

International Student Guidebook



CONTENTS

ACADEMIC LIFE

The Office of International Student Services	1
Orientation: Starting at Delaware County Community College	2
Education Structure	3
The English as a Second Language (ESL) Program	4
Academic Programs	5
Transferring	6
Expectations of students in Colleges and Classrooms	7
Payment	8
Health Needs and Insurance	9
Culture shock and mental health	10

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

Behavioral and Cultural Expectations	10
Campus Life	11
Transportation	13
Getting a Driver's License	13
The Surrounding Area	14

IMMIGRATION GUIDE

Important Documents	16
Regulations for students on F-1 Visa	17
Working	18
Social Security Numbers	19

ACADEMIC LIFE

The Office of International Student Services

The Office of International Student Services is the main point of contact for international students. The office is located on the Marple Campus, Enrollment Central, 3500 Founders Hall. The International Office helps students with:

- Orientation
- Immigration
- Academic Advising and Course Selection
- Personal Advising
- Homestays and Apartment Searches
- Driver's License Letters
- Letters of Full-Time Study Verification
- Working
- Taxes

The Office of International Student Services Staff

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Office Hours

The director's office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 pm. The housing coordinator's hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. During summer, the College is closed on Fridays.

Keep in Touch

All international students are required to provide the Office of International Student Services with their contact information and inform the College of any changes to that information:

- Telephone number
- E-mail address
- Address in the U.S.
- Emergency telephone number and contact person

Visiting the Office

The Office of International Student Services has an "open door" policy. You are always welcome to visit. If students have important things to discuss, it would be best to make an appointment by e-mail or phone.

Orientation: Starting at Delaware County Community College

New international students (those on F-1 visas, and those on J or other visas who have already filed for change of visa status to F, or taken steps to become an international student) should start their College life at the International Student Orientation. During Orientation, students:

- Learn about and tour the College
- Meet key staff and discover important places on campus
- Take the English as a Second Language (ESL) and math placement tests
- Select courses for the upcoming semester
- Pay bill
- Obtain a Student ID card
- Open a bank account

Important Places on Campus

ASSESSMENT CENTER (Room 4260 – Academic Building)

- Tests students in English as a Second Language (ESL), English, and math
- Helps students transfer in credits from a college or university. Foreign transcripts must first be evaluated by a NACES member: <http://www.naces.org/>
- Offers information about CLEP (College Level Examination Program) so that students may earn College credit for prior learning

CASHIER (Enrollment Central – Founders Hall)

- Provides bills, due dates with detailed schedules, and receipts, and takes payment

BOOKSTORE (next to the Cafeteria – Founders Hall)

- Sells the books that students need for courses
- Sells SEPTA bus tokens and College merchandise

LEARNING COMMONS (Room 4500 – Founders Hall)

- Library services and circulation, tutoring services, writing assistance, and more!

THE TRANSFER, CAREER & COUNSELING CENTER (Room 1325 – Academic Building)

- Provides academic and transfer advising and resources
- Helps students with learning disabilities and any other challenges
- Provides free, confidential counseling to students struggling with personal, academic, or psychological issues

CAMPUS LIFE / WELLNESS, ATHLETICS, and RECREATION

(Café – Founders Hall)

- Helps students who wish to start a club
- Helps students who wish to sign up for clubs, sports, and events

RECORDS (Enrollment Central – Founders Hall)

- Provides unofficial transcripts to students
- Mails official transcripts to students and/or the institution that will receive transcripts
- Provides the Application for Graduation
- Registers students for courses

THE COLLEGE'S INTERNATIONAL SITE (www.dccc.edu/inter)

- Features numerous resources, in multiple languages, designed for current and prospective international students

delagate

- The College's Web portal – delagate – enables students to update contact information, register for courses, pay bills, print transcripts, and achieve many other objectives, all in the convenience of your own home. Please be sure to visit delagate: <https://delagate.dccc.edu/cp/home/displaylogin>.



ADMISSIONS (Enrollment Central – Founders Hall)

- Explains the process of admitting international students
- Processes applications and acceptance packages, issues I-20s

Education Structure

The Semester System

The academic year at the College includes the following:

- Two full semesters: Fall (late August/early September to mid-December) and Spring (early January to mid-May)
- Two accelerated summer semesters for regular academic courses: Summer I (late May/early June to early July) and Summer II (early July to mid-August)
- One Summer ESL semester (early June to mid-August)

- One Wintersession semester (December through January)
- For other possible options, students should consult the College website and advisors

Credits

Students' academic work is measured in credits. The number of credits normally indicates the number of hours a class meets each week. A three-credit course, for example, will require the class to meet three hours weekly. A student must earn a specified number of credits to graduate. See your program in delaGATE to learn how many credits you need to graduate.

Credit Requirements for International Students

Each fall and spring semester, international students are required to complete 12 credits. In most cases, students are not authorized to drop a course if it would mean they will complete fewer than 12 credits. Students thinking about dropping a course must consult with the International Office prior to doing so. Returning students are not required to study in summer.

Progressing to Graduation

Most international students will take some ESL courses before beginning full course loads of their academic (major) program. For this reason, it usually takes international students 2-3 years to graduate from Delaware County Community College. See the "Road to Graduation" at the ESL Online Resource Center (www.dccc.edu/esl) or www.dccc.edu/inter.

Applying for Graduation

Students must apply for graduation via the Records department in Enrollment Central.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

The entire ESL program is explained in the ESL Online Resource Center at www.dccc.edu/esl. New international students are required to take the ESL placement test at Orientation. Only students who have taken a regular, academic English Composition course at a U.S. institution may be exempt from the test. ESL courses taken at another institution will not transfer to the College.

The placement test will measure students' ability in Reading, Listening, Writing, and Grammar. Students' scores determine where they start in the College's ESL Program. In rare cases, students may test out of ESL and into developmental English (ENG 050 or REA 050, or INT075), or English Composition I (ENG 100). There are 12 courses in the ESL Program, and two developmental courses.

Tutoring is mandatory for Writing, Reading, and Listening/Speaking classes, but not for grammar. As demonstrated here, the ESL Program and a student's regular academic program will likely merge once the student has finished all levels of a particular subject.

Subject	Level				Regular Academic Courses
	Elementary Level	Intermediate I	Intermediate II	Developmental English	
Grammar	023	033	043		
English / Writing	024	034	044	050	
Reading / Vocabulary	025	035	045	050	
Listening / Speaking	026	036	046		

	First Semester The student took the placement test and placed into the blue circled courses.		Second Semester The student passed all the first semester courses and will advance to the next levels, indicated by the orange boxes. In addition to the three courses indicated, the student will also take one or two regular academic classes.
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Please note:

- If you have questions about your scores or placement testing in general, visit the Assessment Center.
- On the first day of each course, instructors may give a test in the particular subject (e.g. Grammar 023 or Writing 044) to ensure the accuracy of the placement test.
- Students must reach the intermediate levels of ESL before taking regular academic courses. For students in ESL, advisors should recommend only those courses which require less English communication skills (Computers, Mathematics, Art, etc.).
- After ENG 050 and REA 050 or INT 075, students may take English Composition I (ENG 100). This is the first college-level English that all students at the College are required to complete. Here is an example of an ESL student's progress:

Academic Programs

The College offers over 50 programs to choose from, including university transfer degree, career degree, and certificate programs. During first-semester Orientation, advisors will assist students in selecting courses.

In all future semesters, international students are responsible for selecting their own courses. Advisors in the International Office and the Transfer Center (Room 1325) are available to help

students. International students should remember that ESL courses are the priority at Delaware County Community College. Students should visit delaGATE to learn about the classes required for their program and to keep track of their progress.

Students can register and pay online through delaGATE. Students can also register at the Records Window (across from the Cashier in Founders Hall).

Transferring

International students interested in transferring to a four-year college or university should make an appointment with a transfer advisor in the Transfer, Career & Counseling Center (Room 1325 – Academic Building).

- Before the appointment, think of two or three institutions you would like to attend, and search online for their Admissions requirements. Bring your research to your appointment
- Also, remember that if you are having learning, personal, or emotional difficulties, you can meet with a counselor. The counselors are here to help you.

Transfer Timeline

The following guide is suggested for students who are finished ESL and interested in transferring to a four-year college or university:

- FIRST SEMESTER OF REGULAR ACADEMIC COURSES (or up to 15 credits)
 - Clarify your academic goals
 - Attend Transfer Fairs and Information Sessions on campus
 - Meet with a transfer advisor to begin transfer process
- SECOND SEMESTER (or 15-30 credits)
 - Gather information on transfer institutions
 - Attend Transfer Workshops
- THIRD SEMESTER (or 30-50 credits)
 - Contact admissions counselors at transfer institutions
 - Visit transfer campuses
 - Submit applications for admissions
- FOURTH SEMESTER (or 50+ credits)
 - Contact transfer institutions to ensure application file is complete

Expectations of Students in U.S. Colleges and Classrooms

- Class participation is expected and is often times a significant part of your grade. Participate by asking questions to your professors, instructors, and tutors. Participate by being alert in class. Silence may be perceived as lack of interest.
- Be respectful of other students' opinions. Professors will not tolerate any students making fun of or dismissing any other student. All students should feel welcome to participate, as long as they plan to be respectful.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly. Any more than one hour of absence per credit may result in your receiving an F or a W grade. This means that for a three-credit course that meets three days a week for one hour each day, you may be able to miss only three classes the entire semester. Attend class regularly.
- Ask your professor for help if you are struggling in the class. Some professors may offer extra credit.
- Professors should always be addressed by their formal names ("Dr. Joan Delaware," not "Joan"). This applies to when you speak and write to professors unless they ask to be called something else.
- Some professors and students may wear informal attire. This is common in American classrooms.
- Professors are busy people. Try not to take up their time with questions that can be answered on the syllabus. "What is your e-mail address?" for example, is not an appropriate question if the e-mail address is listed on the syllabus.
- Keep all syllabi for at least one or two years.
- Expect many small assignments due within a short period of time. In an American college course, weekly assignments may be given to assess ongoing learning.
- Independent, creative thinking is valued.
- Students must take responsibility for themselves.
- If students wish to dispute a grade, they should communicate politely but openly with the professor. Students should not expect their advisors, or anyone else other than the professor and his or her superiors, to assist in altering a grade.

Payment

Students at Delaware County Community College can obtain bills and receipts in delaGATE or from the Cashier. Students can pay using cash, checks, credit cards, and traveler's checks.

Opening a Bank Account

International students will have the chance to open a bank account at Orientation. Opening an account will provide a method for wire transfer of funds from abroad. Checks can be used to pay monthly bills like those for rent, telephone, and electricity. Be sure that there is enough money in your account to cover the amount of the check when the check is expected to be cashed.

Writing a Check

Remember to sign and date all of your checks. Your address goes in the upper left hand corner of the check. Here is an example of a completed check:

N. E. Student 2300 Mariner Square Drive San Francisco, CA 95102	Date: 08/26/08
Pay To The Order Of DCCC	\$ 5,000.25
Five Thousand Dollars and 25/100 Dollars	
Tuition and Fees – Fall 2008	<i>Jason Oliva</i>
⑆ 1 234 56 780 ⑆ 234 56 789 1 2344 5 ⑆ 2228	

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)

An ATM is located outside of the cafeteria and at the Café on the Marple Campus. One should only use machines located in a safe and secure place. Avoid making withdrawals after dark.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are popular in the U.S., but are sometimes difficult to obtain for international students. Students are advised to obtain an internationally accepted credit card from their home countries. Major credit cards include Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. Be wary of using credit cards as a means of postponing payment for purchases. Almost all credit cards charge interest, which may range from a small percentage to a high percentage (e.g. 25%) charge on purchases. If your credit card is lost or stolen, file a report with the police and notify the company that issued the card immediately.

Health Needs and Insurance

As you know, there is no free health care system in the United States. For international students, financial assistance for medical bills is not available from the government or the College.

To ensure the protection of students, the College automatically enrolls international students in a single health insurance plan. It is an affordable plan that includes basic doctors' visits, emergency care, intercollegiate sports injuries, mental health needs, and emergency medical transportation to the home country.

Students will be covered every semester they are enrolled at the College. Students who begin in fall or spring will be charged twice per year: once in fall, and once in spring. Students who begin at the College with the summer ESL semester will be charged a prorated amount on the summer tuition bill (covering June to August). Each charge will appear on the regular tuition bill; there will be no separate bill.

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the health insurance policy:

How do international students sign up and pay?

Students need not sign up. Students are automatically enrolled and charged. The health insurance charge will appear on the regular tuition bill. As always, students will be expected to pay the entire tuition bill in one full payment.

Do I have to pay for this insurance plan?

Yes. It is mandatory. It is not possible to opt out of enrollment.

Can I provide insurance from my home country or another U.S. insurance policy?

No. The College will not accept other forms of insurance. Even if you have already purchased insurance, you will still be automatically enrolled in and required to pay for the College-sponsored insurance plan.

If I am going home for the summer and will return to the College, can I pay for fewer months?

No. The enrollment period is fixed to cover you for the entire year. This keeps the cost down and ensures that you will be covered under the same policy when you return in the fall.

What if I graduate, transfer, or permanently withdraw from the College?

If you graduate, transfer, or permanently withdraw from the College at the end of the spring semester, you may submit a refund request for the prepaid summer months. The Office of International Student Services can help you.

Do you have more information for me and my parents or guardians?

Yes! The Office of International Student Services will be happy to provide you with the full, detailed insurance plan.

Culture Shock and Mental Health

Culture shock is the feeling of being out of place in an unfamiliar environment. The initial excitement of moving to a new country often goes away when you begin to feel challenged by a different culture and a different environment. You may feel confused and frustrated by new and challenging cultural norms and expectations. The stress of dealing with these challenges can result in discomfort and negative feelings. What can you expect? Here is a graph showing how culture shock may develop:

If you are a person who has already exhibited the courage and sense of adventure to study in another country, overcoming culture shock can be achieved. However, if feelings of longing and depression persist, talk to someone in the Career and Counseling Center (Room 1325 – Academic Building), a friend, family member, host family, or staff in the International Office.

It is not uncommon in the U.S. for people with emotional problems to seek professional help. International students are far from home and lack the usual support system of family and friends. International students may find it helpful to speak with a counselor or other mental health professional when dealing with issues of adjustment, depression, strain, or stress. This process is a respected way in the U.S. to achieve good mental health. Here, shame and stigma are not associated with seeing a mental health professional. Doctor-patient conversations are private and subject to privacy laws.

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

Behavioral and Cultural Expectations

- Be respectful to everyone. Delaware County Community College does not tolerate a lack of respect to *any* person, no matter their economic or social standing, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. You are entitled to respect; please show this same consideration to others.
- Showing appreciation is important in the U.S. Americans expect to hear the word “Please” when you ask for help. They also expect to hear the words “Thank you” after they help.
- Punctuality, or being on time, is important in the U.S. Do not be late for appointments or for your classes. By being late, you are sending the message to your professor, instructor, or advisor that you are not taking your course or your appointment seriously. Value others’ time.

- Communicate well with teachers and advisors. Make appointments when necessary. Never demand something from your teachers, advisors, or other employees at Delaware County Community College. You would do best to *not* say, “I need you to do this for me...” or “I want you to help me now.” Instead, try, “Could you please help me with this?”
- Plagiarism is using – on tests and in written form – someone else’s answers, words, or ideas, and pretending that they are your own. Plagiarism is stealing and may result in disciplinary action against you. If you are wondering whether something is plagiarism, ask your professor, instructor, or tutor.
- Similar to plagiarism, cheating is using another person’s effort and talent for your own personal gain – with or without that person’s permission. Cheating is also stealing and may result in disciplinary action against you.
- Study abroad is not easy. Being away from home is not easy. You will face a different set of expectations and challenges while studying abroad. Remember: talk it out. If you are feeling bothered, stressed, confused, worried, or otherwise not well-equipped to succeed while you study abroad, tell someone. This someone can be a friend, roommate, host family, advisor, professor, tutor, librarian, or anyone else that will listen. It is important to express yourself and communicate how you are feeling. Following this advice will increase your chances for success as you study abroad.

Campus Life

Delaware County Community College has a Campus Life Office and an Office of Wellness, Athletics, and Recreation. These are located in the Café area.

The College offers many sports and clubs in which students can participate. In the past, international students have fulfilled important roles on sports teams, including captain. Students in ESL may play sports and join clubs. All students who participate in sports must have a physical examination from a doctor.

Clubs

- Art and Design Club
- Black Student Union (BSU)
- Business Society
- Campus Bible Fellowship
- Chess Club
- Criminal Justice Club
- DCCC Contemporary Band
- Delaware Valley Computer-Aided Design Club
- Engineering Club

- Future Financial Professionals
- Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)
- History Club
- Hotel/Restaurant Management (HRM) Club
- Literature Club
- Multicultural Club / International Friendship Program
- Nurses' Club
- Paralegal Club
- Performing Arts Club
- Political Science Club
- Science Club
- Social Dance Club
- Spanish Club
- Student Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA)

Organizations

Phi Theta Kappa – Honor Society

Phi Theta Kappa recognizes and encourages scholarship and leadership among community college students. Phi Theta Kappa sponsors many educational and community service activities each year. The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa is the recognition and encouragement of scholarship among community/junior college students. To achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa provides opportunity for the development of leadership and service; for participating in a climate of intellectual exchange; for lively fellowship among scholars; and for stimulation of interest and continuing academic excellence.

Student Government Association (SGA)

Students with at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) are welcome to join the SGA throughout the year. The SGA is actively involved with government-related issues, and designed for students who are interested in learning about policy-making, politics, and government.

WDCR Radio Station

The College's radio station, operated by students, is located in the student lounge, Room 2512 – Academic Building. Announcers and production staff are always needed. This is a great opportunity for students interested in going into broadcasting or communications. Training is available to students interested in technical positions, program positions, or deejay positions.

Pegasus Magazine

Whether your field of interest is communications or nursing, *Pegasus* is an excellent opportunity for you to have your written work published. *Pegasus* is written and produced yearly by students. Any individual interested in submitting work should contact the Campus Life Office.

The Communitarian Student Newspaper

The College's student newspaper was unveiled in 1967. *The Communitarian* is a classroom project for students in Fundamentals of Journalism II (ENG 131). Talented, hardworking, and dependable students who would like to see their work in print and learn more about journalism in general should register for the course.

Wellness, Athletics, and Recreation

Students interested in participating in any College sport should contact the Director of Wellness, Athletics and Recreation at 610-359-5354, or email athleticsdept@dccc.edu. The College's intercollegiate athletic program provides competitive activities for students.

Fall sports

Men's Soccer
Women's Volleyball
Co-Ed Golf

Winter sports

Men's Basketball
Women's Basketball

Spring sports

Men's Baseball
Women's Softball
Co-Ed Tennis

Transportation

Visit the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) website at www.septa.org for information on commuter rail trains and buses. The Marple Campus in Marple Township is served directly by SEPTA bus routes 112, 115, and 118.



Taking the bus is an inexpensive option for traveling to and from New York, Baltimore, Boston, Montreal, Washington, D.C. and other points of interest. Check out MegaBus, Bolt Bus, Greyhound, etc.

Personal Vehicles

Owning a car is expensive. Much thought and planning should go into buying a car. There are various car dealers in the surrounding area. All drivers must have automobile insurance.

Getting a Driver's License

- Download the Driver's Manual to complete your Learner's Permit Application: www.dmv.state.pa.us/drivers_manual/pa_driversman.shtml
- Sign up for the College letter in the Office of International Student Services. Letters will be written after classes start. *One letter will be issued; be sure to use it within 30 days.*
- Visit a doctor's office for a physical exam. Bring your Learner's Permit Application (inside the Driver's Manual) and ask the doctor's office to complete its section.
- If you do not have a social security card, go to the nearest Social Security Office to obtain a Social Security Card Denial Letter.

- Go to a Driver’s License Center and bring with you the following: College Letter, Completed Learner’s Permit Application, Social Security Card or Denial Letter, Passport and Visa, I-20, and two proofs of residency (bills or official mail that show your address)

Visit [PennDOT](#) for the hours and locations of Driver’s License Photo and Exam Centers. The Social Security Office nearest to the College: 8645 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, PA, 19082. *Hours:* Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Surrounding Area

Delaware County Community College is located in Media, a comfortable and convenient small city located 15 minutes away from the main campus by bus or car. Philadelphia is 30 minutes to one hour away depending on your mode of transport and traffic. The cities of New York, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., are all within three hours. Within two hours are mountains where you can enjoy skiing and hiking, as well as beaches in the states of Delaware and New Jersey. Being in a richly diverse area has its benefits – take advantage and enrich your study abroad experience!

Media online resources:

- www.mediaborough.com/
- <http://visitmediapa.com>
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXF_Q_Ni3RA

- *Philadelphia City Paper*
www.citypaper.net
- *Philadelphia Weekly*
www.philadelphiaweekly.com
- www.philebrity.com
- www.phrequency.com
- Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau www.philadelphiausa.travel

Philadelphia online resources:

- www.visitphilly.com/
- www.Philly.com

Entertainment

To find out about College-run activities, check delaGATE and the *Activities Calendar* distributed by Campus Life. For local entertainment and activities, the best source of information is the Internet, local newspapers, radio, and television.

Philadelphia Historical Landmarks

Independence Hall, Independence National Historical Park, the Liberty Bell, Benjamin Franklin’s print shop, Betsy Ross’s House, Battleship New Jersey Museum, Christ Church, Elfreth’s Alley, Valley Forge, etc. – Philadelphia is an important U.S. historical and cultural city, with so many attractions for you to enjoy!

Art Museums

The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Rodin Museum (featuring the largest collection of Rodin's works outside France), the Barnes Foundation (featuring a celebrated collection of French Impressionist painting), the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, etc.

Performing Arts

Philadelphia Orchestra (at the Kimmel Center), the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Wilma Theater, the Arden Theater Company, the Walnut Street Theater, World Café Live, Prince Music Theatre, etc.

Cultural Districts and Other Attractions

The Atwater Kent Museum, Adventure Aquarium (across the Delaware River in Camden, NJ), the Philadelphia Zoo, the Reading Terminal Market (great place for lunch), the Mummer's Museum, the National Constitution Center, the Franklin Institute (museum of science and technology), South Street, the Italian Market, Old City, Rittenhouse Square, King of Prussia Mall, Chinatown, Society Hill, University City, Penn's Landing and the Waterfront, etc.

Sports and Recreation

Among Philadelphia's outdoor attractions is Fairmount Park, the largest urban park system in the United States, with five major parks located throughout the city, each offering a variety of recreational facilities. Philadelphia is also a city of sports lovers, and is home to professional teams in four major sports; the Eagles (American football), Phillies (2008 Major League Baseball Champions), 76ers (basketball), and Flyers (hockey).

Day Trips

Hershey Park (amusement park), Lancaster County (famous for its Amish settlements), the New Jersey shore (beaches, great seafood, etc.), the casinos and boardwalk of Atlantic City, Baltimore, Pocono Mountains, Longwood Gardens, New York City, etc.

Food in the Philadelphia Area

Venture beyond the famous – or notorious, depending on your perspective – cheesesteak, hoagie, and soft pretzel! Good food options abound in our area, including farmers' markets, fresh produce sellers, grocery stores such as Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, and many others. Philly has an incredible restaurant scene as well. Food highlights include:

- Local farmer's market days – in Philadelphia, Media, and all over the area
- Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia
- The Italian Market in South Philly
- Essene Market in South Philly
- Vietnamese and Asian grocery stores in South Philly
- Milk and Honey in West Philadelphia
- DiBruno Brothers in Philadelphia
- Gentiles in Newtown Square
- Chinatown
- The H Mart in Upper Darby

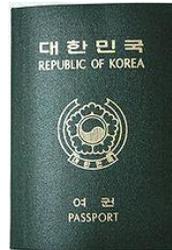
IMMIGRATION GUIDE

Important Documents

Passport, F-1 Visa, Form I-94, and I-20

Passport

Your passport, issued by your home country, identifies you as a citizen of that country. It must be valid for at least six months beyond the time of your authorized stay in the United States. To apply for an extension of your passport, send it to the consulate of your country having jurisdiction over this area or to your embassy in New York or Washington, D.C.



F-1 Visa

Your visa, issued by a U.S. Consulate or Embassy, is stamped in your passport and entitles you to enter the United States. It shows: place of issue, type of visa, date of issue, and expiration date.



I-20

This document is issued by the College and states your beginning date, ending date, and major.

Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record)

Formerly a paper card, this record is digital and will stay in your Immigration record.

Regulations for International Students

Status in the United States

Students are responsible for understanding the regulations and rights of their residency or Immigration-related status while in the United States, and for maintaining good standing for whichever visa or status they hold. Most international students are on F-1 visas, though there are many visa types represented at the College. For information about status and other visa types, contact the Admissions Office or the Office of International Student Services.

Enrollment: Full-time vs. Part-time Studies

International students are required to be enrolled full-time (minimum of 12 credits per fall and spring semesters). An international student must receive permission from the International Office in order to lawfully study part-time. Acceptable reasons for enrolling part-time include medical emergencies and studying in the graduating semester of a degree program. If permission is not granted, a student's status may be terminated in SEVIS, and students may be required to depart the U.S. or file an application for reinstatement to get back into status.

To be "in status" means that you are a lawful F-1 student following your visa regulations. To be "out of status" means you are not in lawful F-1 status, and as such, are no longer eligible for F-1 benefits, such as course registration, work on campus, Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training.

How to Stay in Status

The Department of Homeland Security grants F-1 status to individuals for one purpose only: to study at a particular school in the United States. Penalties for breaking the regulations may include the loss of F-1 benefits and privileges, removal from the United States, inability to re-enter the United States, etc. It is every student's responsibility to understand the regulations and consequences involved in his or her status in the U.S. The College can provide you with the best information available, but you are responsible for maintaining your status.

F-1 Student Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Report to Orientation and attend the authorized school on your Form I-20.
- Register for and attend a full course of study (12 credit hours), except in summer, your graduating semester, and official school breaks.
- Complete 12 credits each fall and spring semester with a letter grade (no withdrawals).
- Maintain consistent academic progress towards completing your studies before the program completion date on the I-20.
- Do not expect to receive any financial assistance or to work in the U.S. In order to be admitted, you testified that you had the financial means to study and live in the United States.
- Obtain signature from the Office of International Student Services on page three of your I-20 to verify the maintenance of your status before you travel temporarily outside the U.S.
- Notify the Office of International Student Services within 10 days of changing your address or telephone.
- Maintain a valid passport.
- Maintain health insurance.
- File tax forms each year as required by federal and state regulations.

- Meet with International Office staff more than 30 days in advance of the end date on your I-20 if you need a program extension.
- Do not work off campus unless you obtain special permission from the Department of Homeland Security in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card or a written notation on the I-20 specifically for Curricular Practical Training (CPT).
- Within 60 days of completing your program: 1) Apply for Optional Practical Training, 2) Gain admission to and enroll in a new academic program, 3) Leave the U.S., or 4) Apply to change your nonimmigrant status.

What should you do if you fall out of status?

Consult with the Office of International Student Services. Staff there can explain your options regarding your status. Out-of-status students within the United States may be eligible to file an application to Immigration asking to be reinstated into good status. Students who have been out of status for five months or more should consult with their attorney.

Working

An F-1 student may seek employment only after obtaining approval. Students generally are not permitted to be employed without special authorization from either the Department of Homeland Security or the Office of International Student Services. The primary purpose of an F-1 visa is to be a student. Work must not interfere with that objective and is therefore limited.

On-campus employment

On-campus employment at Delaware County Community College is limited to 10 hours per week while school is in session. Students must be finished all English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and have at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA). On-campus work during the summer is not available. If you are interested in working on campus, please visit the Office of International Student Services.

Off-Campus Employment – Severe Economic Hardship

An F-1 student may request off-campus employment authorization based on severe economic hardship, but it is granted only in truly severe cases, which may include:

- Severe, unforeseen economic necessity
- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's source of support
- Medical bills or other substantial and unexpected expenses

To qualify for severe economic hardship, a student must:

- Be enrolled as an F-1 student for at least one full academic year
- Be in good standing at the College and with Immigration
- Prove to the Department of Homeland Security that employment is necessary through documentation provided by you and your sponsor

Off-Campus Employment – Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

F-1 students may be eligible for CPT work experience that is a portion of a course or program of study. These experiences may include internships, cooperative education programs, and practical experiences for which academic credit is granted. To qualify, a student must:

- Be enrolled as an F-1 student for at least one full academic year
- Be in good standing at the College and with Immigration
- Obtain approval by the Office of International Student Services and the Student Employment Office

Off-Campus Employment – Optional Practical Training (OPT)

F-1 associate degree students are eligible for 12 months of part-time or full-time Optional Practical Training (OPT). During school, OPT is part-time; post-graduation, OPT is full-time.

OPT provides an opportunity to gain practical work experience. This employment opportunity must be directly related to your major field of study. Students must apply to Immigration for authorization from the Department of Homeland Security. A decision is usually sent to the student within 60-90 days. Consult with the International Office for more information.

Off-campus employment authorization is terminated when you transfer schools.

Consequences of Illegal Employment

As an international student, you are subject to federal regulations that govern your ability to maintain your status and to remain legally in the United States. Please note:

- Any employment that is in violation of your F-1 status is a deportable offense if it comes to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security.
- Any employer who hires you for a position that does not comply with the limitations your employment authorization category may be subject to civil or criminal penalties
- If, at some point in the future, you decide to apply for U.S. permanent residency (either through an employment petition, a petition filed by an immediate relative, or through the diversity visa lottery), you are required to submit copies of your past U.S. federal income tax returns as part of the application. If previous employment is indicated on your tax returns, the Immigration officer may request that you present proof of work authorization for those jobs.

Social Security Numbers

As of October 13, 2004, no international student can be issued a Social Security card without the offer of lawful employment. Since new students can work on campus only after finishing ESL and one semester of college level course work, it is unlikely that any international student will be able to qualify for a Social Security card for at least the first year of studies. International students do NOT need Social Security numbers to obtain a driver's license, to open a bank account, or even to rent an apartment.

Holidays in the United States

Federal Holidays and Celebrations

- New Year's Day, January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, third Monday in January
- Inauguration Day, January 20 every four years
- George Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February
- Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May
- Flag Day, June 14
- United States of America's Independence Day, July 4
- Labor Day, first Monday in September
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October
- Election Day, Tuesday on or after November 2
- Veterans Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, December 25

Other Observances

- Groundhog Day, February 2
- Lincoln's Birthday, February 12
- Valentine's Day, February 14
- Washington's Birthday, February 22
- St. Patrick's Day, March 17
- April Fool's Day, April 1
- Earth Day, April 22
- Mother's Day, second Sunday in May
- Father's Day, third Sunday in June
- Columbus Day (traditional), October 12
- United Nations Day, October 24
- Halloween, October 31

College Locations

Delaware County

Marple Campus
901 South Media Line Road
Media, PA 19063-1094

Southeast Center
2000 Elmwood Avenue
Curtis Building
Sharon Hill, PA 19079

Upper Darby Center
Barclay Sq Shopping Center
1570 Garrett Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082

Chester County

Downingtown Campus
100 Bond Drive
Downingtown, PA 19335

Exton Center
Whiteland Business Park
912 Springdale Drive
Exton, PA 19341

Brandywine Campus
443 Boot Road
Downingtown, PA 19335
610-723-1100

Pennocks Bridge Campus
280 Pennocks Bridge Road
West Grove, PA 19390

Phoenixville Campus
Technical College High School
1580 Charlestown Rd.
Phoenixville, PA 19460
610-450-6500

Questions or suggestions?

Contact the Office of International Student Services
610-359-7322 or klozier@dccc.edu