

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDEBOOK



**UTICA  
COLLEGE**

Founded by Syracuse University in 1946



## Welcome!

Studying in the United States will be an exciting experience. Whether you come to Utica College (UC) for years or just one semester, you will have many wonderful experiences which will help you grow personally, professionally, and intellectually. The Office of International Education will assist you throughout your stay at UC.

The key to a successful study abroad opportunity is planning ahead. Careful plans must be made for proper documentation, travel schedules, and finances. In preparing for life in the United States, you also will need to become familiar with American customs, values, currency, and academic requirements.

After your international flight arrives in the United States, you will need to make arrangements to continue your travel to Utica. For your convenience, general information regarding this transportation is provided in this brochure.

Once you have arrived on campus, the Office of International Education will assist you in getting settled in your new environment. The Office of International Education offers an orientation program designed to address many of the questions and concerns you may have during your first few weeks at Utica College, such as banking, medical insurance, and course selections.

We are confident that you will find your experience at Utica College enjoyable and challenging. We welcome you to Utica College and wish you a very successful and exciting study abroad experience.

## Travel Documents

You will receive a Certificate of Eligibility, either Form I-20 or Form 2019, from Utica College. This form is necessary to apply for the appropriate visa for entry to the U.S. Also, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond your arrival date. This date is generally the first day of the Orientation for new students. Your Certificate of Eligibility indicates the latest date by which you should report to Utica College.

## Applying For Your U.S. Visa

If you are currently abroad, and do not have a valid U.S. student visa, you will apply for one at the U.S. embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for Utica College. The events of September 11 have resulted in delays in visa processing due to increased scrutiny of visa applicants. Winter holidays (such as Christmas and New Year's Day), and the summer can also be very busy times at many U.S. consulates and embassies.

Information on the visa application process is available at [http://travel.state.gov/visa\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa_services.html)

- ◆ If you have previously attended a U.S. school and have an unexpired U.S. student visa that has been used at least once to enter the U.S. to attend that school, you may use your current visa and the I-20 issued by U.C. to enter the U.S. for enrollment at UC.
- If you are transferring from another school and do not intend to leave the U.S. before attending UC, report to the Office of International Education as soon as you arrive on campus to finalize your transfer.
- Citizens of Canada are not required to secure a visa, but should show their I-20 and some proof of identification at the Port of Entry.

When you travel to the U.S., the most important thing to remember is to have all of your required visa documents with you. Do not put any visa documents such as your passport or I-20 (DS-2019 for J visa holders) that you will need for immigration inspection in your check-through luggage! Remember, as well, to be patient if you encounter long lines or additional inspections.

## Things to Bring

### *Climate and clothing*

New York State has a varying climate with four distinct seasons:

SEASON	MONTHS	FAHRENHEIT	CENTIGRADE
Summer	June-September	40 to 90	4.4 to 32.0
Fall	September-December	20 to 80	6.5 to 25.5
Winter	December-March	0 to 45	-18.0 to 7.0
Spring	March-June	40 to 72	4.5 to 22.0

Temperatures vary considerably from year to year. During spring, summer, and fall, moderate periods of rainfall occur; snow falls periodically during the winter months. Three basic types of clothing are essential. In winter, heavy jackets or overcoats, hats, scarves, gloves, and boots are needed. During chilly autumn and spring days, raincoats or medium-weight wool coats or jackets are worn outdoors, sweaters indoors. A lightweight jacket is sometimes necessary for cool nights during spring, summer, and fall.

### *Personal items*

Most students like to bring examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, tapes or CDs, maps, or other items descriptive of their country and culture, both to show interested Americans and to provide a touch of home decoration in their new homes. You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be readily available, or may be more expensive, in the United States--for example, eyeglasses, cameras, watches, or portable radios. You may also wish to bring an electrical converter to accommodate the U.S. 110-120 voltage system. A recipe for one of your country's typical dishes is something else that might be useful.

## Things to Leave at Home

You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the consulate or embassy where you acquire your visa. Prohibited items include some foodstuffs, narcotics, and items for resale. For more information, visit the US Customs Service website at <http://www.cbp.gov/>. Since students are expected to buy required textbooks for all courses, and supplemental reading materials for review and research are available in libraries, you need not bring any books used in previous study. It is best to purchase electrical appliances after you arrive: appliances manufactured outside the U.S. may not be compatible with the power supply or may not be allowed inside the residence halls.

## Arrival in the United States

If you have already obtained your U.S. student visa, congratulations! You have successfully accomplished an important step as you finalize your travel plans. Be sure to have your I-20 form (for F-1 visas) or 2019 (for J-1 visas) with your passport when you go through your immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry. Remember that if you plan to attend Utica College, you must present an I-20 or 2019 endorsed for study at UC. You cannot enter on another school's certificate of eligibility, as that is considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. Immigration Service.

## Travel Information

### *When should I make travel arrangements?*

Travel arrangements should be made as early as possible and finalized when you receive your visa. International students are strongly encouraged to arrive on campus 2-3 days prior to the beginning of the semester. If you will seek off-campus housing, we recommend you arrive earlier to allow enough time for you to locate suitable accommodation before classes begin. This time will allow you to adjust to your new environment and attend the orientation program.

### *What will happen when I arrive in the United States?*

You should expect to go through both immigration and customs inspections at the U.S. port of entry. Whether you will be making your first entry into the United States or have entered the United States before, expect immigration and customs procedures at the various U.S. ports to result in some delays. It is wise to schedule additional time between continuing flights or bus and train plans to allow for these delays.

You should present the Immigration Inspector with your passport, SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 issued by UC, and the completed I-94 arrival/departure card that will be distributed by airplane personnel once you are on your flight to the United States. A portion of the I-94 will be stapled into your passport, marked "D/S" for duration of status, and stamped with the current date. If "D/S" is not indicated on your I-94, you must notify the Office of International Education as soon as you arrive on campus.

If you have recently attended another U.S. school, your Utica SEVIS I-20 may read "transfer pending from" and the name of your previous school. If you are questioned about the "transfer pending" notation, inform the immigration officer that Utica College has advised you that your transfer will be completed once you arrive on campus and register for courses. Answer all questions politely and briefly. Do not offer any information that goes beyond the scope of the question asked you.

### **Will I need U.S. currency?**

It is a good idea to bring some U.S. currency with you. If your international flight arrives in the evening, currency exchange services may be closed. U.S. currency will be needed to pay for a taxi or shuttle to the train or bus depot. Coins may be especially useful if you wish to make phone calls or use a vending machine. However, traveling with large sums of cash is not recommended.

### **What is the best way to travel to UC?**

The closest airport to UC is Hancock International Airport, in Syracuse, NY, a 50-minute drive to Utica. Connecting flights may be arranged from most ports of entry, and you may wish to schedule yourself directly into Syracuse. Limousine transportation should be prearranged for your travel to Utica (note: contact information follows this section). It is sometimes possible for the Office of International Education staff to meet arriving students, if they are arriving during daytime hours and have notified the office in advance.

If you will be ending your flight at JFK Airport in New York City or Newark Airport in New Jersey, you must take a bus or train to Utica. You may take a taxi, bus, or shuttle from either airport to the Port Authority Bus Terminal (bus) or Penn Station (train). The cost will vary. A taxi will cost about \$30-50. A shuttle or bus transfer will cost about \$20. This transfer will take about one hour, so plan your connection accordingly.

### **Bus**

A bus trip from New York City to Utica will take approximately five hours, and the cost for a one-way ticket is approximately \$50. If you fly into Newark Airport, you will need to first take a shuttle from Newark Airport to the Port Authority in New York City. Shuttles from Newark to NYC run every 15 minutes. Schedules and reservations for buses to Utica are available online. See contact information following this section.

### **Train**

Rail transportation runs several times a day from New York City to Utica. The rail from New York City or Newark to Utica takes approximately five hours, and the cost for a one-way ticket is approximately \$50. To verify departure/arrival schedules and book reservations, see the contact information below.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Web site</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Rail	<a href="http://www.amtrak.com">www.amtrak.com</a>	1-800-872-7295
Bus	<a href="http://www.greyhound.com">www.greyhound.com</a>	1-800-231-2222
Limousine	<a href="http://www.nyvintagelimo.com">www.nyvintagelimo.com</a>	1-888-704-5466
Air	<a href="http://www.jetblueairways.com">www.jetblueairways.com</a>	001-801-365-2525

### ***How will I get from the bus or train station to UC?***

It is sometimes possible for the Office of International Education staff to meet students--if they are arriving during daytime hours and have contacted the Office of International Education in advance. Taxi service is available also, 24 hours a day from the station to campus, a 10-minute drive for under \$10. If you arrive on campus between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., the Office of International Education staff is available to assist you in our office, Room 206, DePerno Hall, telephone (315)792-3082. If you will be living in the residence halls and your travel time necessitates arrival after office hours, arrangements can be made to leave your residence halls keys for your pickup at a specified location.

## **General Information**

Once you arrive on campus, it is important for you to report to the Office of International Education. Once the office is aware of your arrival, the Office of International Education staff will assist you in getting settled during your first few weeks at UC.

### ***Residence Hall Accommodations***

The Residence Life Office (RLO) will issue you keys to your campus residence. When you pick up your residence hall keys, you will be required to leave a \$40 key deposit (to be refunded upon the return of your keys at the end of the year). If you will be arriving after 5:00 p.m., contact the Office of International Education in advance so that arrangements can be made to get your keys to you.

### ***Linens***

Residence halls are equipped with single-size beds, a desk, and a chest of drawers. You will be responsible for purchasing your own set of linens. Linens can be purchased either at a local department store or at cost through the Office of International Education. Bedding sheets, towel, a pillow, and blanket will cost approximately \$25-30. You may wish to purchase additional room decorations and items such as a reading lamp, posters, or a hair dryer, once you are settled.

### ***Food***

Many international students adjust to American food rather easily. Our campus dining service offers a vast array of nutritious foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Food service usually begins the Sunday before classes start. If you arrive prior to that time, you can dine at several restaurants available within walking distance.

### ***Orientation Program***

Each semester, the Office of International Education presents an informative orientation program for all incoming international students and faculty. This is a mandatory meeting for ALL new international students. The program addresses academic, social, and cultural issues, as well as any questions or concerns that you may have. The program is held a day or two before classes begin and provides an opportunity for you to complete the necessary paperwork to:

- ◆ Provide personal data information
- ◆ Register for classes
- ◆ Apply for health insurance
- ◆ Apply for e-mail accounts
- ◆ Get your student ID card
- ◆ Apply for a Social Security card
- ◆ Open a bank account
- ◆ Complete a meal plan agreement

Employment and health issues, upcoming social and cultural events, travel information, shopping information, and break requirements also are discussed. You will find the orientation program very beneficial for answering any remaining questions that you may have.

### ***Initial expenses upon arrival:***

- ◆ Travel expenses to UC from NYC or Syracuse (bus, train, cab) \$150
- ◆ Health insurance \$40-50 month
- ◆ Linen package (if desired) \$25-30
- ◆ Toiletries \$20
- ◆ Room key deposit \$40
- ◆ Books/supplies \$350-450 per term
- ◆ Miscellaneous \$40

## American Culture

You will find that Americans have certain habits that are different from yours. To some visitors, Americans may seem informal, competitive, and confrontational at times. To others, Americans may seem helpful, outgoing, and adventurous.

It may take time for you to adjust to personalities, conversations, traditions, habits, and practices, but that is one of the great advantages of visiting America. At first, these differences may be intriguing. Once culture shock wears off, however, these differences may become annoying. Remember, your presence here is a learning experience for you as well as for others. We encourage you to embrace the challenge of diversity.

## Campus Culture

Campus life will be a great experience for you. You will acquire many new friends and acquaintances. Keep in mind that you should encourage friendships with other people. Many people may be shy or quiet. Do not be afraid to smile and introduce yourself often. Join campus clubs and social activities. Invest in a social life. You will make friendships that will last for years.

The residence halls at UC are filled with many outgoing students from around the world. Become a friendly face and enjoy the company. Loud music, laughter, and comradery are part of this appeal. You will find most students to be approachable and considerate.

Sports activities are available all year round. Therefore, if you are interested in soccer, tennis, volleyball, racquetball, basketball, baseball, swimming, or other sports, we encourage you to participate and get involved. Meet the challenge. Become a UC teammate.

There are numerous clubs and organizations that you can join on campus, as well. The Outing Club, International Club, and others are always seeking new members. Also, your views and involvement are welcomed by professors in the classroom, where you will find open discussions common. Make the most of your social and learning experience.

## Recreational Activities

UC is centrally located in scenic New York State. The greater Utica-Rome metropolitan area has an estimated population of 260,000 and is situated amidst much activity, many cultural events, and numerous historical sites and landmarks. Only five hours away from New York City, Utica is 146 kilometers from the New York state capital of Albany and is 81 kilometers from its founding school, Syracuse University.

An array of sports and cultural activities is enjoyed during the four seasons. The city of Utica hosts German, Italian, Ukrainian, and Polish festivals. The Utica area accommodates athletes interested in tennis, soccer, football, baseball, basketball, skiing, mountain climbing, fishing, and golfing. Utica also proudly hosts the Boilermaker Road Race, a world-class running event held every July. The Baseball Hall of Fame and the Boxing Hall of Fame are also nearby.

Many students enjoy shopping. The area has several local shopping centers (called “malls”) and several larger malls located 81 kilometers away in Syracuse. Utica also has many boutiques and specialty shops, as well as the F.X. Matt Brewing Company.

Throughout the year, UC has a variety of activities which will interest you. Generally, these activities are free. Trips are planned periodically during the academic year. Organize your travel budget by planning ahead.

## Community Activities

Occasionally, you may be invited to meet with local community groups or school children. Many people are interested in your culture, heritage, traditions, and lifestyle. Although it is not a requirement, the UC community, as well as the local community, appreciates your participation.

## School Breaks

UC has several breaks throughout the school year. During these times, the residence halls will be closed (except for the October break). You will be responsible for finding accommodations. We encourage you to make friends who may invite you to stay with them, or we suggest that you make your travel plans for this time. Whether you travel or stay with friends, it is important that you contact the Office of International Education with your intentions several weeks before a break.

## Financial Arrangements

Whether the opportunity to study abroad is the result of a sponsorship or exchange program, every international student should be aware of the conditions outlined in his or her respective program. Being an informed student will alleviate confusion or misunderstandings once you arrive at UC. Sponsored students must submit copies of their award letters to arrange for direct payment by their sponsors.

Payment of tuition, fees, and other charges is due at registration (when you enroll for classes). Payment may be made by cash, check, or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express). If you cannot make full payment at this time, you must make special payment arrangements with the Student Accounts Office during orientation. Deferred payment of your first semester bill allows a 1/3 deposit when you arrive and 3 payments of 1/3 each of the remaining balance throughout the semester.

## Money and Banking

Money should always be kept in a safe place. You may secure it in your locked dormitory room or open a local bank account. There are several banks that offer the specialized services international students require. You will have services available to you such as saving and checking accounts and money transfers. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) are also available to function with your bank account here.

## Communication Systems

### *Telephone and Fax*

The United States has a modern and efficient communication system. Telephone and fax messages are the most expedient methods of connecting with an overseas source, but they can be expensive. Calling cards are readily available, with costs of calls varying by country.

### *E-mails*

All international students will have the opportunity to have access to an e-mail account and web services. UC has seven computer labs, with one lab available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Library also has computers available for mail and research. You will sign up for your email access during our orientation program.

## Postal Services

Postage rates vary from letter to package depending on size and weight. You can buy first-class stamps for domestic letters or mail international letters or packages at a U.S. Post Office nearby. They offer friendly service and advice on your questions about mail. Each student in the residence halls will have a private mailbox located on campus. All personal mail may be sent to this Utica College mailing address.

## Health Services

The Student Health Center offers medical treatment to students with minor or short-term illnesses. This service is free for all UC students provided they have complied with the College's health requirements. All students are required to provide the Student Health Center with the following:

- ◆ Medical History Form
- ◆ Current immunization information, including MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- ◆ Health insurance provider and policy number (you may purchase here)

Because it is mandatory that you complete a medical history form, it is suggested that you visit your physician before you leave for your study abroad. If necessary, the Student Health Center at UC can schedule a physical exam for you here for a charge of approximately \$40. They can also make arrangements for you to receive MMR immunizations at a low cost.

Medical treatment, even if only minor, is very expensive in the United States. UC requires that all international students have health insurance, with additional coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation expenses. If you have insurance which will cover you during your stay abroad, please bring this documentation with you.

If you do not carry health insurance, you can purchase it through the Office of International Education. It will cost you \$40 to \$55 per month, depending upon your age. Even with health insurance, you will be responsible for a \$50-100 deductible for each new illness or injury. The Office of International Education will provide assistance with questions or concerns regarding insurance coverage or claims.

*We close by wishing all of our new students a safe journey from their homes to Utica, and a smooth immigration inspection process.*

*We look forward to meeting you soon!*



