



May 5, 2022

Dear Exchange Student:

Welcome to Worcester State University. We are pleased that you will be visiting us this coming fall (2022). According to our records, you will be arriving to begin your program in September of 2022. Classes begin on September 6th, and the Office of Residence Life will communicate the move-in dates for the dormitory to you.

WSU Health Form

The first order of business you can get started on is completing the WSU Health Form. Please be sure that this form is filled out in its entirety and have your doctor sign it and return it to me *no later than **August 1, 2022***. There is also information about the meningococcal disease and vaccination. If you are not going to get the vaccination, you must complete the vaccination waiver form and return it to me. I will make copies for your files and send the originals to the health center. If you have any questions about the health form or the meningococcal vaccination, please contact our school nurse, Lisa Gaimari, at lgaimari@worchester.edu. It is very important these documents are completed and submitted to us prior to your arrival as you may not be allowed to attend classes without doing this.

Health Insurance

All students attending WSU are required to be fully-vaccinated against COVID-19. Per Massachusetts state law as well as the terms and conditions of your J-1 visa, you are required to have health insurance for the duration of your stay, including any vacation periods. You have two options for this. First, you could purchase the WSU health insurance plan. The cost of this is approximately \$1000 per semester and this is **in addition** to the exchange, so you would have to pay out-of-pocket. Additionally, you can choose coverage from a third-party provider. We have a good relationship with *Compass Benefits Group* (www.compassbenefit.com), or there are a variety of other providers as well. Please remember that *travel insurance* **will not** suffice, but that you will need medical insurance for the duration of your stay. **You will need to submit a copy of your policy to WSU a minimum of four weeks prior to the start of classes so we can verify it meets federal requirements for J visitors.** The minimum insurance requirements are outlined here:

Program participants and their dependents are required to have medical insurance coverage with the following minimum benefits [22 CFR 62.14].

- Medical benefits of **at least** \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

Sponsors are to require that their participants (and any dependents entering the United States as holders of a J-2 visa) have insurance in effect during the period of time they are in the sponsor's program. An insurance policy secured to meet the benefits requirements must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-I" or above, a Standard and Poor's Claims Paying Ability rating of "A-" or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above. Alternatively, the sponsor may ascertain that the participant's policy is backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country. For other options, see [22 CFR 62.14].

Program regulations also discuss coverage through HMOs and self-insurance of the above requirements by federal, state or local government agencies, state colleges and universities, and public community colleges, if permitted by law. Refer to [22 CFR 62.14] for additional information.



Course Registration

You have been registered into courses and you will find a copy of your course schedule enclosed. If you would like to change (add or drop) a course, you will be able to do this the first week of the semester. You should try to be flexible with your courses as the International Programs Office is not able to guarantee placement into a specific course.

Arrival

The fall semester dates are from September 6 to December 8 (note that you may have final exams after this date). Your move-in dates for the dormitories are expected to be **September 3-5, 2022**. If you are flying to Logan International Airport in Boston, I will make arrangements to have an airport van pick you up and take you to campus. The cost of this service is approximately **\$60usd** and you will be expected to pay it- don't forget to tip the drive 15-20%!

Accommodation

You will be notified of your dorm placement by Residence Life. Here are some things you need to know ahead of time:

- You will need to provide your own bedding, including a pillow, pillow case, sheets (for an extra long twin bed) and a blanket. You can bring these with you or you can buy them once you are here although it's good to have them when you arrive.
- All rooms are cable TV ready but TV's are not supplied...you can buy a TV when you are here if you want one. There are TV's in the lounge areas of the dorms as well so you may not need one.

For specific questions regarding residence life issues and living on campus, please email Rebecca Giard at rhamwey@worchester.edu. Please copy me on any emails. For additional information on the WSU Residence Halls visit: <https://www.worcester.edu/Residence-Life/>

There is a \$100.00 USD refundable security deposit which will be collected from residence life personnel when you arrive in campus. You will get this money back after the end of the semester so long as no damage has been done to your residence hall. Please note you will probably not have this money before you leave campus at the end of the semester. A check will be sent to you as soon as final calculations have been made. **There is also a \$12.50 USD residence activity fee**, and you will be expected to pay a **\$135.00 USD technology access fee**. You can pay these fees in cash or with a credit card.

Meal Plans

Meal plans here at Worcester State University are required of all students living on campus. There are options for the number of meals you purchase, but expect to purchase the least expensive plan as this way you will be guaranteed a certain number of meals and you can still buy food and prepare other meals in your dorm room.

Meal plans cost between \$750 and \$1300 dollars. It will be arranged so you will be billed (\$750) for the least expense meal plan unless you would like a different one. Even though you will buy a meal plan you will also have the opportunity to cook your meals in your dorm. You will need to supply all of your own cooking pots and pans for your room. However, you will probably have roommates and this is something that can be negotiated with them.

Registration

You are required to register with the International Student Advisor in the International Programs Office upon your arrival on campus. Please bring your form, DS 2019, your passport and proof of health insurance with you at this time.



Your J-1 Visa

Your form DS-2019 (the supporting document for the J-1 visa) is enclosed here. You should sign and date this immediately. You will be required to bring this document, along with your exchange program acceptance letter with you to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain your J-1 student visa. Before attending your interview, be sure to read page 2 of this document thoroughly so as to familiarize yourself with the criteria set forth by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Additional information regarding preparing for your visa interview is enclosed and even more can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html. Should you encounter any difficulties with obtaining your J-1 visa, please notify us immediately so that we may determine the best way to assist you.

You must use your form DS-2019 to pay the SEVIS Fee of \$220 (form I-901). The easiest way for you to pay this fee is online at www.fmjfee.com. This fee must be paid *before* your interview at the U.S. Embassy. For further details please see the additional information provided regarding the payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee.

Once you have been issued your J-1 student visa, please let me know. You may then make travel arrangements to come to the U.S. You are allowed to enter the U.S. a maximum of 30 days prior to the program start date listed on your form, DS 2019. However, you will not be allowed to move into your dorm until September 4 and your meal plan will not begin until Monday, September 5th, so I suggest you make your travel plans accordingly. Also remember that you must vacate your accommodation no later than May 12, 2022. Once you have your flight itinerary, please email it to me.

Please note: Canadian citizens are not required to attend a visa interview, but are required to pay the SEVIS fee.

We look forward to meeting with you upon your arrival!

Sincerely,

Katey Palumbo
Director, International Programs
Kpalumbo2@worchester.edu