



**PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION**

**For International Students**



**Purchase College**

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

*Congratulations on your acceptance to Purchase College, State University of New York (SUNY). We are delighted you have decided to pursue your education here! The Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) has prepared this booklet to assist you in planning your journey to the United States and to help you with the transition to life at Purchase College. There is a special orientation for international students preceding New Student Orientation which we hope you will attend, as it will help you begin your academic career at Purchase. The dates are in the letter accompanying this booklet. We hope you will find the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) your resource on campus for information and assistance.*

## Contents

### Before You Arrive at Purchase College

- 2 Obtaining a Passport
- 2 Obtaining your Visa
- 4 Transfer Students
- 4 Special Information for J-1 Students
- 5 Financial Arrangements
- 7 Temporary Housing
- 7 On-Campus Housing
- 8 What to Bring
- 9 Immunizations
- 9 Things to Remember

### Arriving at Purchase College

- 10 Arrival in the U.S.A.
- 10 Transportation from the Airport
- 11 Housing
- 12 English Requirements

### Settling into Purchase College

- 12 Employment
- 13 Health Care
- 13 International Programs and Services

### If Your Plans Change

- 14 What to Do

## Before You Arrive at Purchase College

### Obtaining A Passport

You must obtain a passport from your government. This basic travel document serves as a formal permit to travel abroad, allows for re-entry into your home country, and serves as proof of identification. The passport must be kept valid **at least 6 months** into the future at any time. If it expires while you are in the United States, your consulate in New York City or embassy in Washington, D.C. must revalidate it. If a passport is lost, application for a new one must also be made immediately.

### Obtaining Your Visa

After acceptance to Purchase College, you are to submit an Advance Enrollment Deposit (AED) of \$150.00 (U.S.) to notify the College that you intend to enroll.\* After paying the AED, you will receive an I-20 Certificate of Eligibility, for F-1 matriculated students. A DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility is sent to J-1 Exchange Visitors; however the deposit is not required. Either form serves as your "application" for a U.S. student visa. Students with other types of visas may have different documents. Check with the U.S. Embassy website for your home country for instructions.

Please take a few minutes to review your I-20 or DS-2019. Make sure all information printed about you and your program of study is accurate. If there is an error on the I-20, contact the Admissions Office to clarify the information. If there is an error on your DS-2019, contact the International Programs and Services Office (see attached page for contact information). If it is correct, sign and date it as required. Finally, note that you have been given a "reporting date". This is the date by which you should enter the U.S. with your I-20 or DS-2019. If you will be late arriving, please contact the offices noted above for advice.

When possible, it is best to apply for the student visa in your home country. Allow time to gather documents and make an appointment for a visa interview. The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee of \$200.00 (U.S.) must be paid **at least three business days prior** to going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for your visa interview. You may pay the fee through the Internet at [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com) by credit card and completing the on-line form I-901, or you can mail in the Form I-901 with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. Bank and payable in U.S. currency. Credit cards cannot be accepted from a few countries, so please check the website. Once you have paid the fee, you can make an appointment at the U.S. consulate. In addition to your I-20 or DS-2019, you will need to take your passport, three passport photos, TOEFL score, Purchase College

acceptance letter, financial documentation, and any proof of ties to your home country to the U.S. consulate. You must complete and print Forms DS-156 and DS-158 online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for a non-immigrant visa (a new form - DS-160 - will be replacing these old forms soon). You will be charged a processing fee of about \$131.00 (U.S.)\* in addition to the \$200.00 (U.S.)\* SEVIS fee. (Taiwanese citizens apply through the American Institute in Taipei; **Canadian students are not required to obtain a visa at a consulate.**) The amount of time needed varies by location. Questions should be directed to the consulate or embassy where you are applying. Remember, if you have an I-20, you will apply for an F-1 visa. If you have a DS-2019 you will apply for a J-1 visa. Also, even though you may be entering the U.S. before your spouse and/or your children, you may apply for F-2 or J-2 visas for them at the same time.

#### The consular officer might ask you:

Why do you want to study in the U.S.?

Why do you want to study \_\_\_\_\_?

Why did you choose Purchase College?

How will your degree be used in your home country and what are your employment prospects?

We recommend that you prepare a written statement, which answers these questions. You must be truthful and willing to answer direct questions. If the consular officer thinks you are not telling the truth, you may not get a visa.

Before issuing the visa, the U.S. consulate must be convinced that you have a residence outside the U.S. that you have not abandoned, and that you have not decided to seek permanent residence in the United States. It is important to show the officer that you have strong ties to your country (family, community or social), such as documents showing membership in professional organizations and religious groups, a family business, ownership of property and bank accounts. A job offer or evidence that people with the kind of education you are seeking are needed in your country are also proof of "compelling ties" to your country. Do not emphasize any ties you have to the U.S. and do not talk about working in the U.S. unless you have been awarded a graduate assistantship.

Rehearse what you plan to say to the consular officer. Practice your English! If your I-20 indicates you have English proficiency, the interview will be in English. You should make copies of any documents submitted to the consulate in case a problem develops. It is important that you are courteous and clear in your presentation. You will only have 1-2 minutes for your interview. **Applications should be made as early as possible.**

### **If you are denied a student visa:**

You have probably not sufficiently proven to the consular officer that you are entitled to student status. In most cases, the denial will be based on failure to prove “permanent residence” or “compelling ties” to your home country. A visa denial is not permanent and may be reconsidered if you can show further convincing evidence. Please ask the consular officer why you were denied and get the **code** for the denial. We strongly suggest that you contact Purchase College if you are denied a visa so we can assist you in your second application to the U.S. consulate.

### **It is extremely important that you do not enter the U.S. with a Visitor’s Visa. It cannot be changed to a Student Visa once you are here.**

Entry to the United States is allowed without a visa (visa waiver) for many countries. However, students **should not enter the U.S. with a Visa Waiver**. Though citizens of these countries are permitted to visit the U.S. without applying for visas at consulates or embassies, entry with a Visa Waiver restricts the visitor to staying as a tourist for 90 days **ONLY**. If you enter with a Visa Waiver, you will not be able to extend your status or attend school legally. **You cannot change to student status when you have entered the U.S. with a Visa Waiver.**

### **Keep in mind the following:**

*Use only the I-20 or DS-2019 issued by the school you plan to attend!  
The I-20 or DS-2019 is very important – Do not lose it!  
Do not enter the U.S. on a Visitor’s Visa or Visa Waiver.*

### **Transfer Students**

International students currently in the U.S. attending another school who plan to transfer to Purchase College must ensure that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is notified of the transfer. Immediately after obtaining the I-20 or DS-2019 from Purchase, see the Director of International Programs and Services. **The deadline for completing this procedure is no later than 15 days after the start of classes.**

### **Important Note:**

*The previous instructions apply only to students who do not depart from the U.S. after leaving one school and before beginning at Purchase. However, if you leave the U.S. before you begin studying at Purchase, use the new I-20 issued by Purchase College to re-enter the U.S.*

### **Special Information for J-1 Students**

The J-1 program is formally known as the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP).

Its purpose is to promote international educational and cultural exchange and develop mutual understanding between people of the U.S. and other countries. The U.S. State Department runs the EVP. Because the focus of the J-1 program is exchange, most J-1 students are funded fully (or partially) by a government or international agency. To insure the maximum benefits of the program, many J-1 students are subject to a two-year home residency requirement [212(e)]. This requirement mandates that a student or scholar will spend at least two years in the home country after their time in the U.S., so that their home country can benefit from the experience and education gained here. Students and scholars may be subject to this requirement based on their source of funding or because their field of study or scholarship is on a “Skills List” for their home country. This List is created by the U.S. government. The issue of 212 (e) is highly complex. For more information, contact the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS).

J-1 students and J-2 dependents are required to prove that they have the minimum health insurance described in U.S. federal regulations. SUNY International Health Insurance meets U.S. government required standards. Failure to carry health insurance will result in termination from the J-1 program.

The company that handles the SUNY foreign student health insurance has health coverage benefit plans for dependents, which you may purchase if you wish, or you may choose to purchase coverage for your family members from another company. However, minimum requirements for students, which comply with U.S. government regulations are:

1. Medical benefits of at least \$50,000.00 (U.S.) for each accident or illness,
2. At least \$7,500.00 (U.S.) in benefits for repatriation of remains (shipping someone who has died back to their home country).
3. At least \$10,000.00 (U.S.) to cover travel expenses if you are sent home because of a serious illness or injury.\*\*

*Contact International Programs and Services for additional details.*

### **Financial Arrangements**

If home currency regulations permit, students are advised to bring \$400.00-500.00 in addition to their regular monthly allowance for expenses.

The U.S. government does not restrict the amount of U.S. or foreign currency that may be brought in or taken out the country (amounts of \$10,000.00 or more must be declared on a special form through customs). However, many governments have restrictions regarding the exchange of

their currency into U.S. dollars. Many countries also restrict the amount of money that can be taken out of the country and some require a letter from the U.S. college certifying the student's enrollment dates before releasing funds. If this is your case, present your I-20 or DS-2019 and request a letter from Purchase College to certify expenses.

It is helpful to exchange currency for U.S. dollars prior to departure from one's home country. However, travelers should not carry large amounts of currency or other valuables—there is too much danger of loss or theft. Students who anticipate bringing large sums of money to the United States should seek advice from a bank or financial institution concerning the safest and most convenient means of carrying or transferring such funds. Many students like to use bank ATM cards, but some also like to bring bank drafts drawn on a U.S. bank in dollars or some other form of non-negotiable currency to open a bank account with.

The tuition and fees payment should be in a separate check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank or international money order made payable in U.S. dollars to Purchase College or your own name. Do not bring large sums of cash. Your funds must arrive at the College in time to pay for registration. Students transferring money directly from overseas should allow 15-21 business days for processing and clearance and request receipts at the time of the transaction. Wire transfer is the least expensive. **Do not send cash through the mail.** Automated Teller Machines (ATM) on campus accept most major credit/debit cards for cash withdrawal. Payment can also be made using Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover. Payment using the Time Payment Plan can be arranged as noted on your bill called the "Statement of Student Fees".

There are certain times during the year when large amounts of funds are required. Tuition and fees must be paid at the beginning of each semester. Books and supplies usually cost \$400.00–\$600.00 a semester for full-time undergraduates and \$400.00–\$700.00 for full-time graduate students and must be purchased at the beginning of the term. Students living on-campus have to pay room and board charges for the entire semester at the time of registration. A student who plans to live off-campus should have money available to cover a security deposit on an apartment in addition to the rental fee. Holiday periods may also mean additional expenses for travel, and room and board because **residence hall facilities close**. Please request "PREP" housing if you need housing during vacations.

During the three months of summer, an international student may attend summer school, participate in a special seminar or travel. In any case, financial planning should include money for room and board and other

expenses during this period. Extra expenses for graduate students are common. Candidates for degrees may encounter extra fees for graduate research after required course work has been completed, fees for membership in professional organizations, or money to attend conferences.

Information about opening a U.S. bank account is available from International Programs and Services. Be aware that the bank will hold funds deposited to open a bank account for an extended period before they are available.

### Helpful Websites

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| U.S. Consulate:     | ( <a href="http://travel.state.gov">http://travel.state.gov</a> )  |
| Home Land Security: | ( <a href="http://uscis.gov">http://uscis.gov</a> )  |
| SEVIS:              | ( <a href="http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis">www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis</a> )                                 |
| U.S. Customs:       | ( <a href="http://www.cbp.gov">www.cbp.gov</a> )   |
| OIPS:               | ( <a href="http://www.purchase.edu/Departments/International">www.purchase.edu/Departments/International</a> ) |

### Temporary Housing

If you require temporary housing when you arrive, it is best to reserve a room well in advance. Write, fax or e-mail the exact date needed directly to a hotel on the attached list or to reserve a Guest Room at Purchase College, contact:

The Purchase College Association  
More Card Office  
Telephone: 914-251-6330  
Fax: 914-251-6956  
Email: [James.Quinlan@purchase.edu](mailto:James.Quinlan@purchase.edu)

### On-Campus Housing

Applications for on-campus housing **must be made in advance**. The Residence License Agreement is completed and a deposit paid online. Unless you receive confirmation from the College, a room is not guaranteed. Once you receive a room confirmation notice, inform the Office of Residence Life of your arrival date and time (see attached page for contact information). Plan to arrive in time for International Student Orientation. See the attached schedule for dates.

**The residence hall rooms are furnished but you will need to bring or buy your own linens, pillows, blankets and other items. Only extra long twin sheets will fit the dormitory beds.**

## What to Bring

New York's climate varies from hot in the summer to cold in winter. Three types of clothing are essential. Clothing made from cotton is most comfortable, particularly in summer. In the fall and spring, add heavier clothes. New York winters are often windy, as well as cold, and you will need raincoats and umbrellas all year long. Your native dress is welcome. Students who purchase their wardrobe after arrival have the advantage of buying clothes which are in style in the United States, but will spend more money than if they had brought them from home. However, heavy winter clothing is less expensive in the U.S., especially for students coming from tropical or semi-tropical climates. Student dress is generally informal; it is common to see students attend class in jeans. Shoe and clothing sizes may differ from your home country.

### Temperature

| Season | Months             | Fahrenheit    | Centigrade       |
|--------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Summer | June-September     | 55-90 deg.    | 4.4-32.0 deg.    |
| Fall   | September-December | 20 to 80 deg. | 6.5 to 25.5 deg. |
| Winter | December-March     | 0 to 45 deg.  | -18 to 7 deg.    |
| Spring | March-June         | 40 to 72 deg. | 4.5 to 22.0 deg. |

All students are expected to purchase textbooks required for courses in which they are enrolled. Excellent library resources at the College provide students ample opportunity to obtain supplemental reading materials or basic texts needed for review and research.

To remind you of home you may wish to bring items such as photographs, DVD's, CD's and artwork. Many students find comfort in having familiar objects around them. Also, you will make new friends who will want to learn more about you and your home country.

You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be available or may be more expensive in the U.S., such as eyeglasses, contact lenses, cameras, watches or electronics.

You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the U.S. consulate where you apply for your visa. All baggage are subject to inspection. In general, you will not be permitted to pass through customs with food, plants, items for resale, or alcoholic beverages if you are under the age of 21. It is best to purchase electrical appliances after you arrive. Appliances purchased outside the U.S. may not be compatible with the power supply here (120/240A/60 cycles), though computers usually have internal converters.

Baggage may be shipped prior to your arrival. If you ship your things separately, you will require the services of an agent to arrange for customs clearance and forwarding of unaccompanied parcels. Such services are expensive and can result in considerable delays.

## Immunizations

All students in New York State are required to have proof of immunizations for measles (rubeola), mumps, and German measles (rubella). Meningitis vaccination is also recommended but not required, though an "Information Response Form" from the Health Center will need to be completed. If you have immunization documents, bring them with you with English translations. If necessary, you can obtain these vaccinations at the Purchase College Health Services.

[www.purchase.edu/Departments/healthservices/](http://www.purchase.edu/Departments/healthservices/)

## A Check List of Things to Remember Before Leaving your Country:

- I have a passport valid for at least 6 months into the future.
- I have the I-20 from Purchase College (if you are an F-1 student), or DS-2019 (if you are a J-1 student). It is with my passport.
- I have copied all of the above documents for safekeeping.
- I have arranged for housing accommodations.
- I have planned for (extra long twin) sheets and blankets.
- I have read the directions to Purchase College.
- I have had a medical, dental, or vision check-up recently.
- I have completed the Health Report and Physicians Certificate/Meningitis/Immunization Form.
- I have copies of my immunization documents (or have previously sent them). (Do not worry if you don't have these. If necessary, you can be given a physical exam and receive required vaccinations once you have arrived on campus for approximately \$125.00).
- I have prescription medication with me, if needed. My prescription(s) have been translated into English.

# Arriving at Purchase College

## Arrival at an Airport or Other Port of Entry of the United States

If you have been admitted for the Fall Semester, you should plan to arrive in August and for the Spring Semester in January. You will be notified of residence hall housing, orientation and registration dates via separate mailings. Do not try to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the report date on your I-20 or DS-2019. When you arrive at the airport in the U.S., your luggage will be inspected, as will your passport and I-20 or DS-2019. The following documents should be carried with you and NEVER left with your baggage: your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, copies of your financial support documentation, your admission letter, TOEFL score record, Purchase College phone numbers and this booklet which contains travel instructions. As part of the regular inspection, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officer will stamp your I-20 or DS-2019 with information about your arrival. **Review the documents returned to you to make sure that the officer stamped your date of entry on your I-20 or DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility.**

Additionally, a small white card, the I-94 Arrival/Departure record, will be stapled in your passport. You may be charged \$6.00\* (U.S.) for the I-94. This card is very important because it notes the date you entered the U.S., your status, (F-1 or J-1) and how long you are allowed to stay in the U.S. The I-94 cards of F-1 and J-1 students will be marked "D/S" meaning Duration of Status. D/S permits you to stay in the U.S. while studying until the expiration date of your I-20 or DS-2019.

## Transportation from the Airport

When you are at the airport, do not leave your baggage unattended at any time. Luggage carts cost from \$1.50 to \$4.00 (U.S.)\*\*

After you "clear" Immigration, your luggage will be inspected by Customs and then you can proceed to ground (local) transportation. It is best to have at least \$100.00 in U.S. currency to pay for transportation and initial expenses. There are ATM machines at the airports, but it is best to have U.S. currency on hand when you arrive.

### To Purchase College:

Take the Westchester Express (1-866-914-6800) directly to Purchase College or the Connecticut Limousine Service (1-800-472-5466) to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains (1-914-682-0050). Westchester Express costs about \$50.00 from JFK or La Guardia Airport to anywhere in

Westchester County. Connecticut Limousine Service also costs approximately \$54.00\* from JFK Airport to Crowne Plaza Hotel or Rye Towne Hilton and approximately \$78.00\* from Newark to Rye Towne Hilton. No reservations are required, except to Rye Towne Hilton, and you can request these services at the airport's ground transportation area. They will tell you the schedule and limousine boarding location. Once you have arrived at the Crowne Plaza Hotel or Rye Towne Hilton, the Bell Captain can call you a taxi to take you to Purchase College. From the Crowne Plaza to Purchase College costs approximately \$12.00\*. A tip of 15% is expected for the driver. If you are flying into the Westchester Airport, take a taxi to the campus. The charge should be under \$20.00.\*

### Useful Transportation Information:

The Port Authority of N.Y. & N.J. (Operates JFK, Newark, La Guardia Airports)  
Website: [www.panynj.gov](http://www.panynj.gov)

Westchester Express  
Telephone: 1-866-914-6800  
Website: [www.westchesterexpress.net](http://www.westchesterexpress.net)

Connecticut Limousine Service  
Telephone: 1-800-472-5466  
Website: [www.ctlimo.com](http://www.ctlimo.com)

Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Website: <http://www.mta.info>

All Purchase College offices are open Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm. The University Police Department is open 24 hours a day. If you need to arrive on campus other than the arrival date in the pre-arrival letter, contact the Office of International Programs and Services (phone numbers and email addresses can be found on the last page). If you plan to arrive on campus after business hours and will live on campus, contact University Police. Tell them you are an international student and they will contact a Residence Life staff member to help you (see the phone numbers on the contact directory).

## Housing

Most students choose to live on campus, at least their first year. Off-campus housing can be expensive. Students who choose to live off-campus should plan to arrive early to allow time to find housing before the beginning of the school year. This process may take several days of active

searching. Often, however, off-campus housing is much more expensive and far from the campus, which means students must rely on public transportation. When arranging for off-campus housing a student may be required to give the landlord a deposit of one to two months rent, which is returned when the student leaves, providing no damage has been done to the apartment. Sometimes a lease must be signed which requires the student to pay for the rent for a year or more. If your family is accompanying you and you want to live off-campus, it might be advisable to arrive in the U.S. alone and to send for them when you have found suitable housing. Few private apartments are furnished, so you will need to plan for furniture.

*Once you have a local address, inform International Programs and Services (OIPS) and complete a change of address form at the Registrar's Office. OIPS must always have a current address for you.*

### English Requirements

Students for whom English is their second language are required to take an English proficiency test during orientation. If your level of English proficiency is below the College requirements, you may be required to attend an ESL (English as a Second Language) program. This may lengthen the time you will need to complete your degree and will increase your costs. ESL requirements will be determined during course advisement.

## Settling into Purchase College

### Employment

All students should consult with the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) before taking any job, on or off campus. F-1 students should be aware that they cannot earn their entire support through part-time employment while attending school, since they may not work more than 20 hours per week when school is in session (full-time work is permissible during holidays and recesses). Some international students may have off-campus employment that is required by an internship, *but may not do so during their first nine months in student status*. All students must obtain permission from OIPS before accepting employment.

Spouses and dependents of F-1 students may not work under any circumstances at any time. Spouses of J-1 visa holders may work with the permission of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to support the J-1 student. Contact International Programs and Services (OIPS) for more details.

### Health Care

Health Care in the United States is **very expensive**. The SUNY system requires that ALL international students be automatically enrolled in a Health Insurance Program. The cost will be added to your bill (Statement of Student Fees). The health insurance coverage begins August 15 for students entering for the Fall Semester and January 15 for those entering for the Spring Semester. If you are planning to enter the U.S. before those dates, you should buy short-term health insurance to cover you until your SUNY coverage begins. **The SUNY insurance does not cover you for the summer months.** You must pay the Student Accounts Office separately if you want SUNY summer coverage.

Like most U.S. insurance plans, treatment of dental or eye problems is not covered. If you wear contact lenses or glasses, it is a good idea to bring extras with you and bring a copy of your prescription. We recommend that you take care of dental work and eye care before you come to the U.S.

There is a health clinic on campus, which is open to all students during the school year. It is funded by a mandatory Health Services fee, so there are few additional charges. Health Services is staffed by doctors and nurses and provides basic primary care, with a list of referrals to specialists, if needed. Many prescriptions for medications can be filled in the clinic.

### International Programs and Services

International Programs and Services (IPS) provides a variety of services for international students at Purchase College. We offer a required orientation for the beginning of every semester. We can help you adjust to Purchase College, the New York Metropolitan area and the U.S. In general we can help with immigration, social security questions, health insurance and all kinds of personal concerns. We advise you regarding your legal rights and responsibilities. The office plans social and educational events throughout the year and we can help you investigate additional study abroad opportunities. It is important to register with International Programs and Services and submit a copy of your passport and I-20 or DS-2019 within 10 days of arrival.

*We advise you to register with your consulate in New York City as soon as you arrive.*

## If your **Plans Change**

### What to Do

We certainly hope you enroll at Purchase College, but if for some reason you do not, please return the I-20 to the Admissions Office. Return the DS-2019 to The Office of International Programs and Services. If you wish to defer your admission, please write to the Admissions Office.

\* Fees subject to change

\*\*Rates subject to change

Purchase College does not discriminate against any person in employment, educational programs and activities, or admission on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, handicap/disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Purchase College  
State University of New York  
Student Services Building, Second Floor  
735 Anderson Hill Road  
Purchase, New York, USA 10577  
E-mail: [intlstu-services@purchase.edu](mailto:intlstu-services@purchase.edu)  
Telephone: 914-251-6032  
Fax: 914-251-5933

Purchase College  
State University of New York  
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735 Anderson Hill Road  
Purchase, New York, USA 10577  
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Telephone: 914-251-6032  
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