide for New Students (available online at [www.hws.edu/orientation](http://www.hws.edu/orientation)), you'll learn more about working on campus. Unfortunately, as international students, you will have some restrictions regarding where and the number of hours you may work.

If you're a student in F-1 status, you may work up to twenty hours per week during the academic year. On campus employment means that you are paid by Hobart and William Smith Colleges or working at a College location with an employer that is providing services to students, such as with Sodexo in any of the dining halls.

Once you've been in F-1 status for one academic year, you are eligible to work off campus if you are experiencing extreme financial difficulties due to unforeseen changes that severely affect your financial resources.

J-1 students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester and full time during the break with the permission of their sponsor. Such employment cannot interfere with full-time pursuit of the exchange visitor's program objective and is limited to 20 hours per week during the academic year and full-time during break. If the Colleges are your sponsor please see Amy Teel in the Center for Global Education before starting work.

### **Practical Training**

Defined as employment related to your field of study, there are several different types of practical training that you can pursue during and after the completion of your studies. There will be a meeting in the spring explaining both Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for all interested international students.

[www.hws.edu](http://www.hws.edu)

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