PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

WHEN TO ARRIVE

Immigration regulations allow you to enter the United States no more than 30 days prior to the start date on your F-1 immigration document, the I-20. However, you should plan to arrive at York College of Pennsylvania on Saturday August 22, 2014 for the Fall 2014 semester, when the residence facilities will open for International students.

When you arrive on campus, you should go directly to your housing accommodations to leave your luggage and check in with your Resident Assistant. If you arrive during the day between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm, your next stops should be the Intercultural Student Life and Global Programming (ISLGP) office, and your DSO office. If you arrive late at night, visit the offices first thing in the morning.

U.S. immigration regulations require that you report to your DSO when you arrive to campus. Bring your passport and immigration documents. When you check in with the ISLGP office and the DSO office, we will provide you with information and assistance to welcome you and help you settle into your new surroundings.

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

When shopping around for the best price for a round-trip flight to the U.S., you should keep in mind that there are several airports convenient to York, PA. Most international flights arrive in BWI, Baltimore/ Washington International Airport (1h 15m from York, PA). You may also wish to check prices for flights that arrive in MDT (HIA), Harrisburg International Airport (45m from York, PA).

York College of Pennsylvania can arrange to pick-up new international students coming from abroad at any of the two designated airports. Make sure you communicate your arrival information to the college if you need a ride.

Don’t forget to confirm your flight 72 hours in advance of your departure, and arrive at the airport early! Check the travel tips information sheet on our website.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Medical and Dental Care: Get all your doctor's and dentist's check-ups before you leave. Medical and dental care in the U.S. is excellent, but it makes sense to take care of anything you need before you leave. Dental care in the U.S. is VERY expensive. While it is possible to purchase student coverage, it does not cover all dental procedures 100%. Don't forget to bring any prescription medications (with copies of your prescriptions translated into English) or even non-prescription medications that you take. Sometimes it is difficult to translate a prescription or a non-prescription medication.
If you can bring the scientific name of the drug with you, it may be easier to find the equivalent here. Prescription medication will often cost more in the U.S. for the same drug from the same company, so you may want to bring enough of a supply with you (as long as it will remain fresh for the time you are here). Students will be automatically covered by the Accident and Sickness Health Policy and charged accordingly.

Money Matters: Most people set up their bank accounts in their first days in York, and because it normally takes a few days before funds are available, it is a good idea to bring a credit card for purchases or an ATM bank card to draw cash from your local account in U.S. currency. You should anticipate needing funds (minimum $1,500) for transportation, getting short-term housing until moving in on campus, meals and purchasing things you need to set up your room, and books. Remember that it can take several days to have money wired from your country directly into your U.S. account. Some students have had better luck with Western Union wire service, as they will wire funds from an individual directly to another individual. You may want to see if you have a Western Union office in your city and get details before you leave. It is never a good idea to travel with large amounts of cash, but you should probably get some U.S. currency before you leave your country. If possible, try to get some one-dollar bills so that you will be able to rent a cart for your luggage from the automatic dispenser in the airport (You can also use a credit card to rent a cart). One-dollar bills are also handy to use as tips for people who assist you with your bags, or for taxi fare and tips.

PACKING YOUR BAGS

Moving Overseas Rule #1: Pack as lightly as possible. You will have to carry everything yourself once you arrive, and you will have a better sense of what you actually need once you settle in. You can always have your family mail you a box or pick up what you need during the Christmas break. Remember too, anything you forget to bring can be purchased. You will have an opportunity during orientation to take a van trip to shopping areas. There are also public busses that you can take to go shopping, if necessary.

Suitcases: Cut off all old luggage tags from your suitcases no matter how sentimental they may be. Put your York College address on a tag outside of your bag, and on a card that will go somewhere inside your bag as well. You may wish to tie a colored ribbon to the handle of your suitcases to make them more easily identifiable at the baggage claim. Once you have finished packing, zip up and lock all of the compartments on your bags. Make sure you check with the airlines before you lock your bags since security regulations may accept only unlocked luggage. Locks may be broken if additional inspection is required.

Clothes: The weather in York can range from very hot and humid in the summer to quite cold in the winter. You need to plan for all four seasons – fall, winter, spring & summer. For the summer you will need light casual clothes. To plan for the changing weather from fall through spring, you will probably want to have at least one heavy coat or jacket and a light jacket or sweater to start with. You can buy anything else you need.
To stay warm, people will often layer clothes -- for example, a long-sleeved tee shirt under a sweater, with a jacket on top. That way as it warms up during the day, you can shed the layers you don’t need. Moreover, if you bring clothes you can layer, then you don’t need to bring as much. Overall, clothing in York is not too expensive and if you need something once you get here, there are many places to buy discount clothes and shoes.

**Shoes:** You will need an assortment of footwear. Sandals for summer, heavier boots/shoes for winter, something for a formal occasion, etc. You'll probably want to bring comfortable sneakers or flat shoes for walking around campus and York. When the snow arrives, typically in March, you will be glad you have a good pair of boots.

**Fashion:** Dress at US universities is generally quite casual. Most people wear jeans and tee shirts like a uniform. If you have it, you might want to bring some traditional dress from your country for festivals and/or special occasions, and it is recommended that you bring at least one formal evening outfit and a semi-formal outfit.

**Mementos from Home:** Bring photographs of friends and family. Some familiar objects to make you feel more at home might seem like a silly thing when you are packing, but can make you feel a lot better when you are feeling blue and missing home. Consider bringing some small significant items to place next to your bed or hang on the wall.

**Household Items:** Plan on buying most of your household items (small electrical appliances, telephone, lamps, cooking and eating supplies) once you have arrived. **You may want to bring a set of sheets and towels from home to get started as you will need these items your first night.** You can always purchase what you need at second-hand or discount shops when you get settled.

**Valuables:** Make sure you don't pack anything valuable into the suitcase that you are going to check through in case it gets lost. Carry all your important documents, medications, toiletries etc. in your carry-on luggage, and in case your checked luggage gets lost, you will want to also have a change of clothing with you. Sometimes it can take a couple of days to locate misplaced luggage.

**Don’t Forget:** Here are some items that should be carried on your person or go into your carry-on luggage (**make sure you review the travel tips information sheet also**):

- Your I-20 document, valid passport (for at least six months!), and any other important documents (marriage license or school transcripts for example).

- Your original supporting financial documents, such as personal bank statements, a scholarship award and/or the offer of admission letter.

- The street address of where you will be going in York when you arrive.
• Medications you use regularly; extra prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. Make sure that you use the original container with the doctor’s information on any prescriptions you bring. If you have a health problem that requires medication, bring enough to last as long as possible.

• English Translations of your important documents, medical records, school transcripts, marriage license, medication prescriptions, etc.

• Your valid driver’s license – accompanied by an International Driver’s Permit (IDP). You will not be able to drive in Pennsylvania without the IDP. You can inquire at a local travel agent on how to obtain an international driver’s permit. An International Driver’s Permit is valid up to a year after your entry in the United States.

• A credit card that you can use in the U.S. You can use it to pay for things while you are getting settled and you won’t have to carry so much cash with you. You never want to carry large amounts of cash as a safety precaution.

• An ATM card (bank card) that you can use at the automatic transfer machines (ATM’s) to withdraw cash in USD from your local bank account. You will normally pay a small fee to the U.S. bank, and possibly to your bank too, but you will get the most up-to-date exchange rate.

• Some U.S. currency – dollars. Between $150 to $200 so that you will have some cash to pay for immediate expenses like meals, books, transportation, or a telephone card. You might want to bring more in traveler’s checks, if you know you will be waiting for a wire transfer to come from your bank at home to your bank in the U.S.

• U.S. traveler’s checks. If you plan on carrying more than $200 in cash, you should carry U.S. traveler’s checks or credit cards for additional expenses (You may want to plan on bringing enough in traveler’s checks to cover your first month’s expenses). Traveler’s checks are recommended because of their security – they can be replaced if lost or stolen.

**Other suggestions:** You may also want to consider bringing the following.

• Recipes of native foods - - There will be international ‘potluck’ dinners that you may wish to attend, and you will be asked to make a dish from home. Also, you will sometimes prefer your own cooking over American food!

• Small souvenirs from your country to give as gifts.

• A camera – especially a digital camera so you can e-mail photos to your friends and family at home.

• CD’s of favorite music. Musical instruments.

• A travel alarm.