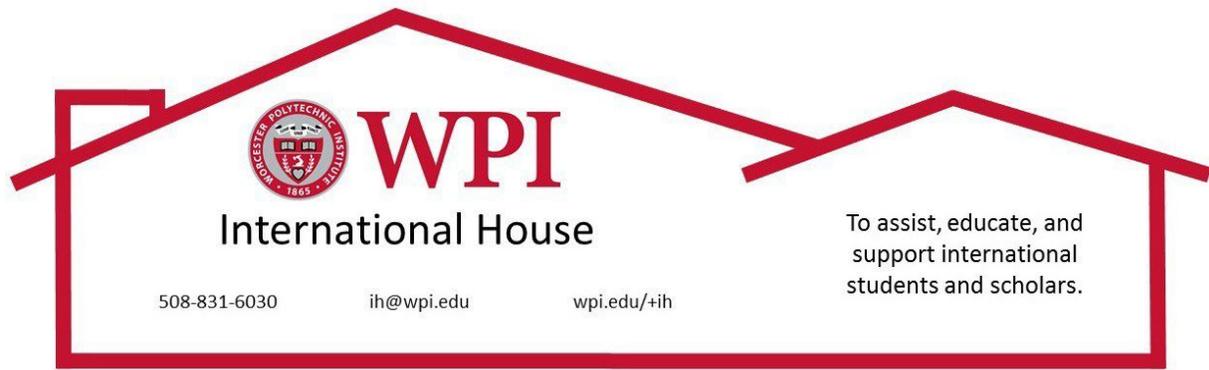


**2022-2023**

# **International Student Handbook**

**Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Office of International Student Life**



August 2022

Dear International Student:

Welcome to WPI! The primary objective of WPI, in hosting international students, is to enable them to achieve their academic goals. We also welcome your presence as a means of strengthening our knowledge and understanding of your country and culture.

The Office of International Student Life, with the help of the International Student Council, has prepared this handbook, which contains valuable information about the Worcester Polytechnic Institute and about living in Worcester. We hope this handbook will be a helpful resource throughout your stay at WPI. It is written as a supplement to other WPI publications.

As the staff of the International House, we welcome you to WPI. The international life of WPI, as well as the WPI community, is greatly enhanced by your presence.

Sincerely,

Colleen Callahan-Panday, Director  
Office of International Student Life

David Murcko, International Student Advisor  
Office of International Student Life



*International Student Council*

Campus Center • WPI

100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280

<https://wpi.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/international-student-council>

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August 2022

Dear International Student,

The International Student Council warmly welcomes you to the diverse international community of WPI. You must be excited and anxious to start a new chapter of your life away from home. College life is a very exciting, but also challenging, endeavor, and we aim to make it enjoyable and exhilarating in any way we can.

The International Student Council (ISC) is a student-run organization that represents more than seventy-five countries and is an extension of WPI's commitment to diversity. The ISC brings students together from around the world and strives in the formation of a tight-knit community you can call home. Through a series of multicultural events, the ISC promotes diversity on campus, raises awareness of global issues, and reinforces WPI's resolve to offer a global education to all of its students. Additionally, it serves as a bridge between the international and American communities in WPI.

The ISC is not just your average student organization; it is also a way of life. It is a close-knit community of serious yet entertaining, ambitious, and humble individuals who work together to enhance the rest of campus. We provide a glimpse of what the world is like through several majors, award-winning events like the International Dinner and the International Food Festival. We aspire to provide you with a chance to experience the United States by arranging trips for skiing, to shopping malls, apple picking, and amusement parks. In addition, our famed Midnight Breakfasts will give international students a chance to promote cuisines from different parts of the world. You are not only going to experience American culture, but also cultures from every corner of the world.

We understand that leaving your home, family, friends, and country is a very difficult decision to make, but we will do our best to make you feel at home. You will find people who have the same taste in music, watch the same series you do, speak the same language, like the same food, among other things! The first few days at WPI might be overwhelming and chaotic with a vast influx of information and numerous activities. We aim to offer you the best American

college experience and we promise to do our best in order to achieve this. Once you get here, you will embark on a personal journey of self-discovery and independence. All of the people you meet on your first few days will become your family away from home. After you settle down in your new home at WPI, we invite you all to visit the International House and join the International Student Council! Focus on your studies, but always remember to have fun!

**President**

Aashish Singh Alag

**Vice President**

Roberto Sabater

**Secretary**

Naisargi Mehta

**Treasurer**

Juancarlo Mantica

**Public Relations**

Ali Attaa

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## INTRODUCTION

In addition to information about WPI's services and programs for international students, this handbook is written to give you an introduction to Worcester and Worcester County. The city of Worcester is home to 5 colleges and universities, many unique museums, musical performing groups, and local theater groups, in addition to many interesting sights.

Worcester has historically attracted immigrants from all over the world including Armenians, Finns, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Jews, Lebanese, Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. The descendants of the “old” immigrants and the newly arrived immigrants from the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East make Worcester a culturally diverse city.

The section of the handbook covering government regulations is up to date as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Immigration regulations will change, often with short notice. It is recommended that you check with the Office of International Student Life for any changes in US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations.

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND DIFFERENCES

When moving to a new country, the adjustment process may be very different than what you may have experienced while taking an extended vacation to a new place. Below you will find information about culture shock, American social customs, and information about what Americans are generally like in the United States.

### CULTURE SHOCK

"Culture Shock," or "cultural adjustment," is the term for the sense of disorientation and confusion, which almost all people experience to some degree when they arrive in another country and discover a new culture. When you leave what you are familiar with (food, language, family/friends, climate, etc.) and are expected to function in your new culture, you might experience culture shock.

**Symptoms of Culture Shock:** Cultural adjustment can have both emotional and physical symptoms, including sadness, loneliness, insomnia, depression, irritability, lack of confidence, feelings of insecurity, longing for family, feelings of loss of identity, or even physical aches and pains.

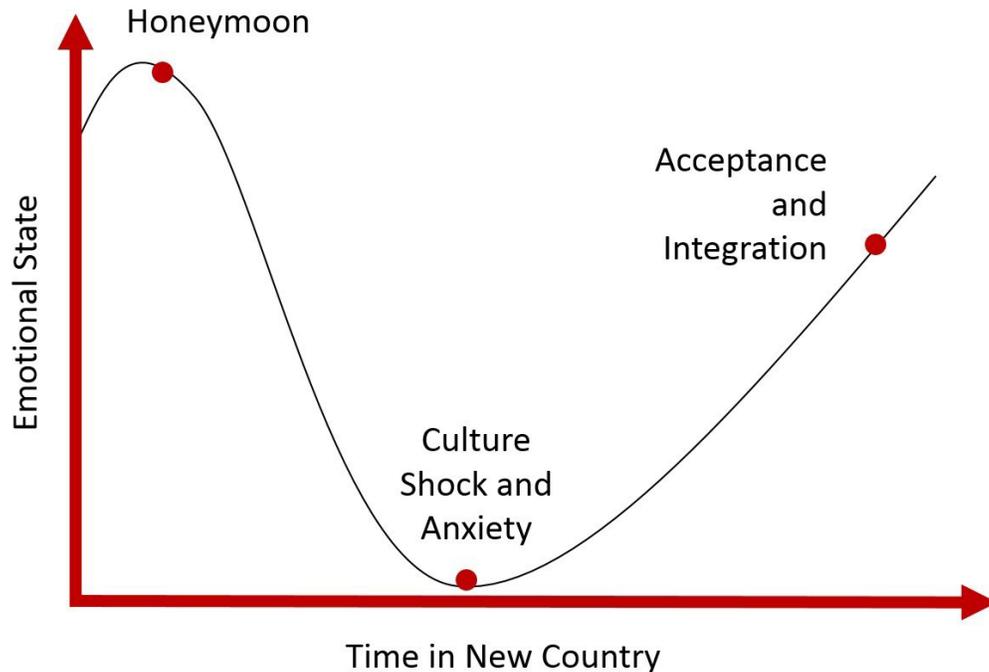
**Dealing with Culture Shock:** It is important to acknowledge that cultural adjustment is a real issue and takes time to overcome. It is okay to feel sad or to miss home, and you should allow yourself time to feel this way. However, it is also important to seek ways to connect to American people and culture. This will help you adjust and make you feel more comfortable in your new environment. Getting to know your neighbors, joining campus organizations, and participating in activities will help with this transition. Regular exercise, a proper diet, and adequate amounts of rest and sleep will also help with this process.

There are some simple steps you can take to minimize the impact of culture shock:

- **Listen and observe.** Watch the reaction of others in different situations. The more you know about how Americans behave, the less uncomfortable you will feel.
- **Ask questions.** Don't assume that you will always know what is going on or that you will always understand every communication.
- **Try not to evaluate or judge.** A lot of things will be different. It is important not to view everything as good or bad in comparison to your own culture.

## STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK

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**Phase 1: *Honeymoon*:** When a student first arrives in a new culture, every experience tends to be “new,” “exciting,” and “interesting”.

**Phase 2: *Culture Shock and Anxiety*:** “What am I doing here”? Students tend to transition to this phase after 2-3 weeks in the US. This generally happens after you have settled into the routine of school and things stop being “new” and “exciting”. During this period frustration can take hold, and issues like language, food, and figuring out smaller cultural issues become draining and aggravating. This is also the time period when most students start to feel homesick.

**Phase 3: *Acceptance and Integration*:** At this point students start to overcome some frustrations and start to feel more comfortable in their new culture. This initial adjustment generally takes one semester, and some students go through several periods of Phase 2 and Phase 3 while adapting to American culture.

## SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN THE UNITED STATES

It is difficult to generalize about social customs in the US because the American society is very complex and diverse. Hopefully, the following information will be helpful as you adjust to your new "culture".

### GREETINGS

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Upon meeting each other for the first time, men (always) and women (usually) shake hands, firmly. "How are you doing?" "Good morning," "good afternoon," and "good evening" are formal greetings. Usually people just say "hello" and "hi". (Remember that social customs differ in different sections of the country and between younger and older people.) "How are you?" is a common greeting. It is *not* generally meant as a question; instead, it is an alternative to "hello." A common response to "how are you?" is "I'm good, how are you?" instead of a detailed explanation of how you are actually feeling.

First names are more readily used in the US than in other countries. It is acceptable automatically to use the first name of someone of approximately your same age or younger.

Men and women in the northeast of the US might be surprised if you use Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. with a first, or "given" name, as is the custom in some countries. These titles are generally used with the last name, or "family name" (Although in the southern regions of the US, using these titles with first names might be more common). If you have any doubts about what to call someone, simply ask, "What should I call you?" If people seem unsure how to address you, tell them the name you prefer, and pronounce it slowly, so they will understand.

The use of "nicknames" is fairly common in the United States. A nickname is not the person's real name, but a name given by family or friends. Sometimes a nickname is a shortened version of the person's first or his family name – like "Bob" for Robert, or "Andy" for John Anderson. Being called by a nickname is not uncomplimentary; in fact, it often is a sign of acceptance and affection.



Some international students choose to take on an English name once they are in the US. This might be a name they used back home in English class, or a nickname from home/school. Some students feel it is easier to use an English nickname with Americans, especially if their original name is long or complex for an American tongue. Having an English name is a personal preference and is not required. If you prefer to use your original name, even if Americans have difficulty with it, don't feel shy to politely correct them if it is mispronounced, and to encourage its use.

## SOCIAL INVITATIONS

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Social invitations are extended by telephone or by written note or a printed invitation, and in this age of social media, sometimes by text, email, or an online card. Some casual, verbal comments that sound like invitations, like "come by and see me" or "maybe we can get together sometime", are generally not intended to be taken literally. An invitation is not firm until a date and time and other arrangements are set.

## PROMPTNESS

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It is polite to arrive at or shortly after (but not before) the appointed hour. If you will be more than 10 minutes late, contact the host or hostess and say when you will arrive.

## RSVPS

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If an RSVP is requested, you should reply with a yes or no. RSVPs are often used by the host to predict attendance and to order food and other resources accordingly. To RSVP that you will be attending and then not show up, or vice versa, is considered very rude in the US.

## TIPPING AND GRATUITY

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Service charges, or tips, are not added to the bill in restaurants, but are expected (and often needed) by the waiter/waitress as the main source of income. Tips in restaurants are 15% to 20% of the total bill depending on the quality of service. You don't tip in a cafeteria or places where you help yourself. Sometimes if you are eating in a large group, the gratuity might be automatically included in the bill, but this would be noted at the bottom. If you do not see any mention about "gratuity added" on your bill you can assume that you will have to leave a tip.

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE LIKE

The notion of the US as a "melting pot" where all cultures blend together is somewhat misleading. Although some immigrants to the US have given up their original languages and customs, there are still many differences among Americans. You should also be aware of the diversity among international students attending WPI. Being an international student means that you share a common bond with students from countries other than the US. Beyond this similarity, differences between students from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe can be great.

The United States is populated by a large and highly diverse collection of individuals, and it is difficult to generalize about "what Americans are like." As you read the typical traits listed below, remember that US society is composed of people from many social, cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds, different economic situations, and vastly different philosophies of life.

## AMERICANS ARE INDIVIDUALS

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Probably above everything else, Americans consider themselves individuals. There are strong family ties and strong loyalties to groups, but individuality and individual rights are most important. If this seems like a selfish attitude, it also leads Americans to an honest respect for other individuals and an insistence on human equality.

## AMERICANS ARE DIRECT

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Honesty and frankness are more important to Americans than "saving face", which means Americans will be direct when it comes to sharing their thoughts. They may seem blunt at times, and they may bring up topics and issues which you may find embarrassing, too controversial, or even offensive. Americans are quick to get to the point and do not spend much time on formal social amenities. This directness encourages Americans to talk over disagreements and to try to patch up misunderstandings themselves, rather than ask a third party to mediate disputes.

## AMERICANS ARE VERY INFORMAL

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In general, Americans are very informal when it comes to interactions with others. International students may consider this cross-generation, cross-class informality disrespectful, even rude, but it is a part of US culture.

## AMERICANS ARE GENERALLY COMPETITIVE

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Most Americans have a competitive nature. They place a high value on achievement, which leads them to be focused on their own success. This leads them to compete against each other.

## AMERICANS ARE FRIENDLY, BUT IN THEIR OWN WAY

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In general, friendships among Americans tend to be shorter and more casual than friendships among people from other cultures. This has something to do with American mobility and the fact that Americans do not like to be dependent on other people. Americans also tend to "compartmentalize" friendships, having "work friends", "family friends", "school friends", and so on. You may also notice Americans will smile a lot, which is typically genuine and used to show friendliness.

## AMERICANS ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS

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Americans can ask some questions that may to you seem pointless, uninformed, or elementary. Someone you have just met may ask you very personal questions. No impertinence is intended; the questions usually grow out of a genuine interest.

## AMERICANS ARE TIME-CONSCIOUS AND VALUE PUNCTUALITY

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Americans keep appointment calendars and live according to schedules. They usually are on time for appointments, or no more than a few minutes late. It is considered rude to show up late to an appointment without notification that you will be arriving more than a few minutes past the agreed upon time. Common courtesy is to let the other party know if you will not be able to make an appointment or meeting as soon as you know, to allow for rescheduling if necessary.

## AMERICAN POLITENESS

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Americans often use the words “please,” “thank you,” and “I’m sorry” more often than an international person might be used to. Some Americans tend to say, “I’m sorry” in situations where you might not think an apology is necessary, such as brushing against someone on a train or bumping into someone in the hallway—it doesn’t have to be a big problem to say, “I’m sorry”. A common response to “I’m sorry” is “no worries” or “it’s okay.” Saying “please” when requesting something, and “thank you” when receiving something is also very customary in the US and may be considered rude if you don’t also use these phrases, even amongst close friends or family members.

## USING PRONOUNS

The mindful use of pronouns in the United States is important to ensure you are being respectful. Asking about pronouns and being sensitive to pronouns is a relatively new concept in the United States and is more commonly understood and utilized amongst younger generations and people of certain communities, such as the LGBTQIA+ community. Older generations of Americans may not be as familiar or comfortable with the concept of asking about pronouns.

While many people might assume someone’s, pronouns are based on how they look, pronouns are not indicative of gender; only the individual can tell you which pronouns they want to be referred to by. Because of this, it is okay (and important) to ask someone about their pronouns, especially when meeting someone new. If the use of pronouns is not common in your native language, it is okay to let the other person know you are learning and might make mistakes along the way, especially if you are okay with being corrected. While there are many pronoun options, and new pronouns are constantly emerging, below is a chart of some of the most common pronouns:

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Examples
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is happy.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is happy.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are happy.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/Zirself	Ze is happy.

## INTERNATIONAL HOUSE



The International House functions as a center for international education by drawing on the resources on campus, such as international students and scholars, faculty and students returning from overseas experiences, and international faculty members. For our international students and scholars, the International House also helps in creating a sense of community. The house serves as the venue for a variety of programs throughout the year, such as tax workshops, OPT workshops, and more. The International House consists of three departments: Office of International Student Life, Office of International Faculty and Scholar Services, and English-as-a-Second Language Programs.

In addition, the International House provides several services to international students such as:

- Forms to help with government updates. All forms are available in a digital form on the International House website.
- Safekeeping of passports, tickets, etc.
- Limited temporary housing for international graduate students and scholars
- Notary Public
- Summer storage for international undergraduate students
  - \*Only available for those returning to live in campus housing next fall
- Resources for travel in the US
- Tax information and workshops
- International student employment workshops
- Mail collection for government documents

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR

The international student advisors, Colleen Callahan-Panday, and David Murcko, are here to serve you, so do not hesitate to bring your concerns and questions to the International House. The international student advisor advises international students and exchange students on a wide range of topics, which include immigration matters, social and cultural differences, financial matters, and personal concerns. The international student advisor provides programs designed to help students adjust to life in the US and to minimize the difficulties they may experience both initially and throughout their stay. The Office of International Student Life



publishes electronic information updates to keep you up to date regarding educational, social, and cultural activities, and changes in immigration regulations. Be sure to check the International House website for information including forms for various requests and updates, and the Video Archive for short videos to help answer some of your most common questions. The Video Archive is password protected – email [ih@wpi.edu](mailto:ih@wpi.edu) if you do not know the password.

## NOTARY PUBLIC

Colleen Callahan-Panday in the Office of International Student Life is a Notary Public. The notary services are provided free of charge. The office will charge for all photocopies done in conjunction with notary function.

Massachusetts notaries are empowered to administer oaths and affirmations, take acknowledgments, witness signatures, jurats, and certify copies of certain documents.



A Massachusetts notary may witness documents for use in other states and nations provided the notary is physically in Massachusetts when performing the notarial act. A notary public is a public servant, obligated to fulfill the needs of the general public whenever possible. You may also contact [notary@wpi.edu](mailto:notary@wpi.edu) for additional services in case Colleen is not available.

## CAMPUS FACILITIES AND SERVICES

What does WPI offer to complement your academic education? There are several learning and recreational resources on campus that you can use to complement your classroom activities. A brief description of these services will give you a general idea of how and when you can use them.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES OFFICE

The Student Activities Office (SAO), located on the second floor of the Rubin Campus Center, coordinates most of WPI's 225+ campus clubs and organizations. For more information about WPI clubs and organizations, you should consult Student Activities: <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/getting-involved/clubs-organizations>. Most organizations are also on WPI's TechSync, an online database for campus clubs and organizations.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

On the 2nd of November 1988, the International Student Council (ISC) was officially recognized as a student organization devoted to providing for the needs of the international student community at WPI. A great way to connect with other International Students is to get involved with the International Student Council and attend some of their many annual events.



Since its induction, the ISC has held events such as the International Dinner, ISC Ski Trip, International Food Festival, and Wrentham Outlets trips, which are now fixed events on the ISC calendar. Although events are a major part of the ISC's activities during the year, the ISC tries to concentrate its efforts on other matters or problems that affect international students at WPI. The ISC is always open for suggestions, comments, and is always eager to help out students in any way possible.

**International Student Council (ISC), Campus Center Room CC316**

<https://wpi.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/international-student-council>

[iscexecs@wpi.edu](mailto:iscexecs@wpi.edu)

## CULTURAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are a variety of campus organizations that are cultural in nature and may be of interest to our international students and a great way to get involved. Some of the cultural clubs include:

- African Percussion & Dance Ensemble (APDE) [africa-drum@wpi.edu](mailto:africa-drum@wpi.edu)
- African Student Association (ASA) [asaexecboard@wpi.edu](mailto:asaexecboard@wpi.edu)
- Armenian Student Association (ASA) [aremenianstudentsassociation@wpi.edu](mailto:aremenianstudentsassociation@wpi.edu)
- Black Student Union (BSU) [wpibsu@wpi.edu](mailto:wpibsu@wpi.edu)
- Brazilian Student Association (BRASA) [brasaexecs@wpi.edu](mailto:brasaexecs@wpi.edu)
- Chinese Student and Scholars Association (CSSA) (Graduate Students) [cssa@wpi.edu](mailto:cssa@wpi.edu)
- German Club (Deutschklub) [deutsch@wpi.edu](mailto:deutsch@wpi.edu)
- Hellenic Student Association (HSA) [wpihsa@wpi.edu](mailto:wpihsa@wpi.edu)
- Hillel [hillel-officers@wpi.edu](mailto:hillel-officers@wpi.edu)
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) [shpeoffs@wpi.edu](mailto:shpeoffs@wpi.edu)
- Engineers Without Borders [gr-ewb-execs@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-ewb-execs@wpi.edu)
- Society for the advancement of Chicanos/Hispanic and Native American in Science (SACNAS) [gr-sacnasofficers@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-sacnasofficers@wpi.edu)
- Iranian Student Association (ISAWPI) [aghasemi@wpi.edu](mailto:aghasemi@wpi.edu)
- Japanese Culture Club (JCC) [jclub-exec@wpi.edu](mailto:jclub-exec@wpi.edu)
- Korean Student Association (KSA) [ksa-off@wpi.edu](mailto:ksa-off@wpi.edu)
- Muslim Student Association (MSA) [msaofficers@wpi.edu](mailto:msaofficers@wpi.edu)
- Russian-Speaking Students and Scholars Association (RSSA) [rssa@wpi.edu](mailto:rssa@wpi.edu)
- South Asian Student Association (SASA) [sasa-execs@wpi.edu](mailto:sasa-execs@wpi.edu)
- Turkish Student Association (TSA) [turkish@wpi.edu](mailto:turkish@wpi.edu)
- Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) [vsaofficers@wpi.edu](mailto:vsaofficers@wpi.edu)

## ENTERTAINMENT ON CAMPUS

The Activities Calendar, which is available on the Student Activities Office website, lists the major events each month. You can also look up various student organizations on campus through TechSync to see what events are being offered. For example, WPI has a free movie portal for anyone with the WPI VPN. <https://cinema.wpi.edu/>

The WPI Social Committee (SocComm) sponsors most of the large activities on campus. The student-run group selects, plans, and promotes recreational, educational, and social events. Such events include weekly movies, activities on the quad, and an annual concert. Student committees plan some of the more



regular entertainment on campus. All committees are open to new members and offer opportunities to meet new people. SocComm offers a little something for everyone! If you're interested in joining or want an update on what's happening, contact the Social Committee Office, Campus Center, Room 314.

## CAREER PLANNING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

WPI's Career Development Center (CDC) provides assistance to WPI students in making post-graduation plans. The CDC coordinates a busy schedule of interviews by recruiters from private industrial firms – large and small – and government, civic, and professional organizations, along with services such as résumé critiques, and career workshops. You can contact the CDC to schedule an appointment by phone at 508-831-5260 and by email at [cdc@wpi.edu](mailto:cdc@wpi.edu).

Career planning for you as an international student can be very different from that of an American student. To better assist international students, the CDC and the International House offer a number of services in the areas of career development and planning, including various workshops. *It is best to contact the International House before you begin any type of employment to make sure you are not violating your visa status.*

## CAMPUS POLICE AND CAMPUS SECURITY

Campus police provide services such as protection of life and property, criminal investigations, and assistance in case of illness or accidents. Parking and traffic control is the most visible function of the WPI Police, but they can also help you with:



- Transportation to the hospital in case of emergency sickness
- Crime prevention programs
- Engravers (to permanently imprint your name/I.D. on your property)
- Assistance with theft or break-ins

The office is located at 26 Boynton Street, Founders Hall, Lower Level. You can reach them 24 hours a day/7 day a week at:

**Campus Police (Emergency):** 1-508-831-5555

**Campus Police (Non-Emergency):** 1-508-831-5433

**SNAP:** 508-831-6111

## SECURITY NIGHT ASSISTANCE PATROL (SNAP) and TRANSLOC

The WPI Police Department sponsors WPI's Security Night Assistance Patrol (SNAP). The WPI Police Department trains and supervises student drivers who work closely with WPI Police to help students get to their destinations safely. They act as additional "eyes and ears" for the Campus

Police, and also provide a mobile escort service for students during the late evening hours. You must be a WPI student and show your WPI Student ID to the SNAP van driver, and the driver will only pick you up or drop you off at a home/apartment address within a mile of campus, or an on-campus building. SNAP also provides a shuttle service to Price Chopper grocery store on Park Ave Sundays through Thursdays during normal operational hours, and transport to and from Union Station if requested at least 30 minutes before pick-up time. If you need to pick up prescription medication or receive a vaccination that is not provided by Health Service, SNAP can also drive you to CVS Pharmacy at 44 West Boylston Street.



To request the SNAP service or an escort please contact Campus Police at 508-831-6111. The escort service is available:

- **A Term and D Term:** 6:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.
- **B Term and C Term:** 5:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.
- **Recess/Break:** 6:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

After these hours, an officer may walk you to your destination upon request. There may be times when a mobile escort is unavailable or not deemed necessary, and a walking escort will be provided. The SNAP phone number should also be listed on the back of your WPI ID Card.

Information for the updated Transloc App can be located at this website here. WPI has been utilizing this and SNAP since COVID. <https://transloc.com/rider-transit-app/>

## SELF-DEFENSE AND SAFETY CLASSES

WPI offers a Self-Defense class for women known as R.A.D., or Rape Aggression Defense. This program offers self-defense tactics and techniques to help women to protect and educate themselves about resistance to attackers. This course can be counted as a Physical Education class to satisfy WPI's graduation requirements. The course is offered during all 4 terms and is taught by certified R.A.D. instructors that are part of WPI's Campus Police Department. For more information, please visit <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/resources/safety/rape-aggression-defense>.

The Society of Martial Artists (SOMA) is another student-run campus organization that is open to all students. SOMA is dedicated to promoting personal safety and responsibility through self-defense education and awareness at WPI, and often holds self-defense workshops during the academic year.

## CAMPUS BOOKSTORE

Barnes and Noble Bookseller at WPI, located in the Campus Center, sells textbooks for all WPI courses, supplies, and equipment. It is also available online <https://wpi.bncollege.com>. In addition, the bookstore offers services such as college- oriented clothing, cards, gifts, and

magazines, along with special ordering of any book in print. You should be aware that once a book is marked in any manner (pencil, pen, gummed stickers, etc.), it automatically becomes a "used" book as far as the publishers are concerned and the book cannot be exchanged or returned for credit.

## WRITING CENTER

Trained Peer Tutors are available at no cost every day to help WPI students with any writing problems, especially those arising from project work. Students with writing problems of any type may be referred by faculty to the center, may make appointments on their own initiative, or make an appointment using the electronic schedule on the website. In addition to tutoring, the center has handouts on formats for reports and proposals and books on improving writing. The center works with native speakers as well as with those for whom English is a new language. Daily hours vary due to availability of tutors during each term. Check the web site for up-to-date schedules. Hours are by appointment, and you can register online: <https://wpi.mywconline.com/>.

### **The Writing Center**

Salisbury Labs 233

Phone: 508-831-6561

<https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/resources/writing-center>



## LIBRARY SERVICES

The services at the George C. Gordon Library are available to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the Worcester community. The library has several departments to help you in your class, homework, projects, or personal needs. The Reference Department and the Circulation Desk are two very important services you should get to know. The Reference Department can assist you in using the library, help you with research problems, and obtain books and journal articles not immediately available in the library. The WPI library provides access to library services and resources from anywhere via the library web page: <https://www.wpi.edu/library>



The Circulation Desk lends books for a period of four weeks for undergraduates and graduate students. Also, the books and materials reserved by the faculty members (professors) for certain courses can be found there. You can borrow a course book for in-library use for up to 3 hours at no charge. This can be beneficial if you do not want to bring your textbook to campus but want to do homework or research in the library. In addition to these

services, the Gordon Library offers student-access computers, computer labs, study rooms, study

seats, and tech suites. Tech suites can be rented free of charge by students to work on group projects, and each tech suite is equipped with a computer and plasma display to facilitate group collaboration. A reading area is available with current local, national, and international newspapers, journals, and magazines. For those who get hungry as they study, the Class of 1970 Café offers students food and drink options while they are in the library. Meal plans are accepted.

The library is typically open the following hours during the academic year:

- Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- Friday 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
- Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
- Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.

Library Hours occasionally vary during the academic year, especially towards the end of an academic term, and it is always best to double check on the library's website before visiting the library.

## COMPUTER SERVICES

The IT Helpdesk, located on the main level of Gordon Library, is open Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during the academic year, and can be contacted at [its@wpi.edu](mailto:its@wpi.edu). During the summer, the Helpdesk working hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Other areas supported by Information Technology will have hours posted on location.

Software, such as Microsoft Office, antivirus, and Windows are available for students to download on their personal devices through Campus License Agreements.



## HEALTH SERVICES

The WPI Student Health Center, located in the Stoddard C building on the ground floor with the entrance on Hackfeld Road, is open throughout the school year. Students who have paid the student health fee and have submitted a completed health form are eligible to use the facility. Their website is: <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/health-counseling/health-services>.



The Student Health Center was established to provide basic health services for students. Health maintenance and health education is emphasized. A series of wellness-oriented health workshops and seminars are provided to help students learn and maintain positive and productive health styles. A team of physicians and nurses is available to provide primary care and coordinate referral services. The physicians are in the office five

days a week for approximately four hours each day. When the Health Center is closed, the physicians are available by phone to evaluate and provide medical services to the students.

***If you need medical attention when the Health Center is closed, please follow this procedure:***

1. For the physicians “on call” dial 508-334-8830
2. Identify yourself as a WPI student
3. The doctor “on call” will return your call as soon as possible

Routine allergy injections are administered at no charge (if you have WPI insurance, a co-pay may be required for outside insurances), by appointment, provided the student furnishes the serum, and on the instruction of the student’s allergist or physician.

Services are available on an appointment basis; walk-ins are not available. These services include routine exams, emergency contraception, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, contraception counseling, and pregnancy testing and counseling.

WPI requires each entering student to complete a health form prior to registration. Students without one on file will have a hold placed on their WPI account and cannot register for classes.

All patient records are kept completely confidential, even to others within the college. Information relating to diagnosis and treatment may be released only with the written consent of the patient.

### **Student Health Services**

Ground Floor, Stoddard C (Entrance on Hackfeld Rd)

Phone: 508-831-5520

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm (closed 12pm-1pm)

<http://www.wpi.edu/offices/health-services>

## **MAIL SERVICES**

Undergraduate students may pick up incoming mail from their mailboxes located in the Central Mail facility in the Campus Center. You should be advised that at no time would packages or letters be given out to anyone without a WPI ID and signature. You must pick up such packages personally. You may also send letters here, and purchase stamps.

Graduate students typically choose to receive mail at their apartment address or their academic department, as they are not provided a campus mailbox through WPI.

**Note:** When you graduate, or leave WPI for some other reason, be sure that you fill out the necessary postal forms to ensure the forwarding of your mail.

## SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

All of the sports facilities on campus are available for you to use according to posted hours. These facilities include an enclosed swimming pool located in Sports and Recreation Center. Other facilities that you can find in the gym and other places on campus are tennis, squash, racquetball, badminton, basketball, volleyball courts, table-tennis, baseball, football, soccer, track fields, a fitness center, dance studio, and a rowing tank. All students must complete a release form the first time they use the Sports and Recreation Center.



Family members of students can purchase a “WPI Student Spouse/Partner” membership to use WPI athletic facilities. More information can be found in the Membership Handbook here: <https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/2020/02/21/MembershipHandbook.pdf>

## STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND COUNSELING CENTER

The Student Development and Counseling Center provides a wide range of services to all enrolled WPI students free of charge. Professional staff members offer personal counseling, wellness programming to encourage a healthy lifestyle, and seminars on stress management, study skills, creative decision-making, and other topics.

### **Student Development and Counseling Center**

16 Einhorn Road

Phone: 508-831-5540

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

**Walk-In Hours:** Monday through Friday, 2pm to 3pm

<http://www.wpi.edu/+sdcc>



## OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME) is home to several identity centers that aim to foster an inclusive campus community that respects, honors, and celebrates diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in all of its dimensions, including but not limited to differences in race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, nationality/citizenship, and other identities. To ensure the academic success of all undergraduate and graduate WPI scholars, ODIME programs and services are created to support their social, personal, cultural, and professional development.



## UNITY HALL

The Unity Hall is one of the newest buildings on campus, opened in 2022. The new academic building features versatile learning spaces like tech suites, meeting rooms, research, and collaborative student spaces, faculty offices and more. You can also find the Student Academic Service Center, which connects the students with the support and guidance they need. The building also houses the Academic Advising office, Registrar's office, CDC to help facilitate student's journey through WPI.



You can find more information about the Unity Hall here:

<https://www.wpi.edu/about/locations/unity-hall>

## TITLE IX

WPI strongly encourages any student, faculty member, or staff member who has concerns about sexual misconduct to seek assistance. Anyone who has information about sexual misconduct that may also be a crime, report it to the WPI Police Department. Confidential Resource Advisors are available to discuss your options without a report being made to WPI.

For more information visit: <https://www.wpi.edu/offices/title-ix> for more information and resources.

## BIAS RESPONSE PROGRAM

WPI is dedicated to fostering an equitable, inclusive, and anti-oppressive community in which all people are valued and respected as intrinsic members of the community. WPI established the Bias Response Program as part of our efforts to foster a campus culture that rejects bias, prejudice, discrimination, and hateful acts (BRP).

Bias incidents occur when speech or expressive behavior is directed toward an individual or group based on or motivated by the individual's or group's true or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability, gender identity and/or expression, weight, or other social identities. Bias incidents may include actions motivated by bias that are protected by academic freedom and do not meet the elements necessary to prove a crime or a violation of university policy. To report a bias incident or more information about the program visit: <https://www.wpi.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/bias-response-program>

## PATHWAYS FOR CHANGE

Pathways for change is a Worcester based community organization, which now has a counselor present on campus at WPI. The program's mission is to provide quality and multicultural services to those whose lives have been impacted by sexual violence and to provide education geared towards ending violence. Pathways for Change Counseling Department, located on the second floor of the International House, offers counseling and advocacy to survivors of any form of sexual violence (that includes rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, etc.). All counseling is free, confidential, and offered in English and in Spanish, and in a wide range of language through interpreters.

This program working with Title IX, provides 24-Hour hotline with multi-language access answered by all genders at: 800.870.5905. For more information about the program visit: <https://www.wpi.edu/offices/title-ix/other-resources-organizations>



## LIVING IN WORCESTER

Throughout your time at WPI, you will have the chance to explore Worcester and the surrounding areas. The following information is designed to help you to navigate the Worcester area, set yourself up when you first arrive, find housing and apartments, and more.

### HOUSING

Finding adequate housing is one of the most important tasks you have as a new student. If you make well-informed decisions about housing, you can begin your studies at WPI without the worries that inappropriate housing can create. This section has been prepared to assist you by presenting, in some detail, information on the options that exist and the resources available to help you evaluate those options.

#### ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Residence hall living at WPI offers convenience of location, camaraderie with other students, and educational sharing and exchange. Residential Services is committed to the principle that learning at college occurs both in and out of the classroom. Almost 50% of WPI's undergraduates, approximately 2,000 students, live in the residence halls. WPI offers 9 residence halls, 3 apartment complexes, and 4 residential houses for undergraduate students. Additionally, there are limited spaces available for graduate students in houses, apartments, and Salisbury Estates.

*Some of the advantages to living on campus:*

- you get to know more people
- you can develop an awareness of American students as individuals and as members of a group, which might help you integrate into the WPI community
- you might improve your English
- you are closer to campus and have several security card access systems required to reach your room

*Some disadvantages:*

- for undergraduates, after freshman year there is no guarantee of on-campus housing
- you must vacate your room during winter vacation unless you live in an apartment that offers residency during breaks (your belongings can stay, but you must leave and cannot access your belongings during the break)
- you cannot stay during the summer months and must remove all of your items
- if you do not have a kitchen in your apartment, you must purchase a WPI meal plan

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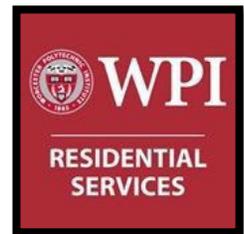
## OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Graduate and undergraduate students who were unable to or did not wish to obtain housing on campus will have to find a place off-campus not owned by WPI. Finding living accommodations can require a great deal of time, as most students spend one to two weeks of intense searching to find an adequate apartment. It is not easy, especially if you are living on a limited budget. In this area, a one-bedroom apartment is estimated to rent from \$600 to \$1200 per month. You will find below some considerations that are important when establishing a place to live.

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## SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

WPI's Residential Services, located in East Hall, can assist you in deciding the type of housing most appropriate for you. If you are looking to live off campus, you can find more information and resources for finding an apartment on the Residential Services' Living Off Campus website here: <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/housing-dining/living-off-campus>.



There are many websites you can use to find off-campus apartments, which are listed on the Residential Service's website (link listed above). Please note that WPI does not endorse or support any specific landlords or rental agencies and does not assist students with finding off campus housing or settling disputes with landlords.

Craig's List is a website where people can list all sorts of items and services for sale. It is a good place to look for apartments as well as furniture but beware of online scams. The Worcester regional site is: <http://worcester.craigslist.org>.

There are several real estate agencies in Worcester that can be helpful when looking for an apartment, but it is far cheaper to find one yourself by using the sources mentioned above.

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## RENTING AN APARTMENT (FLAT)

When renting an apartment, you are normally asked for a one-month security deposit plus the first and last month's rent. The security deposit will be returned to you when you leave if there has been no major damage to the apartment. For your own protection, you should examine the apartment carefully before you sign the lease (contract) and get a written statement signed by the landlord about the condition of the apartment at the time you move into it. It is also a good idea to take photos of any damages before you move in to ensure you are not charged for damage that was done before you lived in the apartment. The landlord, or lessor, is the person who rents

the apartment. The lease or contract is a legal agreement between you (tenant, lessee) and your landlord specifying the renting conditions.

In the negotiations with your landlord, you should:

- know which services and utilities are not included in the rent: electricity, gas, air-conditioning, TV (antenna or cable), washing machine, etc.
- ask if the landlord will pay for repairs
- know the exact duration of the lease
- learn the conditions under which you can end the lease
- ask if you can sublet to someone else and under what conditions you may do so
- be sure that the landlord knows the size of your family, as some don't allow children or pets

## UTILITIES

Your landlord (apartment owner) may or may not include the cost of utilities in your rent. Check your lease to know which ones you have to put into service. Contact the offices indicated below if you need any of these services.

### ELECTRICITY

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To obtain electric service for your apartment, you need to call the electric company (National Grid) and give them your name, address, and some sort of identification. If your apartment currently has electric service, they will transfer the service to your name. If your apartment does not have the service, you will obtain the service in one or two days. You will be billed on a monthly basis.

#### **National Grid:**

Customer Service (toll-free): 1-800-322-3223

Emergencies (power outages): 1-800-465-1212

Website: <https://www.nationalgridus.com/MA-Home/Default>



### GAS

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Gas service is obtained by calling Eversource Gas and providing them your name, address, plus your landlord's name and telephone number. After calling, you will have to wait for about 24 hours to get the service. You will be billed monthly.

#### **Eversource Gas:**

Customer Service (toll-free): 1-800-592-2000

Website: <https://www.eversource.com/Content/ema-c>



## WATER

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Most landlords provide water and sewer service. If yours does not, call the Worcester Water Department as soon as you know the date that you will move in. When you call, you must provide the name and address of your landlord.

### **Worcester Water Department:**

Telephone: 508-929-1300

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Health costs in the United States can add up quickly and are often very expensive if not covered by your health insurance. Health insurance in the US is essential to cover the high cost of hospital and medical expenses. A short stay in the hospital often costs more than a year's tuition at WPI. An ambulance ride, for example, can be several hundred to several thousand dollars and should not be used for minor injuries where you can take a cab or have a friend drive you to the hospital. Be aware of all costs involved before making medical decisions and what is included in your health insurance. If you have children, it is essential that you obtain adequate health insurance for your family.

In accordance with Commonwealth of Massachusetts's mandatory student health insurance legislation, all students must have primary coverage for sickness. WPI offers health insurance through Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA that meets the required qualifications for student health insurance. You can find more information about WPI's 2019-2020 program here: <https://www.wpi.edu/offices/bursar/student-health-insurance>. WPI will automatically apply this fee to your eBill, but it can be waived if you choose to use a different health insurance company with comparable coverage and submit the waiver form with proof of comparable coverage. Even though this policy will fulfill the mandatory requirements, we further recommend that you consider getting a major medical policy. Another option to consider is ISO insurance, which specifically offers plans for International Students ([www.isoa.org](http://www.isoa.org)).



**For students on a J1 program**, it is required for you to have insurance with a minimum coverage of \$100,000 per accident or illness, repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000, medical evacuation to your home country in the amount of \$50,000, and deductibles that do not exceed \$500 per accident or illness. This requirement is effective as of May 15, 2015.

To make effective comparisons among insurance policies and choose the one that offers the selection of benefits best suited for your needs or visa requirements; you need to understand

some of the most important features of health insurance policies. Be sure to carefully read what a plan includes before making a purchase. Only comparing price could be a mistake if you later need treatment and learn that the inexpensive policy will not pay for the care you require.

### DEDUCTIBLE AMOUNTS

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Most insurance policies require the insured individual to pay a small part of the medical cost before the insurance pays anything. This amount that you must pay first is called the deductible.

### CO-PAYMENT PERCENTAGE

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Most insurance policies pay a percentage of your medical costs after you pay the deductible. For example, some policies pay 80% of the costs, you pay 20%. Many insurance policies pay a larger co-payment for certain types of illness, a smaller co-pay for other types. Others pay a percentage until you have paid a certain amount (called an out-of-pocket maximum), then they pay 100%.

### SPECIFIED LIMITS

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Some policies give specific dollar limits on what they will pay for particular services. For example, they may limit the hospital room and board charge, the doctor's fee, the surgery fees, the psychologist/psychiatrist fees, the anesthesiologist charge, etc. Other policies pay "usual" charges for these costs, meaning they pay what is usually charged in the local area. If you are looking at a policy with specific dollar limits, you can check average costs in your location to be sure that the dollar limits are sufficient to pay for all the services you may need.

### BENEFIT PERIOD

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Some insurance policies limit the amount of time they pay for illnesses or injuries. For example, if a policy has a 52-week benefit period, it will stop paying for a medical benefit 52 weeks after it began, even if the insured individual still requires that treatment.

### EXTENSION OF BENEFITS

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The extension of benefits provision applies if you are receiving treatment at the time your insurance policy expires and you are not eligible to renew the original policy agreement. Many companies will extend the policy and continue to pay benefits for a limited period of time.

### EXCLUSIONS

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Most insurance policies exclude coverage for certain conditions. It is important to read the list of exclusions carefully so that you understand exactly what is not covered by the policy.

## MEDICAL EVACUATION/REPATRIATION

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For international visitors in the US, coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains is important. If your policy covers medical evacuation, it will pay your transportation costs if you need to return home because of a covered medical condition. If it covers repatriation, the insurance company will pay the cost of returning your remains home from the US should you die here.

## PREMIUM COST

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It is important to compare the cost of the policies you are considering, but keep in mind that you need to judge the policies based on the comparable coverage they provide. Generally, when a policy costs less, it provides less coverage; you usually get what you pay for and no more. Costs shouldn't be the only factor in your decision. Being sure that the insurance protects you adequately against unexpected medical costs is far more important.

## URGENT CARE FACILITIES

Walk-In Clinics and Urgent Care facilities are becoming more and more common and are used for medical issues that arise that require immediate care but are not serious enough to go to the emergency room. Typically, you would visit a Walk-In Clinic or Urgent Care facility if you have a non-life-threatening issue but cannot wait to schedule an appointment with your primary care doctor. Some of the closest Walk-In Clinics and Urgent Care Facilities to WPI are:

### **CareWell Urgent Care**

500 Lincoln St, Worcester, MA 01605

Phone: 774-420-2111

**Hours:** 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm

<https://www.carewellurgentcare.com/locations/woresterfair-ma-lincoln-st-urgent-care/>

### **ReadyMED Plus Urgent Care**

366 Shrewsbury Street, Worcester, MA 01604

Phone: 508-595-2700

**Hours:** 7 days a week, 9am to 8pm

<http://readymed.org/location/worcester/>

## BANKING

Americans don't usually carry a lot of cash. They prefer to pay by check, credit card, or debit card, even for small purchases. To function efficiently in the U.S. economy, you will need to open a checking and/or savings account at a local bank. Other services you may find at these banks are foreign currency conversion, traveler's checks, and interbank transfers. Most banks also offer online banking.

### OPENING AN ACCOUNT

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When you open an account with a bank, most banks require two pieces of identification, such as your passport and a WPI student ID. You may open a checking or savings account at any nearby bank. Upon opening the account, you should also bring the initial deposit. You do not need a Social Security Number to open an account. At the time you open your account, you can complete a W-8BEN Form instead of giving the bank a Social Security Number. You can access this form here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw8ben.pdf>

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### CHECKING ACCOUNT

A checking account is convenient for payment of bills and occasional expenses. The initial deposit may take up to two weeks to clear before you can withdraw money from your account. Once you are able to withdraw, you can use a debit card linked to your account to access your money. This can be done either at the bank, at an ATM, or by using the debit card to pay for purchases. You can also use personal checks that are connected to your checking account to pay for things such as utility bills and monthly rent.



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### SAVINGS ACCOUNT

A savings account enables you to save money and accumulate interest on these savings. These accounts are convenient and safe if you have some extra money that you are not going to use immediately. Most banks pay about 0.01% - 0.05% interest credited annually.

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### MAKING A DEPOSIT

To make bank deposits, fill out a "deposit slip" and present this (along with the check or cash) to the bank teller. If the money is in the form of a check, you will have to endorse the check by signing your name on the reverse side. Depending on the amount you deposit, it might take a few days for the entire deposit to be available in your account. Many banks nowadays have online banking apps that allow you to deposit a check using a smart phone.

## DEBIT CARDS

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Many banks issue debit cards that make deposit and withdrawal services available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week by use of an automated teller machine (ATM). These machines, which are located outside banks and in various locations such as grocery stores, are very convenient. WPI has a TD Bank ATM machine located in the Campus Center. You can avoid waiting in line at the bank and have access to cash after the bank closes or in an emergency. Banks that are members of a national ATM network allow you access to your funds throughout the country. Usually, a fee of \$3.00 to \$5.00 is charged for this service if you are not using an ATM supported by your bank. When you are withdrawing cash from an ATM after dark, be aware of your surroundings to prevent an assault. Protect your bankcard and your secret access code (PIN) as you do your cash and credit cards.

## CREDIT CARDS

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Credit cards can be convenient, especially if you unexpectedly have major expenses. However, you must understand that credit cards are seductive, and before you know it you may be in debt. Before you accept a credit card, you must be sure to understand all of your obligations.

Most credit cards charge an annual fee. If you are unable to pay your full balance, you will be charged high interest rates (usually 18%-29%) on the remaining balance and any additional charges you make. Being responsible with a credit card can be a great way to begin establishing credit in the United States. Obtaining a credit card requires a Social Security Number.

Credit is usually tied to your “credit score” which is an important number to maintain while you are in the US. A lot of calculations go into the credit score, and it is used to evaluate your reliability, especially when making large purchases that require a loan such as a car. If you pay your bills late or have a large credit card bill that maintains a balance each month, these can contribute to having a bad credit score. If your credit score is very low, it could even effect renting a nice apartment or passing a background check.

## SECURING MONEY FROM HOME

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In order to secure money from home, you may need a certificate of enrollment letter from WPI stating that you are currently enrolled as a student. Each country has its own requirements and restrictions on transfer of foreign currency. If you need specific information, you should contact the Education Department at your own country’s embassy. The person sending you money should have all the specific information about your bank and your account. Your bank can also provide you with their identification number so that money can be wired from your family’s bank to your bank and credited to your account.

## WRITING CHECKS

This image of an example check can be used as a guide to show how to write a check. Checks are written by filling out the date—usually following the MM/DD/YY format (1), the name of the person or organization to whom the payment is being made (2), and the amount of payment (both in numbers (3) and in words (4)), which are then validated by your signature (5). Do not sign your checks until you are ready to use them and have reviewed that all written information is correct. You can use the “for” line at the bottom to write a reminder of why you wrote the check, such as “August Rent”, or to include your account number if you are paying a bill (6). Do not sign the back of the check. This is for the person you are giving the check to; they sign the back before cashing the check at the bank.

Your Name  
Your Address  
Anywhere, US 01234

DATE 07/15/07

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Barb's Flower Barn \$ 23.14

twenty three dollars and 14/100 DOLLARS

FOR mom's flowers your signature here

00 123 0 12345600 123

Do not make checks payable to “cash”. When cashing checks, you may be required to present one or more pieces of identification, such as your passport. A checkbook, which includes a register on which to record each deposit and check written, will help you keep an accurate balance. Monthly, the bank issues a balance statement, which includes summary statements of deposits, withdrawals, and service charges, which you should compare to your own records. Any check written for an amount higher than funds available in your account will be returned to you, and the bank will charge you a fee. Many banks now have online banking, and you can see images of your cashed checks in your online statements, and cash checks directly through an online app.

## LOCAL BANKS

There are many banking options available in Worcester. Some banks are local, which others have branches all over the United States. When selecting a bank, you should compare services and service charges. Banks most commonly used by International Students at WPI include:

 <b>Bank of America</b> 255 Park Ave Worcester, MA 01609 www.bankofamerica.com	 America's Most Convenient Bank® <b>TD Bank</b> 295 Park Ave Worcester, MA 01609 www.tdbank.com	 <b>Santander Bank</b> 446 Main St Worcester, MA 01608 www.santanderbank.com
 Life is exciting. Let us help. <b>Berkshire Bank</b> 386 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 www.berkshirebank.com	 <b>People's United Bank</b> 75 Gold Star Boulevard Worcester, MA 01605 www.peoples.com	 <b>Webster Five Bank</b> 266 Chandler Street Worcester, MA 01602 www.web5.com

## CELL PHONES OPTIONS

There are many cell phone companies that require either a Social Security Number (SSN) or a high security deposit before you can sign a contract for cell phone service. As International Student, there are other options for you to consider.

### INFORMATION ABOUT PREPAID PHONES

Prepaid phones usually do not require a deposit and have either **month-to-month** subscriptions or “**add minutes as you go**” features. These phones are typically cheaper and offer basic features such as texting and calling. You can buy prepaid phones at stores such as Target, Walmart, and BestBuy, or online, some providers will allow you to use you own unlocked phones, while others will require you to purchase a phone compatible with their network.

### CAMPUS SIMS

The Mint Mobile sims are available at the International House for free. This service is specifically designed for international students, and you can get your U.S. number and plan for your needs as soon as you arrive at WPI. This service does not require any contracts, deposits, or require an SSN.

### CELL PHONE CONTRACT

Most cell phone companies offer contracts, which provide monthly number of minutes, texting, and data usage. Generally, without SSN you will be required to pay a **heavy deposit** (usually \$400+). The deposit should be returned to you at the end of your contract or after a certain period of time. It is better look at all of the different options available to find the one that fits best with your needs. It is advised to consider a family plan or a group plan to cut costs if you have several friends that need a cell phone too. More information about cell phones companies and contracts are available at the International House.

## US POSTAL SERVICE

The government provides mail service in the US. It is a federal service. US mail is delivered every day except for Sundays and federal holidays.

### CERTIFIED MAIL

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You can use this service when you want proof of the delivery of your mail. Your mail is treated like ordinary mail, but the receiver's signature is obtained and returned to you as a proof of the delivery.

### SPECIAL DELIVERY

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You can use this service when you need your letters to be delivered with certain urgency. Upon its arrival at the post office in the city to which it has been sent, a special postal messenger will deliver the letter at once to the recipient's address.

### REGISTERED MAIL

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When you need your mail to be safeguarded, you can use this kind of mail service. Your mail will be covered by insurance. Therefore, if it is lost, the post office will pay you the value of the article.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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When you change your address, there is a service that allows you to receive your mail at your new address. Special cards are available at any post office for reporting a change of address or you can change your address online here: <https://moversguide.usps.com>.

### PAYING BY MAIL

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In the US, many people pay their bills by mail or using online bill payment. If you do not have a checking account, money orders can be obtained at any bank, the post office, or local money order facilities such as Price Chopper. Cashier's checks from the bank can also be used. Cash should never be sent through the mail, as it can very easily be lost or delivered to the wrong person, and you have no way to track the delivery if you send cash. It is always advisable to send a check or money order instead.

### POSTAL OFFICES (LOCAL)

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- US Post Office (Main Branch): 4 E Central St, 508-795-3600
- UPS Store (Packages): 210 Park Ave, 508-757-1700
- FedEx (Packages): 77 Boston Turnpike, Shrewsbury, MA 508-756-1977

## TRANSPORTATION

### TAXI SERVICE AND RIDE SHARE APPS

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- **Red Cab** 508-792-9999
- **Yellow Cab** 508-754-3211
- **Uber** <https://www.uber.com>
- **Lyft** <https://www.lyft.com>

### TRAIN SERVICE

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- **Amtrak (across the US)**  
Union Station, 2 Washington Square, 508-755-0356 [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)
- **MBTA Commuter Rail (Framingham/Worcester Line) to Boston**  
Union Station, 617-222-3200 <http://www.mbtta.com/>

### BUS/LIMOUSINE SERVICE

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- **Worcester Regional Transit Authority (City Bus)**  
508-791-9782, 60 Foster Street, [www.therta.com](http://www.therta.com)
- **Greyhound Bus Lines**  
508-754-1102, Union Station Bus Terminal, [www.greyhound.com/home/](http://www.greyhound.com/home/)
- **Peter Pan Bus Lines**  
800-343-9999, Union Station Bus Terminal, <http://www.peterpanbus.com/>
- **Knights Airport Limousine Service** (to/from Boston Logan Airport) 1-800-822-5456, Shrewsbury, MA <http://www.knightslimo.com/>

### AIRPORT INFORMATION

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- **Bradley International Airport**  
Windsor Locks, CT, 1-860-292-2000,  
1-888-624-1533, [www.bradleyairport.com/](http://www.bradleyairport.com/)
- **Logan International Airport**  
Boston, MA 1-800-235-6426,  
<https://www.massport.com/logan-airport/>
- **T.F. Green Airport**  
Warwick, RI, 1-888-268-7222 or 401-691-2471,  
<http://www.pvdairport.com/>



- **Worcester Regional Airport**

Worcester, MA, <http://www.massport.com/worcester-airport/>

Worcester has a limited number of daily flights available, including to JFK in New York, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando in Florida, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.

## DRIVING

As an international student on a student visa, you are required to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license if you plan to drive a car. This is because you intend to live in Massachusetts long-term to complete your program, which means you are establishing residency in Massachusetts, and you are not categorized as simply a visitor.

### CONVERTING A LICENSE FROM ANOTHER STATE

If you have a driver's license from another state in the US which has not expired (or expired less than a year ago), you can simply pay the required fees for conversion to a Massachusetts license. You can make the conversion after showing proof of residence in Massachusetts and proof of legal status in the US, given that you do not have any physical disability or prior criminal record.

### CONVERTING A FOREIGN DRIVER'S LICENSE

If you have a foreign driver's license from Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Germany, France, Taiwan, or one of the U.S. Territories, you may convert your foreign license upon becoming a Massachusetts resident without taking the written or road test. If you are not from one of these countries, you will be required to pass a Massachusetts written test and a road test in order to obtain your Massachusetts license. Although some foreign visitors may drive in the US with an acceptable foreign license and an International Driver's Permit for up to one year from the date of entry in the US, you must still apply for a Massachusetts license when you establish residency (studying towards a degree is considered establishing residency, as you are more than simply visiting the United States).

### APPLYING FOR A MASSACHUSETTS DRIVER'S LICENSE

If you do not have a driver's license but would like to get one in the US, you should look on the International House website at the "Getting a MA Driver's License" handout, which has more information about required documentation and the process of applying for a Massachusetts Driver's Permit and License.

Please Note: As of July 1, 2017, RMV regulations require that visa holders must have a total authorized stay of at least 12 months to be eligible to apply for a Massachusetts Learners Permit or License. This would be based on the amount of time between your program start date and

program end date on your I-20 forms or your DS-2019. You must also have at least 30 days remaining on your status before applying.

### **Registry of Motor Vehicles – Worcester Branch**

611 Main Street

Phone: 508-831-5540

Hours: Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm

<http://www.massrmv.com/>

## **CHILDCARE AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

There are three main types of childcare available: private, family, and in-home. Each type addresses different needs and is described here to assist you in deciding which type of care is best for your child.

### **PRIVATE CHILDCARE**

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Also referred to as day care centers, these facilities are privately operated centers featuring trained staff. Such centers primarily offer educational and developmental programs for children of varying ages. This is a good way to form a community for working parents, reinforce good child-rearing practices, and for children to gain playmates. These facilities must be licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care. The EEC, in its capacity as a licensing agency, licenses all childcare programs in Massachusetts. EEC enforces strong licensing standards for the health, safety, and education of all children in childcare.

### **FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES**

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This type of childcare encompasses any private residence which provides care for children during part, or all, of the day. The total number of children in such a facility cannot exceed six. Such care is not a cooperative arrangement among neighbors. These day care homes must also be licensed by the EEC. In this type of childcare, children can interact and learn from one another.

### **IN-HOME CARE**

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Childcare provided by a "sitter" or nanny can be considered in-home. This type of care can include relatives. Such services are usually found individually, and participants are not required to have licensing or special training. This type of care is good for small babies because of the familiar environment.

## LOCAL WORCESTER CHILDCARE CENTERS

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- **The Goddard School**, 287 Grove St, 774-415-0333
- **Children's Garden**, VNA Care Network, 120 Thomas St., 508-751-6985
- **First Friends Early Care and Educational Center**, 111 Park Ave, 508-791-4884
- **Elm Park Center**, 284 Highland St., 508-752-1201
- **YWCA**, 1 Salem Square, 508-791-3181
- **YMCA**, Central Branch, 766 Main Street, 508-755-6101

## PRIMARY EDUCATION

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The Worcester Public School System offers a Parent Information Welcome Center to answer your questions about your child's education and options from kindergarten through high school. The Parent Information Welcome Center is located at 768 Main St., 508-799-3194, office hours are 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## RESTAURANTS, MARKETS, CAFÉS, AND SALONS

The following listing of restaurants, markets, and cafés in Worcester (and surrounding towns) is a sampling of the many choices you have when eating out in Worcester. All locations are in Worcester unless otherwise noted. This list was compiled with the help of Worcester faculty and staff as well as International Students from WPI.

### RESTAURANTS

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#### **African:**

Accra Girls Restaurant (Ghanian), 1280 Grafton St, 508-459-0054  
Anokye Krom (Ghanian): 687 Millbury St, 508-753-8471  
Fatima's Café (East African): 43 W Boylston St, 508-762-9797

#### **American:**

Addie Lee's Soul Food: 596 Main St, 508-752-0569  
Armsby Abbey: 144 Main St, 508-795-1012  
Bagel Time (Breakfast or Lunch): 194 Park Ave, 508-798-0440  
The Boynton: 119 Highland St, 508-756-8458  
Coney Island (Hot Dogs): 158 Southbridge St, 508-753-4362

Deadhorse Hill (Co-Owned by a WPI Alumni): 281 Main St, 774-420-7107  
The Fix Burger Bar (Gourmet Burgers): 108 Grove St, 774-823-3327  
Herbie's: 1030 Southbridge St, 508-757-5083  
Hot Dog Annie's: 244 Paxton St in Leicester, MA, 508-892-9059  
Joey's Grill: 344 Chandler St, 508-797-3800  
Lock 50: 50 Water St, 508-379-3400  
Ralph's Rock Diner (Hamburgers): 148 Grove St, 508-753-9543  
Smokestack Urban Barbecue (Southern BBQ): 139 Green St, 508-363-1111  
The Hangover Pub: 102 Green St, 508-459-1511

**Brazilian:**

Miranda Bread (Bakery): 140 Shrewsbury St, 508-791-2030  
Pampas Churrascaria: 145 E Central St, 508-757-1070  
Terra Brasilis Restaurant: 480 Shrewsbury St, 508-752-0390

**Chinese:**

Chuan Shabu (Hot Pot): 301 Park Ave, 508-762-9213  
Dragon Dynasty: 104 Highland St, 508-755-5588  
Ming House: 217 Chandler St, 508-756-6888  
Nancy Chang: 372 Chandler St, 508-752-8899  
Red Pepper (Most "Authentic" in Town): 1083 Main St, 774-243-6488  
The Loving Hut (Vegetarian/Vegan): 415 Chandler St, 508-459-0367

**Greek:**

Meze Greek Tapas Bar & Grill: 156 Shrewsbury St, 508-926-8115  
Zorba's Taverna: 97 Stafford St, 508-796-5828

**Indian:**

Bollywood Grill: 97 Boston Turnpike (Rte 9) in Shrewsbury MA, 508-793-9888  
Mayuri: 30 Lyman St in Westborough, MA, 508-898-1888  
Momo N Curry (Nepali): 431 Somerville Ave in Somerville, MA 617-7643  
Royal Indian Bistro: 7 Merian St in Lexington, MA, 781-861-7350  
Welcome India Cuisine: 770 Worcester Rd, Framingham, MA, 508-370-9977

**Irish:**

O'Connor's Restaurant: 1160 W Boylston St, 508-853-0789

**Italian:**

Antonio's Pizza by the Slice: 268 Chandler St, 774-530-6000  
Dino's Ristorante: 13 Lord St, 508-753-9978  
La Scala Ristorante: 183 Shrewsbury St, 508-753-9912  
La Cucina Italiana: 294 Hamilton St, 508-797-3354  
Leo's Ristorante: 11 Leo Turo Way, 508-753-9490  
Mare E Monti: Wall St, 508-767-1800  
Nuovo: 97 Shrewsbury St, 508-796-5915  
Olis Italian Eatery: 33, West Boylston St, 508-854-1500  
Pepe's Pizza: 274 Franklin St, 508-755-1978  
Pizzeria Delight: 522 Cambridge St, 508-753-3335  
Via Italian Table: 89 Shrewsbury St, 508-754-4842  
Volturno: 72 Shrewsbury St, 508-756-8658

**Jamaican:**

Belmont Vegetarian: 157 Belmont St, 508-798-8898  
Home Style: 82 Harrison St, 774-420-2999  
Jamaica Thymes: 169 Lincoln St, 508-868-1511

**Japanese:**

Baba Sushi: 309 Park Ave, 508-752-8822  
Broth (American/Japanese Fusion Ramen): 106 Green St, 508-459-1511  
Kyoto: 535 Lincoln St, 508-852-5788  
Sake Bomb Bistro (Sushi): 258 Park Ave, 508-754-2426  
Yama Zakura: 369 W Main St in Northborough, MA, 508-393-4187

**Korean:**

Healthy Food Choose and Mix (Korean and Japanese): 5 East Mountain St, 774-530-6123  
Koreana: 158 Prospect St in Cambridge, MA, 617-576-8661  
Sapporo Korean BBQ: 50 E Main St in Westborough, MA, 508-898-1880  
Westborough Korean Restaurant: 7 E Main St in Westborough MA, 508-366-8898

**Latin American:**

Café Reyes (Cuban): 421 Shrewsbury St, 508-762-9900  
Fuente De Vida (Salvadorian): 1159 Main St, 508-929-3266  
Hacienda Don Juan (Salvadorian and Mexican): 875 Main St, 508-756-2076  
Los Andes (Bolivian/Peruvian): 904 Chalkstone Ave in Providence RI, 401-649-4911

**Lebanese/Middle Eastern:**

Bay State Shawarma & Grill (Halal): 96 Water St, 508-753-6000

El Basha: 256 Park Ave, 508-795-0222

Shawarma Palace: 3 Pleasant St, 508-755-6500

Tandoori Halal Food: 560 Lincoln St, 774-243-7474

Zaytoon (Halal): 72 High St in Clinton, MA, 978-733-4258

**Mexican:**

Casa Vallarta: 45 Belmont St in Northborough, MA, 508-366-2153

El Patron: 192 Harding St, 508-757-8000

Hola Restaurante: 154 Turnpike Rd in Southborough, MA, 508-460-2058

La Terraza: 591 Park Ave, 774-530-6360

Mexicali Fresh Mex Grill: 700 Main St in Holden, MA, 508-829-7700

Mexicali Mexican Grill: 225 Shrewsbury St, 508-926-8811

Mezcal Cantina: 30 Major Taylor Blvd, 508-926-8308

Sol of Mexico: 538 Pleasant St, 508-756-2660

**Seafood:**

Eggroll Lady: 609 W Boylston St, 508-755-4451

Ronnie's Seafood and Ice Cream: 871 Southbridge St in Auburn, MA, 508-832-9068

Scales Seafood & Ice Cream: 45 River St in Millbury, MA, 508-865-3377

Sole Proprietor: 118 Highland St, 508-798-3474

West Boylston Seafood: 321 W Boylston St in West Boylston, MA, 508-853-3655

**Spanish:**

Bocado Tapas Bar: 82 Winter St, 508-797-1011

**Thai:**

Basil n' Spice: 299 Shrewsbury St, 774-317-9986

Brown Rice Thai Cuisine: 26 Boylston St in West Boylston, MA, 774-261-8322

Racha Thai: 545 Southwest Cutoff (Rte 20), 508-757-8884

Thai Place: 50 Boston Turnpike (Rte 9) in Shrewsbury, MA, 508-425-3595

Thai Time: 107 Highland St, 508-756-7267

**Vietnamese:**

Anh Thu II: 91 Stafford St, 508-796-5333

Dalat Restaurant: 425 Park Ave, 508-753-6036

Pho Dakao: 593 Park Ave, 508-756-7555  
Pho Sure: 114 Boston Turnpike in Shrewsbury, MA, 508-425-3314  
Saigon Restaurant: 976 Main St, 508-799-5250

### CAFÉS, COFFEE HOUSES, AND BAKERIES

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Acoustic Java: 932 Main St, 508-756-9446 (Plus a new roastery and tasting room: 6 Brussels St)  
Bean Counter: 113 Highland St, 508-754-3125  
Birch Tree Bread Company: 138 Green St, 774-243-6944  
Crust Bakery: 118 Main St, 774-823-3355  
Espress Yourself Coffee: 2 Richmond Ave, 508-755-3300  
GongCha (Bubble tea), 24 Southbridge St, 508-373-2100  
In-House Coffee: 225 Shrewsbury St, 508-363-1212  
Lucky's Café: 102 Grove St, 508-756, 5014  
Miranda Bread (Brazilian Bakery): 140 Shrewsbury St, 508-791-2030  
NU Kitchen: 335 Chandler St, 508-926-8800  
OneZo Worcester (Bubble Tea), 129 Water St, #4, 774-243-6195  
Worcester Art Museum Café: 55 Salisbury St, 508-799-4406, ext. 3068

### DINERS

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Worcester is a "living diner museum" partly because the famed Worcester Lunch Car Company manufactured diners in Worcester. Today, Worcester's diners serve good food to customers from every corner of the city. Eating in a diner is a must for any visitor to Worcester.

Art's Diner: 541 West Boylston St, 508-853-9705  
Boulevard Diner: 155 Shrewsbury St, 508-791-4535  
The Broadway: 100 Water St, 508-753-3233  
Corner Lunch: 133 Lamartine St, 508-799-9866  
Kenmore Diner: 250 Franklin St, 508-792-5125  
Lou Roc's Diner: 1074 W Boylston St, 508-852-6888 (Cash Only)  
\*Miss Worcester Diner: 300 Southbridge St, 508-753-5600  
Parkway Diner: 148 Shrewsbury St, 508-753-9968



\*The Miss Worcester Diner was the original "showroom" lunch car (Lunch Car #812) from the Worcester Lunch Car Company. It was built in 1948 and is in the register of historic place

## VEGETARIAN OPTIONS IN WORCESTER

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A resource guide for vegetarian and vegan dining in Worcester, including many restaurant suggestions, can be found here: [happycow.net](http://happycow.net)

## HALAL OPTIONS IN WORCESTER

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Resources for Halal restaurants and markets in Worcester and the surrounding area: <http://www.zabihah.com/sub/United-States/Massachusetts/Worcester/37Ty4tenfv>

## MULTICULTURAL MARKETS AND GROCERY STORES

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### **African:**

Danco African Foods: 195 Pleasant St, 508-791-8580

### **Asian:**

Asian Supermarket: 50 Mill St, 508-304-6167

Binh and Market: 64 Green St, 508-798-6960

Ha Tien Market: 892 Main St, 508-791-2220

India Market, 1000 Boston Turnpike, Shrewsbury MA 01545, 508- 925-5427

Mekong Market: 747 Main St, 508-304-1437

Nepal Bazaar: 98A Belmont St, 774-420-2146

Patel Brother's Indian Market: 504 Boston Turnpike (Rte 9) in Shrewsbury MA, 508-842-9600

Pinoy Republic Asian Store: 545 SW Cutoff (Rte 20), 508-890-8600

**Butchers:** (If you are looking for fresh cut meat, or if you are looking of cuts of meat that are not as common in American grocery stores, some places to try)

Emerald Meats: 347 Chandler St, 508-756-2700

Tatnuck Meat and Seafood: 1100 Pleasant St, 508-754-8064

S&S Farms and Deli Marketplace: 307 W. Boylston St, 508-835-9989

AP Fish Company: 1059 Grafton St, 508-753-7744

### **European:**

European Bakery & Pastry: 29 Millbury St, 508-767-1651

Golemo's Market (Polish/ Eastern European): 43 Millbury St, 508-756-0086

Tom's International Deli: 52 Millbury St, 508-755-7295

Crown Bakery (Swedish): 133 Gold Star Blvd, 508-852-0746

### **Latin/Caribbean:**

Compare Foods: 664 Main St, 508-438-3663

Plaza Supermarket: 1000 Main St, 508-752-5406

### **Mediterranean/Middle Eastern:**

Bahnan's Bakery & Middle Eastern Style Food: 344 Pleasant St, 508-796-5365

Ed Hyder's Mediterranean Marketplace: 408 Pleasant St, 508-755-0258

George's Bakery: 308 Grafton St, 508-752-0762

Kalamos Greek and Mediterranean Market: 125 June St, 508-304-8828

### **HAIR AND GROOMING**

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Hair Anthony's Barber Shop (European/Asian style hair - cheap, decent, close to campus) 324 Grove St, 508-752-5510

Axe to Grind (European style hair) 174 Shrewsbury St, 774-243-9259

Bebe's African Hair Braiding, 685 Main St, 508-799-0172

Capelli Avanti Salon, 104 Grove St, 508-757-3855

Carlinto's Barbershop (black/Hispanic hair) 925 Main St, 508-755-6427

Henroks Barbershop (Black/African hair) 120 Shrewsbury St, 508-981-7651

Les Salon Beauty (Asian hair) 10 Kneeland St, Boston, 617-338-9898

Rosy's Hair Salon (Dominican owned, focus on Hispanic women's hair) 820 Main St, 508-757-1185

Santa's Hair Salon and Barber (Dominican salon, black and Hispanic hair) 198 Chandler St, Worcester 508-752-3328

Santana's Company Barbershop (all hair) 934 Main St, 508-926-8150

Shi-Shi's Lounge, A Eurayshia Willams Salon (Black/African style hair) 376 Chandler St, Worcester, 508-304-78780, [www.shishisalon.net](http://www.shishisalon.net)

### **Threading**

Salon Thread

131 Highland St, Worcester, 508-459-1771

The Eyebrow Place

Greendale Mall, 7 Neponset St

Usha's Christmas Tree Shops Plaza, Shrewsbury 508-366-9636

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

Worcester has a very rich cultural life. The best sources of information are the weekly calendars published by Worcester Magazine or the Worcester Telegram & Gazette Newspaper.

### **THEATERS**

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**Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts:** 2 Southbridge St, Worcester, 877-571-7469 or 508-831-0800 (Ticket Office). The Hanover Theatre regularly has performances of musicals, Broadway shows, comedians, and more.

Don't forget WPI has theater options as well! WPI offers several shows a year available for

students to attend (or even participate in!).

## PERFORMANCE CENTERS

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**DCU Center**, 50 Foster St, 508-755-6800 (Ticket Office). The DCU Center is the area's most popular entertainment center attracting top names in music, sports, and entertainment. It is also home to the Worcester Railers of the American Hockey League.

**Mechanics Hall**, 321 Main St, 508-752-5608 (Ticket Office). This National Historic Landmark serves as a performing arts center hosting a wide variety of concerts and cultural events. Among these are the unique free "Brown Bag" lunch concerts, the International Artist Series, the Travel Film Series, and the Worcester Music Festival.

## MUSEUMS

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**Worcester Art Museum**, 55 Salisbury St, 508-799-4406. The Worcester Art Museum has more than 35,000 works of art from all over the world. Classes are available for all ages, and exhibits are constantly changing. Admission is free to students with a WPI ID.



**Worcester Historical Museum**, 30 Elm St, 508-753-8278. This museum is full of local history and artifacts. Learn about Worcester's Industrial history or check out the Salisbury Mansion off of Institute Road.

## AMUSEMENT PARKS, HIKING, AND SKIING

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**Six Flags New England**, Agawam MA. Largest amusement park in New England with roller coasters, rides, and a waterpark. WPI Student Activities and the International Student Council organize trips at least once a year.

<https://www.sixflags.com/newengland>



**Canobie Lake Park**, Salem NH. Over 85 rides, games, live entertainment and attractions.

<http://www.canobie.com/>

**Breezy Picnic Grounds Waterslides**, Douglas, MA. A place to picnic and to go on waterslides for the summer. <https://breezysummer.com/>

**Wachusett Mountain State Reservation** and **Wachusett Mountain Ski Area**, Wachusett Mountain is only about 30 minutes from campus and is a great place for hiking in the summer and fall, and skiing in the winter. The State Reservation allows various hiking trail access to the summit and picnic areas (345 Mountain Rd, Princeton MA), while Wachusett Mountain Ski Area has chair lifts, ski rentals, and lodge for winter skiing (499 Mountain Rd, Princeton MA)

**Ski Ward Ski Area**, 1000 Main St, Shrewsbury MA, <https://www.skiward.com/> a local place to go skiing, snow tubing, and other activities

**Additional Hiking in Central Massachusetts:** If you are interested in getting off campus and into nature, there are many great hiking trails in Massachusetts and greater New England, for a start check out Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, Cascades Trail System, East Side Trail, Gates Pond, and Midstate Trail. More information can be found here:

<https://handluggageonly.co.uk/2021/01/31/15-best-hikes-in-massachusetts-to-experience/>

## SHOPPING

There are many stores in the immediate Worcester area to satisfy all of your shopping needs. The following lists include the most common locations to shop for groceries, furniture, clothing, and electronics. For a larger selection, it is recommended to go to one of the malls located close to campus.

### GROCERY STORES

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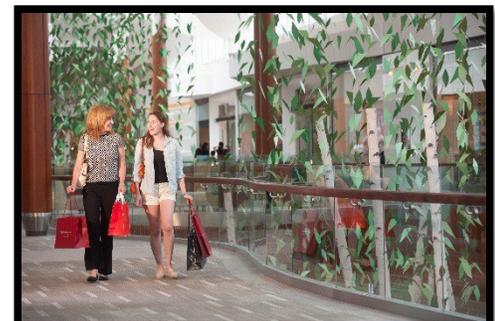
- Honey Farms Convenience Store: 101 Highland St, 508-438-0201
- Price Chopper: 221 Park Ave, 508-798-5178
- Shaw's Supermarket: 14 West Boylston St, 508-852-5833
- Big Y: 100 Mayfield St, 508-793-9011
- Trader Joes: 77 Boston Turnpike in Shrewsbury, MA, 508-755-9560
- Whole Foods: 193 Boston Turnpike in Shrewsbury, MA, 508-749-5520
- Wegmans: 9102 Shops Way, Northborough Crossing in Northborough, MA, 508-936-1900



### MALLS

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- Auburn Mall: 385 Southbridge St in Auburn, MA, 508-832-2314
- Greendale Mall: 7 Neponset St, 508-856-9400
- Natick Mall, 1245 Worcester St, Natick MA, 508-655-4800
- The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley: 70 Worcester-Providence Turnpike in Millbury, MA, 617-232-8900



- Solomon Pond Mall: 601 Donald Lynch Blvd in Marlborough MA, 508-303-6255
- Wrentham Village Premium Outlets: 1 Premium Outlet Blvd in Wrentham, MA, 508-384-0600

## FURNITURE

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- Austin Furniture: 199 Chandler St, 508-795-7400
- IKEA: 1 Ikea Way in Stoughton, MA, 888-888-4532
- Rainbow Furniture: 112 Grove St, 508-752-9143
- Savers: 490 Lincoln St, 508-853-3653

## GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

As the United States seeks to develop immigration policy which balances security concerns with the desire to remain a welcoming society, we continue to see a pattern of stricter interpretations of existing regulations and introduction of new regulations in a way we have not experienced before. For international students, this means that you must pay close attention to any communication you receive from the International House regarding updates/changes in immigration regulations.

The US immigration law classifies international students in the US as temporary non-immigrant aliens ("aliens" means any person not a citizen or national of the United States). As international students, you are in the US on a non-immigrant visa, usually F-1 or J-1. If you have any questions, please don't ever hesitate to contact the International House to ask for advice. You will find many useful websites published by US government agencies and different organizations or immigration attorneys. However, for the most accurate and up to date advice, we always ask that you rely on information provided by the International House.

The following information is meant to make you aware of your rights and responsibilities as an international student; it is not meant to be a complete listing of all government regulations as they pertain to you.

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The primary objective of the Department of Homeland Security is to protect the US against terrorist attacks, but it is also an objective of the department to enhance public service. There are three major organizations under DHS charged with enforcing immigration regulations in the US:

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):** The primary functions of ICE are immigration and customs investigations, customs air and marine



interdiction, immigration and customs intelligence, detention, and removal.

**Customs and Border Protection (CBP):** As a single unified border agency, CBP is charged with border patrolling, customs service, and immigration inspection at the ports of entry (land borders, airports, and harbors). When you enter the US, your first contact will be with an agent from this agency.



**US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS):** Most adjudication of immigrant and non-immigrant benefits will be done by USCIS either at the local USCIS Office or by mailing applications to a USCIS Service Center. As a student you might be filing an application



for change of status, for Optional Practical Training (OPT), or for re-instatement. These are all examples of applications adjudicated by USCIS. For more information, visit: <http://www.dhs.gov/>

## PASSPORT

Before coming to the United States, you were issued a passport by your government allowing you to leave and re-enter your own country. Your passport must always be valid for a period of *six months longer* than you expect to stay in the US. If necessary, your own consulate or embassy in the US will extend your passport. Consult with them to learn what forms and fees are required. If you have a valid US visa in an expired passport you can still use the visa as long as it is presented at the port of entry together with a new and valid passport.

You can locate your Embassy or Consulate here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/list-of-posts.html>.

## VISA

The US visa is the label placed by a United States consular office on a page of your passport. It indicates that the consular office has determined that you are qualified to apply for admission to the United States in a particular immigration classification. A valid visa does not ensure an alien's entry into the US. An immigration officer at the port of entry makes this decision.

A visa contains the following information:

- The visa numbers





- The location of the issuing consular post
- The visa classification (F-1, J-1, etc.)
- The date of issuance
- The expiration dates
- The number of applications for admission to the US for which it is valid
  - the letter “M” will appear if you have indefinite (multiple) entries to the US during the period of the visa’s validity

The expiration date on the visa does not have any relationship to the length of time you can stay in the US, but only to the length of time it is valid to present to immigration when entering the country. The duration of your legal stay in the US will be noted on your immigration entry stamp.

## FORM I-94

For those of you who have traveled to the US in the past, you may be familiar with the small white cards you filled out in duplicate on the airplane before landing. This card, called an I-94 arrival/departure record, would then be turned in at the US immigration desk at the airport and stamped by a Customs and Border Protection official before being stapled into your passport. The card proved your legal entry and status in the US.

As of May 2013, CBP has moved to an automated I-94 system, meaning the I-94 cards are now electronic. When you enter the US, the CBP officer will stamp your travel document (passport) at your port of entry. The stamp will show your date of admission, class of admission (F-1, J-1, etc.), and the date that you are admitted until, which for students is "D/S", or Duration of Status. In order to access your electronic, I-94, you must visit the Customs and Border Protection's website and fill out your personal information (name, birth date, passport number, passport country). We recommend that you do this shortly after entering the US (and each time you leave and re-enter the US) and print a copy for your records. A printed paper version of your I-94 card is still necessary for certain processes, such as applying for a Social Security Number (SSN).

Please note that the electronic I-94 will have an expiration date at the top right corner of the page when printed. This expiration date does not refer to the validity of your presence in the US. The only date that you should be concerned with is the date you are admitted until, which should read D/S. If you are concerned about this expiration date on the top of the I-94, you should be able to reprint a new copy of your I-94 with a future expiration date.

To access your electronic, I-94, visit CBP's website at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>

## MAINTAINING STATUS

The responsibility for maintaining your visa status lies with you. Being out of status can have serious consequences for your academic plans. There are several important things you must do

to maintain your status:

- Keep your passport valid. Your passport must be valid for a minimum of six (6) months into the future.
- Do not work off campus without USCIS approval. Before beginning any work, talk to an International Student Advisor to obtain approval.
- Obtain extensions as needed. Allow ample time for WPI to assist you with any application for extension of stay by talking to the International House well before the program end date listed on your I-20 form or DS-2019. Extensions must be recorded in SEVIS by an International Student Advisor, and you will receive an updated I-20 form or DS-2019.
- Maintain full-time enrollment and normal progress towards your degree. To remain in status, you must carry a full course of study every semester, except the summer term. For valid educational or medical reasons, you can be allowed to carry a reduced course load. Only the International Student Advisor can approve this exception. Permission must be obtained prior to enrollment for a reduced course load.

## OVERSTAYING AND UNLAWFUL PRESENCE

The provisions of The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA) affect all non-immigrants, and in some cases, even immigrants (green card holders) are affected. These provisions are to inform you of what will happen if you are out-of-status and remain in the United States illegally. As an F-1 or J-1 student, you need to know, as a minimum, the following about IIRAIRA:

*Unlawful presence in the US can result in up to a 10-year bar from re-entering the US. For the purpose of this regulation, you are unlawfully present when an immigration judge, a CBP officer, ICE officer, or a CIS officer determines that a status violation has occurred.*

## STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEVIS)



SEVIS is a tracking system for international students and exchange visitors in the US on F or J visas. The program facilitates timely reporting and monitoring of international students and exchange visitors. All F-1, F-2, J-1 and J-2 visa holders have a permanent SEVIS ID number, and all actions taken by the International Student Advisor, the US Consulate issuing initial visa, and the immigration

inspector at the port of entry will be recorded in the individuals SEVIS record in the government database. **WPI is required to keep our part of SEVIS up to date with the following information:** *Your US local as well as foreign home address, your program of study, your enrollment status, any employment we have authorized or recommended, program extension, dismissal from WPI, transfer to another school/program in the US, and date of completion of studies.*

The SEVIS Fee you paid when applying for your initial visa is a one-time fee. This fee is collected by the DHS to fund the SEVIS Program. You can reprint a confirmation of SEVIS fee payment at any time by visiting [fmjfee.com](http://fmjfee.com).

We will do everything possible to update each student's SEVIS record as we become aware of any changes, but it is ultimately **YOUR responsibility** to inform the International House of any changes in your circumstances. All reporting in SEVIS must be completed within specific timeframes, thus it is VERY important that you inform us immediately when you change your address, major, etc. Furthermore, certain actions on your part require prior approval by the International Student Advisors and updates in SEVIS. If you enroll for less than full time, you need to see the International Student Advisor prior to enrolling. If you need an extension, you must apply for the extension prior to the expiration date on your current I-20 or DS-2019. Finally, because we have to report your enrollment status every semester, it is very important that you adhere to the enrollment dates and complete your enrollment and registration no later than the first week of classes at the start of each semester.

## STUDENTS WITH F-1 VISA

If you were issued an I-20 form in order to obtain your US visa, you are on an F-1 visa. Any accompanying family members will be on an F-2 visa unless they are full-time students as well or if they have their own visa status. The following is a very brief overview of the F-1 regulations.

### DURATION OF STATUS

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Your immigration entry stamp should have a D/S written on it. Duration of Status is defined as the period of time necessary to complete a full course of study in any educational program, plus any authorized period of practical training following completion of that program, plus 60 days in which to depart the US. The term "duration of status" is not an indication that you can stay in the US indefinitely as long as you are enrolled at a university. You must have a valid I-20 form to support your D/S.



### I-20 FORM

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The first time an F-1 student comes into contact with the Department of Homeland Security, the

student must present a properly completed Form I-20. The I-20 is provided to the student by the Designated School Official from the US school the student will be attending and is the student's permanent record of his/her non-immigrant F-1 student status in the US. The Form I-20 is also used to record work and practical training. It should remain with your passport and should not be surrendered when leaving the US. Always be in possession of your I-20, and never allow someone else to keep your I-20 (for example, never allow your employer to keep your I-20). If you are given a new I-20 at any point, you must keep your past I-20s for your records - **do not throw them away!** A new I-20 form is only required if there has been a change in your field of study, degree program, in the source or amount of funding, or if all of the travel endorsement lines have been used. At a minimum you should scan all of your I-20s and keep an electronic copy.

### LEAVING THE US TEMPORARILY AND RE-ENTERING

F-1 visa holders need the following documents to re-enter the US after a temporary absence:

- Valid I-20 form recently signed by one of the International Student Advisors
- Valid passport
- Valid US visa (must at least be valid through the day you return to the US)
- Recent verification of adequate financial support, such as bank statements
- It is recommended that you carry with you an official copy of your transcript obtained from the Registrar's Office
- It is recommended that you carry an enrollment verification letter obtained through the Registrar's Office
- If you are on Optional Practical Training, you must bring your valid EAD card and, if possible, a letter from your employer stating you will resume your position upon your return to the US

### DEPENDENTS

Your spouse and/or children may enter the US on an F-2 visa provided they have evidence of adequate financial support. A person on an F-2 visa may NOT be employed under any circumstances. A separate I-20 form must be issued for your spouse and for each child.

### TRANSFER

If you are considering transferring from WPI to another university in the US, you need to inform the International Student Advisor once you have been accepted to another school and decide to transfer. You should also provide a copy of your acceptance letter to the new school to the International House and set up an appointment with the appropriate International Student Advisor to discuss your transfer release date. WPI will need to enter a "release" date into SEVIS and indicate the school you are transferring to. As soon as your record is released to another

school, you will lose all Practical Training privileges (CPT/OPT) associated with your time at WPI, even if you have been pre-authorized to work until a later date.

If you are a transfer student starting at WPI, you need to make sure your SEVIS record from your previous school has been released, and you must register within the first week of class. You are expected to check in with the International House as soon as you arrive to Worcester to begin your studies and attend orientation.

## EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH F-1 VISA

The basic requirement for all types of employment is that you must maintain lawful F-1 status. The USCIS defines employment as work performed or services provided *in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, meals, room and/or board, or any other benefit.*

### ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

You can work on campus as soon as your program begins provided you are otherwise maintaining your F-1 status. On-campus employment must not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session. During vacation periods, you can work full time. Once you receive a job offer, you need to obtain on-campus employment authorization from an International Student Advisor before starting any employment on campus. This can be done by bringing a copy of your official employment offer letter to the International House and filling out the necessary paperwork. Sample letters are available at the International House to provide to the hiring department if needed. Side jobs, such as tutoring other students on campus for cash, do not qualify as on-campus employment. Employment on campus must be paid by WPI or one of WPI's on-campus partner companies, Chartwells or Barnes and Noble.

### OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT BASED ON SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

If you are experiencing severe economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances beyond your control, you may be eligible to apply for Employment Authorization from the USCIS. You should see an International Student Advisor before applying.

### CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined as work experience directly related to the student's field of study that is completed while the student is still working towards their degree requirements. More specifically, CPT is the employment authorization used for F-1 students participating in off-campus co-ops or internships as part of their academic curriculum. To be eligible for CPT, you must be an F-1 student for one full academic year. You must apply for CPT and receive a new I-20 form with CPT employment authorization before you begin working.

Undergraduate students must first go through the Career Development Center (CDC) to complete the proper paperwork via Handshake before the International Student Advisor can process your CPT request. Once your internship or co-op has been approved by the CDC, the International House will automatically let you know when your CPT I-20 form is ready to be picked up.

Graduate Students must apply for CPT using the online graduate internship application form, which can be found on the Graduate Internships website here:

<https://www.wpi.edu/academics/graduate/internships>. The application must be approved by your advisor and the Registrar's office before it can be processed by the International House. The International House will automatically let you know when your CPT I-20 form is ready to be picked up.

### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

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Optional Practical Training (OPT) is defined as a work experience directly related to your field of study that is available after you have completed your degree requirements. The term "optional" refers to your option of whether or not to exercise your 12-month practical training privileges. OPT is available once per degree level, meaning you will have a new period of 12 months of OPT if you move from a BS to MS or MS to PhD. Workshops will be available each semester at the International House to provide more information regarding OPT, and videos are available on the International House website under "Video Archive." Please contact the International House directly to receive the password for the Video Archive section of the website.

Under certain circumstances, you can also apply for a 24-month extension of your OPT, known as the STEM Extension. To apply for an OPT STEM extension, your degree must be a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) degree, which is determined based on the CIP code assigned by WPI to your major field of study. Your employer must also be registered in the E-Verify database. More information about the OPT STEM Extension can be found on the International House website.

### STUDENTS WITH J-1 VISA

Exchange Visitors are admitted to the US in J-1 status to engage in one of a number of possible activities, one of which is to study. The United States Department of State administers the overall Exchange Visitor Program by designating sponsors to administer individual exchange visitor programs. The International Student Advisor who serves as the Responsible Officer (or Alternate Responsible Officer) for the WPI Exchange Visitor Program administers the WPI J-1 program. The following information pertains to J-1 Student Status only.

A number of students attend WPI on J-1 programs sponsored by outside agencies, such as Fulbright/IIE, AMIDEAST, and LASPAU. The international student advisor can provide information

regarding the J-1 program to students on other programs, but only the specific program sponsor can approve any benefits associated with the program. WPI cannot access the SEVIS records of those who hold non-WPI issued DS-2019s.

## DURATION OF STATUS

Your immigration entry stamp should have a D/S written on it. Duration of Status is defined as the period of time necessary to complete a full course of study in any educational program, plus any authorized period of academic training following completion of that program, plus 30 days in which to depart the US. The term "duration of status" is not an indication that you can stay in the US indefinitely as long as you are enrolled at a university. You must have a valid DS-2019 form to support your D/S.

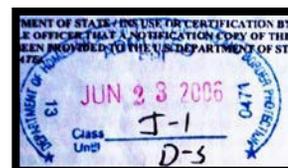
## DS-2019 FORM

The first time a J-1 exchange visitor comes into contact with the Department of Homeland Security, the student must present a properly completed Form DS-2019. The DS-2019 is provided to the student by the Program Sponsor through a Responsible Officer. If WPI is the program sponsor, one of the International Student Advisors will provide the DS-2019. For exchange visitors sponsored by outside programs, such as Fulbright, your Program Sponsor will issue your DS-2019. The DS-2019 serves as the permanent record of the exchange visitor's non-immigrant J-1 student status in the US. It should remain with your passport and should not be surrendered when leaving the US. Always be in possession of your DS-2019, and if you are given a new DS-2019 at any point, you must keep your past DS-2019s for your records - **do not throw them away!** A new DS-2019 form is only required if there has been a change to your program such as a change to your program end date, the source or amount of funding, or if all of the travel endorsement lines have been used.

## LEAVING THE US TEMPORARILY AND RE-ENTERING

J-1 visa holders need the following documents to re-enter the US after a temporary absence:

- Valid DS-2019 form recently signed by one of the International Student Advisors
  - If your DS-2019 was not issued by WPI, your Program Sponsor must sign your DS-2019 before you leave the US
- Valid passport
- Valid US visa (must at least be valid until the day you return to the US)
- Verification of adequate financial support, such as bank statements or your program sponsorship letter that shows financial commitment
- It is recommended that you carry with you an official copy of your transcript obtained from the Registrar's Office



- It is recommended that you carry an enrollment verification letter obtained through the Registrar's Office

## DEPENDENTS

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Your spouse and/or children may accompany you on the basis of their own form DS-2019. They will get J-2 visas. Your spouse can work only if they apply for work authorization through USCIS and receive an approval notification with a valid EAD Card.

## TRANSFER

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Exchange visitors may transfer from one sponsor to another only if the first sponsor releases their SEVIS record. You can change your J-1 sponsorship either by leaving the US and re-entering with a new DS-2019 form, or by successfully transferring programs in the US through approval from your current sponsor and SEVIS record transfer.

## EXTENSION OF STAY

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As an exchange visitor, you may apply for an extension of stay two-to-four weeks prior to the expiration date of your stay. The expiration date can be found on your DS-2019. Do not let your DS-2019 expire if you have plans to continue your program.

## TWO-YEAR HOME-COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT

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Certain J-1 students must return home for at least two years after completing their educational program (including any approved academic training). This requirement applies to students whose program has been financed to some extent by the US Government or by their home country, or to students whose skills are needed by their home country. For details on the two-year rule and grounds for waivers, you should contact your program sponsor.

## INSURANCE REQUIREMENT FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS (J-1 AND J-2)

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Exchange visitors are required to have medical insurance in effect for themselves and any accompanying spouse and dependents on J-2 visa. The minimum coverage must provide:

- At least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness
- At least \$25,000 for repatriation
- At least \$50,000 for medical evacuation to your home country
- Deductibles that do not exceed \$500 per accident or illness

Students must maintain the required insurance during the duration of their J-1 status, and dependents must be covered throughout the time they are physically in the US with the J-1 visa holder. This requirement is effective as of May 15, 2015.

## EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH J-1 VISA

The basic requirement for all types of employment is that you must maintain lawful J-1 status. The USCIS defines employment as work performed or services provided *in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, meals, room and/or board, or any other benefit*. You cannot legally work until you receive proper work authorization.

### ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

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You can work on campus provided you are otherwise maintaining your J-1 status. On-campus employment must not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session. During vacation periods, you can work full time. Once you receive a job offer, you need to obtain on-campus employment authorization from an International Student Advisor before starting any employment on campus. This can be done by bringing a copy of your official employment offer letter to the International House and filling out the necessary paperwork. Sample letters are available at the International House to provide to the hiring department if needed. Side jobs, such as tutoring other students on campus for cash, do not qualify as on-campus employment. Employment on campus must be paid by WPI or one of WPI's on-campus partner companies, Chartwells or Barnes and Noble. If you are not sponsored by WPI, you should check with your program sponsor first to confirm you are okay to work on campus while meeting program requirements.

### ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR J-1 VISA HOLDERS

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An Exchange Visitor Student (J-1 visa) may be authorized for a period of up to 18 months of academic training directly related to his/her program of study while enrolled or after completion of the academic program. For PhD students, postdoctoral academic training is allowed for up to three years. However, the academic training cannot exceed the total time enrolled in course work. You must have firm employment before applying for Academic Training.

As a J-1 visa holder, you may only be employed if the position will not unduly delay your degree, and employment is permitted only if it is an integral part of the program for which you came to the US. Only the program sponsor can authorize such a period of academic training for students on J-1 visas. Also, it is up to each program sponsor to determine the length of the academic training period up to 18 months. Some sponsoring agencies will only allow 6 or 12 months of academic training. To obtain permission for this kind of employment, you must consult the program sponsor. If you are sponsored by WPI, you must speak with an International Student Advisor.

## TRAVEL TO CANADA, MEXICO, AND ADJACENT ISLANDS

Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa may travel to Canada, Mexico, or select islands adjacent to the United States with an expired US visa if you have all other required documents. So long as you are traveling to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands for pleasure/tourism for a duration of less than 30 days, you can use an expired F-1 or J-1 visa to reenter the US. If you apply for a US visa while in Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent island, automatic revalidation no longer applies.



Automatic revalidation of non-immigrant visas does not apply to nationals of the following countries: Iran, Syria, and Sudan.

If you wish to apply for a non-immigrant visa from any of the US Consulate Posts in Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands, you must schedule an appointment.

For more information on how to apply for a visa at a US Consulate in Canada or Mexico, see: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/nonimmigrants-present-visiting-canada-mexico.html>. You should note that if your application for a new visa from a US Consulate in Canada or Mexico is denied, you must return to your country of residence and apply for the visa from there.

Check first to see if you need a visa to enter Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands. Applications and instructions for a Canadian Tourist visa are available on the web at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp>. To find out if you need a tourist visa to visit Mexico, visit: <https://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/sanfrancisco/index.php>

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Foreign nationals are required to advise the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of any change of US address within 10 days. Since the events of September 11, 2001, the DHS appears to seriously enforce this rule. If you are a student on an F-1 or J-1 visa, you can satisfy this requirement by informing the International House of your address change within 10 days. You can satisfy this requirement by completing the Change of Address form online through the International House's International Student Forms Page on their website, located here: <https://www.wpi.edu/offices/international-house/student/forms>.

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

A Social Security Number is a unique number that is assigned by the Social Security Administration and is used primarily for tax and identification purposes. If you are authorized to work and receive payment in the United States, you will need a Social Security Number. Only students who have proof of employment are eligible to apply for a Social Security Number.

Once you have received an offer of employment, International House will have information for you to apply in person for your social security number.

If you are a new student, the Social Security Office recommends waiting eight to ten days after you complete the SEVIS Check-In Process during International Orientation before applying for the Social Security Number. This is to ensure you are properly registered in SEVIS. The Social Security Administration verifies the status of all non-immigrant applicants for Social Security Numbers with USCIS. This USCIS check could add about a six-week delay in obtaining a Social Security Number. Please note that the Social Security Administration cannot check you in the SAVE system unless you have been registered in SEVIS by the International Student Advisor.

Applications must be done in person at the Social Security office. If you live in Worcester, the local office is located below. Documentation you are expected to bring: passport, visa, I-94, [SS5 form](#), offer letter. Once you have received your SSN, it is your responsibility to connect with WPI HR or Chartwells to give them your SSN for tax purposes as soon as received.

### **Social Security Administration**

Madison Place, 51 Myrtle St Worcester, MA 01608

Phone: 1-866-331-9069

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am-4pm

Wednesday: 9am to 12pm

Closed for All Federal Holidays

<http://www.ssa.gov/>



## US TAX OBLIGATIONS

As a F1 or J1 visa holder, ***you are required to submit forms each year*** to the US Government as a part of your US Tax Obligations. This is a requirement regardless of whether or not you were employed.



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withheld from each paycheck during the tax year. The most commonly used forms of summary statements are called W-2 forms and 1042-S forms. These forms are mailed during the month of January to those who have earned income. It is the responsibility of each person to file federal and state income tax return forms with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the State of Massachusetts by April 15.

*Some facts about tax obligations for non-US citizens:*

- International students and exchange visitors are not automatically exempt from paying income tax.
- Most stipends, scholarships, grants, and fellowships are taxable.
- All F and J visa holders--even those who earn no money in the US--**must file a statement** by April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- If you make more than \$8,000 in a tax year, you are required to file state taxes. If you make less than \$8,000, filing state taxes is optional.
- If you have been in the US for less than 5 calendar years, you are considered a non-resident alien for tax purposes. If you have been in the US for more than 5 calendar years, you are considered a resident alien for tax purposes.
  - A calendar year is considered any time present in the US during a specific calendar year. If you arrived on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, you would count 2017 as your first calendar year.
  - While you are considered a non-resident alien you are exempt from paying Social Security and Medicare taxes (payroll or FICA tax). Make sure you tell your employer when you begin work or they will automatically deduct this tax from your paycheck.
- As a non-resident alien, you cannot use the same tax software advertised for American residents. The International House has a tax software available for you to purchase.
- Some countries have tax treaties with the US. If you are applying for tax treaty benefits,

you must complete Form 8233.

All F and J visa holders are required to file a tax return whether or not they earned any US source income. If you had NO income from the US, you only have to file Form 8843. If you HAD US income, you must file Form 1040 NR-EZ. Individuals with more complicated tax situation should use Form 1040 NR instead of Form NR-EZ.

#### WHERE TO GO FOR TAX HELP AND INFORMATION

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There are several government publications that are very helpful:

- Publication 519 US Tax Guide for Aliens
- Publication 901 US Tax Treaties
- Publication 513 Tax Info for Visitors to the US
- Publication 520 Scholarships and Fellowships
- Publication 515 Withholding of Tax on Non-resident Aliens.

You can contact the IRS by phone at 1-800-829-3676 or 1-800-829-1040 if you have questions about your tax return. There is also an IRS office in Worcester at 120 Front St, 508-793-8227.

During tax season, the International House offers software to help you file your taxes. In addition, Colleen Callahan-Panday offers tax workshops to help you understand your tax filing obligations. Be sure to read the International House newsletters during the tax season for more information about tax workshop dates and tax software.

## APPENDIX A: CONVERSIONS

1 inch	25.4 millimeters
1 foot (12 inches)	3.048 decimeters
1 yard (3 feet)	0.9144 meter
1 mile (5,280 feet)	1.6093 kilometers
0.03937 inches	1 millimeter
3.2808 feet	1 meter
1.0936 yards	1 meter
1 kilogram	2.21 pounds
1 quart	1.1012 liters
1 peck	8.8098 liters
1 bushel	35.239 liters
1 fluid ounce	29.573 milliliters
1 quart	0.94635 liters
1 gallon	3.7854 liters
0.033814 fl. Oz.	1 milliliter
1.0567 quarts	1 liter
0.26417 gallon	1 liter

Fahrenheit °F      Centigrade °C (Celsius)

32	0
35	1.6
40	4.4
45	7.2
50	10.0
55	12.7
60	15.5
65	18.3
75	23.8
80	26.6
85	29.4
90	32.2
100	37.3

## APPENDIX B: ACADEMIC TERMS COMMONLY USED ON CAMPUS

*Source:* Educational Counseling Section, United States Information Service

**Academic Advisor:** Member of the faculty who helps and advises the student on academic matters. He or she may also assist the student during the registration process.

**Academic Probation:** A status resulting from unsatisfactory academic work; a student who is on academic probation must improve academic performance (i.e., grades) or be dismissed from the university after a specified length of time.

**Academic Year:** The period of formal academic instruction, usually extending from August to May. WPI uses academic quarters, or terms, for undergraduate courses, and semesters for graduate courses.

**Accreditation:** Non-governmental approval of institutions and/or certain programs within institutions by nationally recognized accrediting bodies. Accreditation can affect the transferability of credits from one institution to another or can be linked to prerequisites for professional certification or licensure.

**Advanced Placement:** A waiver of some of the studies normally required for an undergraduate degree, granted to a student on the basis of prior study or experience (often as indicated by the student's performance on special examinations).

**Alumna, Alumnus:** A woman (alumna) or man (alumnus) who has attended or graduated from a school, college, or university. (Plural forms: alumnae for women, alumni for men or both men and women together)

**Assistantship:** A study grant for a graduate student that is offered in return for certain services in teaching or laboratory supervision (as a teaching assistant), or services in research (as a research assistant).

**Class:** The word “class” has several different definitions:

- (1) Group of students which meets with an instructor or professor on a regularly scheduled basis
- (2) The group of students in a particular year of study, i.e., freshman class (1st year), sophomore class (2nd year), junior class (3rd year), senior class (4th year)
- (3) The group of students who will graduate in a particular year, as “The Class of 2000.”

**Consortium:** A union of several colleges and/or universities within close proximity of each other, offering wider course selections, more extensive library resources and other extended cultural and educational opportunities. WPI is a part of a consortium of 13 colleges and universities in the greater Worcester area.

**Cram:** Intense study for a test, done at the last possible moment.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Activities which are a part of student life, but not part of regular classroom study, such as athletics, student activities, dances, hobbies, clubs, etc.

**Professor Emeritus:** An academic title sometimes conferred on a retired faculty member.

**Quiz:** Short written or oral test, less formal than an examination.

**Registrar:** The college administrator who maintains student academic records and is responsible for registering a student for their courses.

**Research Paper:** A written report, which includes research findings and the development of the student's original ideas.

**Seminar:** A form of small group instruction combining independent research and class discussions under the guidance of a professor.

**Transcript:** A certified copy of a student's educational record containing titles of courses, the number of credits, and final grades in each course. An official transcript will also state the date a degree has been conferred. Transcripts can be obtained from the Registrar.

## APPENDIX C: IMMIGRATION TERMS

For a complete listing of immigration terminologies, visit the USCIS homepage.

**Alien Registration Number (or “A” Number):** Identification number assigned to an immigrant for US government purposes. In certain cases, at the discretion of the USCIS, registration numbers may be assigned to non-immigrant students and exchange visitors. However, most F-1, J-1 and M-1 students in the United States do not have “A” Numbers.

**“Certificate of Eligibility” (Forms I-20, or DS-2019):** Forms I-20 or DS-2019 are issued by a recognized US educational, vocational, or non-academic institution that accepts a foreign student for full-time study. Their sponsor, or the US educational institution they will be attending, issues the DS-2019 to exchange visitors. The I-20 and DS-2019 forms are not visaing; they are used to show your eligibility to apply for the non-immigrant student visa status.

**Change of Status:** Change from one non-immigrant classification to another. Change of status requires an application and USCIS approval.

**Dependent:** One who relies on another for support. For immigration purposes, a dependent is usually a spouse or any unmarried minor children (under 21-years-old).

**Extension of Stay:** Permission from USCIS to remain in the United States beyond the expiration date specified on the Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record”. For F-1 and J-1 visa holders, this means extending your I-20 or DS-2019 program end date.

**Form I-539:** Application form to be filled out by non-immigrants requesting reinstatement or a change of status.

**Immigrant:** A person who comes to a country other than his own as a permanent resident.

**Naturalization:** Process of becoming a citizen of a country not one's own.

**Permanent Resident:** Same as immigrant; a foreign national authorized to remain in the United States for an indefinite period of time.

**SEVIS Number:** The number on the I-20 Form or Form DS 2019 assigned to an F-1 or J-1 student. A SEVIS Number will begin with the letter “N”, followed by a list of numbers.

**Visa:** An endorsement stamped into a passport by a proper authority of a country the bearer wishes to enter. The visa denotes that the passport has been examined, that certain requirements for entry have been met, and that the bearer is permitted to proceed. The visa does not represent permission to enter the country; actual permission is granted at the point of entry.

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