

LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

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International Student Advisor

An Important Resource

As you prepare for study in the United States, you will have many questions. You will need to learn about U.S. customs and values, academic requirements for your studies, and community facilities for medical care, banking, shopping, and amusements. You will obtain some information before you leave for the United States, but most of the important questions can only be answered once you have arrived on a U.S. campus.

The International Student Advisor assists you while you are in the United States. You should visit the office when you have questions and concerns. Contact the advisor when you first become aware that a problem might be developing rather than when it has become extremely serious. Remember that it is your responsibility to obtain the information you need, but there are many people and resources available to assist you during your stay in the United States.

Once you arrive on campus, you can also obtain valuable information by reading the school newspaper (the Currier); the Student Activities paper (Cliff Notes); NewsBytes; looking at announcements on bulletin boards around campus; talking with classmates, professors, and local residents; and reading helpful publications.

Immigration Policies and Procedures

SEVIS: What it is and what it means to you!

SEVIS is the acronym for Student & Exchange Visitor Information System. It is an online tracking system for International Students and their dependents. Through SEVIS colleges and universities enter and update various data regarding the International Students who have been issued a Form I-20 by their institution.

You must tell the International Student Advisor any time you: have a change of address, change of name, change of major, wish to drop below full-time enrollment, or wish to engage in practical training or employment. The International Student Advisor must also enter information about illegal employment or any other violation of your F-1 status.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has complete access to your information via SEVIS. This department works with the college to assist you in properly maintaining your F-1 status. While Genesee Community College and the USCIS do our parts, you must also make sure that you are maintaining your F-1 status properly.

MAINTAINING YOUR F-1 STUDENT STATUS

F-1 Students are responsible to know and follow all immigration regulations. Failure to maintain your status, or comply with these regulations, may have very severe consequences for your ability to study, seek employment, or even remain in the United States. Please carefully review the list below of requirements and contact the International Student Advisor if you have any questions about these regulations. We suggest that you review this page each semester to refresh your memory, as these regulations are very important to follow.

1. Keep your immigration documents valid.

As an international student, you should have the following forms of identification:

- *Form I-20*
 - Always keep information on your I-20 valid and up to date.
 - Make sure the school name on your current I-20 is the same as the school you are currently attending.
 - Make sure your I-20 program end date does not expire. You may apply for a [Program Extension](#) if you need more time to complete your degree.
 - Notify the International Student Advisor of any changes in financial information, name, address and major.
 - Complete the [Request for I-20 Travel Signature](#) and bring it to the International Student Advisor at least 2 weeks prior to traveling outside the U.S.
- *Passport*
 - Always keep your passport valid at least 6 months into the future (passports can be extended while you are in the U.S. by contacting your home country's embassy consulate).
- *I-94 Card*
 - Your I-94 card is the white card that was stamped "F-1 D/S" and stapled in your passport when you entered the country. This is a very important document, as it is proof that you are in F-1 status. This card will be removed from your passport when you travel home, and you will receive a new one when you re-enter the U.S. (If you are traveling to Canada for less than 30 days, the I-94 should not be removed). As of May 2013, students arriving at air or sea ports of entry will no longer get an I-94 card. It is now available online through: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html?jsessionid=N32WRsyY9Z5YtQVw3L5zyhC572whwx7tjcTk19Y82HWVnbz8PLl8!-992220287>
(Students entering at land ports of entry will still get an I-94 card.)
- *F-1 Visa*
 - Canadian students will not have a visa stamp. If you do have an F-1 visa, before you plan to travel outside the U.S. and re-enter, you need to make sure that your visa is not expired. If it is expired, you need to renew your visa before re-entering the U.S. You do not need a valid visa in order to *stay* in the United States.

2. Register for and complete a full course load of at least 12 credits every required semester (fall and spring).

- All students are required to make normal, full-time progress toward degree completion. If you feel that you cannot handle taking 12 credits during the semester consult with your International Student Advisor to see if you qualify for a [Reduced Course Load](#). **DO NOT** drop or withdraw from any classes if you will fall below 12 credits until talking with your Advisor about the consequences.

- Only 3 credits of these 12 may be taken as online courses. If you have at least 9 credits on campus you may take more than 3 credits online. Be careful! Online classes may be more difficult.
 - *Attendance in all classes is mandatory.*
3. **DO NOT accept any off-campus employment without authorization from the International Student Advisor and/or US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).**
- Full-time students in valid F-1 Status may accept ON-Campus employment of no more than 20 hours per week (part-time) while school is in session, or may accept full-time employment ON-Campus during vacations.
 - Students must request and have employment authorization approved **BEFORE** beginning to work off-campus! If a student would like to participate in an off-campus internship they should contact the International Student Advisor to apply for Curricular Practical Training. All other forms of Off-Campus employment require USCIS approval which may take up to 3 months to process. Please review our Employment page to learn more about employment opportunities for F-1 Students.
4. **Contact the International Student Advisor if there are any changes to your personal or academic situation. Notify your Advisor if you...**
- Change your address (within 10 days of moving)
 - Change your name (within 10 days of change)
 - Change your major (within 10 days of change)
 - Wish to transfer to another college (within 60 day grace period)
 - Plan to depart the United States (within 10 days of leaving)
 - Change your immigration status (within 10 days of change)

EMPLOYMENT IN THE U.S.

Employment opportunities for foreign students are restricted in the U.S and therefore obtaining authorization to work in this country is often a difficult process. There are basically two types of employment: on campus and off campus employment. Foreign students are never allowed to work without prior authorization from the International Student Advisor and/or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Please come to the International Student Advisor's office located in the advisement center, C222 with any questions regarding on or off campus employment.

** It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to you as F-1 students. If you fail to comply with these responsibilities you may lose your valid student status!*

On Campus Employment

F-1 students are eligible to begin on-campus employment 30 days before initial start of classes and may work until their program completion while enrolled full-time. They are limited to 20 hours per week (part-time) while classes are in session, and can be full-time when school is not in session.

Off Campus Employment

Off-Campus employment is any type of work or services performed in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit. An Employment Authorization Document is required before

any off-campus employment is allowed. Please review the information below or speak with the International Student Advisor for more information about employment opportunities.

- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Curricular Practical Training is employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum. This is generally for those students who will participate in a paid internship as part of their Major. [Download our CPT information packet](#) to learn more about applying for CPT.

- **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Optional Practical Training is off-campus employment authorization that permits F-1 students valuable work experience in their major field of study. You are permitted to work for a maximum of 12 months of Full-Time employment (over 20 hours per week) for each higher educational level you pursue in the U.S. To learn more about applying for OPT, click on the links below. [Download our OPT information packet](#) to learn more about applying for OPT.

- **Severe Economic Hardship**

This type of work authorization is only available if you have severe economic hardship because of some major event that you could not control. You must have been in F-1 Status for one full academic year in good academic standing. Some possible reasons for economic hardship include: major increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial condition of your source of income, medical bills, natural disaster...etc. If you think you may qualify for this type of off-campus employment please see your International Student Advisor for more information.

- **Internship with an international organization**

An F-1 student who has been offered employment by a recognized international organization within the meaning of the International Organization Immunities Act (59 Stat. 669) may apply for employment authorization.

TRAVEL AND REENTRY

If you were registered in NSEERS (Special Registration), be sure you follow the proper exit procedures. If you do not follow proper exit procedures, you may be denied admission to the U.S. at a later date.

Basic requirements for an F-1 to reenter the United States after traveling abroad

- You have been out of the United States for less than five months
- A current SEVIS Form I-20 with a valid endorsement for travel by your DSO
- A current passport valid for at least six months after the date of your reentry (select countries have an agreement with the United States allowing entry with a passport that is current through the date of entry- however, you must never let your passport expire!)
- A valid, current visa or you traveled to a contiguous country or adjacent island for less than thirty days
- Financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses
- Bringing your most recent I-94, Departure Card, will facilitate your reentry if reentering through a land POE. If you are flying, the airline will collect your I-94 prior to departure. *If you are from a visa exempt country, you do not need a visa to reenter the United States from the western hemisphere.*

If you have an expired passport or one that will expire in less than six months

- You must renew your passport before reentering the United States. In most cases, to enter the United States, you must have a passport that is valid for at least six months after the date you enter or reenter. However, some countries have an agreement with the United States that allows you to enter on a current passport up to the actual date of expiration.
- If your expired passport has a valid visa, you can still use it if you kept the old passport. Present the old passport, along with the new passport when you reenter the country.

If your F-1 student visa has expired

- You can stay in the United States on an expired F-1 visa as long as you maintain your student status. However, if you are returning home or traveling to a country where automatic revalidation does not apply, you must have a valid visa to return to the United States.
- Ensure that you have all the documentation you need for your visa application and allow sufficient time for processing a new visa. The documentation you may need for a new visa includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - A SEVIS Form I-20, endorsed for travel and signed by your DSO and your original Form I-20 with port of entry stamp (see your DSO before you travel)
 - Original evidence showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses
 - Evidence showing your intention to return to your home country upon program completion, including evidence of compelling social and economic ties to your home country
 - If you have applied for or had optional practical training (OPT) approved, bring a copy of your Form I-20 endorsed for OPT and your Employment Authorization Document (EAD), if one has been issued

The Department of State recommends that you apply for a visa in your home country.

In some cases, you can go to Canada or Mexico and apply for a new visa. Contact the individual U.S. embassy or consulate in Canada or Mexico. However, you cannot return to the United States until your visa is issued. If the visa is denied, you will not be able to return to the United States as a student. For more information about visa applications visit the Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>. You can also visit www.nvars.com, the site that provides appointments for consulates in Canada and Mexico.

Applying for a new visa is **not** the same as automatic visa revalidation. You cannot apply for a new visa and take advantage of automatic visa revalidation at the same time.

Travel to Canada, Mexico, or one of the islands adjacent to the United States

In most cases you can travel and reenter the U.S. even if your visa has expired. You can usually revalidate an expired visa automatically when returning from a visit of no more than thirty days to Canada, Mexico, or one of the islands adjacent to the United States (other than Cuba) provided that you have a valid SEVIS Form I-20 endorsed for travel and a valid unexpired Form I-94. This process is known as **automatic visa revalidation**.

However, if you meet any **one** of following criteria, **you will not be able to automatically revalidate your visa**.

- You applied for a new visa and it has not been issued

- You applied for a new visa and were denied
- You have a terminated SEVIS record indicating that you are out of status
- You have been out of the United States for more than thirty days
- You are a citizen from one of the following countries:
 - Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Syria

Travel while Form I-485 adjustment of status application is pending

Do not travel without advance permission. If you depart the United States with a pending I-485, you have abandoned your application unless you receive permission in advance from USCIS to return to the United States. This permission is called Advance Parole.

You may also be considered ineligible to return to the United States as an F-1 student, because your application to change status to that of a permanent resident is evidence of intent to immigrate which is inconsistent with nonimmigrant student status.

Additional requirements for travel outside the United States

If you are not returning to your home country, you should check the requirements of the country you are visiting. Some countries will require a visa. You may also need an in-transit visa for countries where you are making a connecting flight. Be sure to check before you travel. Most countries have immigration websites that provide visa information.

RETURNING HOME

Grace Periods

- An F-1 student will be admitted to the United States for “duration of status”, noted as D/S on both Form I-94 and Form I-20. Duration of status means the period during which the student is pursuing a full course of study at an approved educational institution or engaging in authorized practical training following completion of studies, plus a 60-day grace period to prepare for departure from the U.S.
- If for any reason you need to leave your program before completion, and you notify the International Student Advisor before withdrawing, you will have a 15-day grace period to finish up your affairs.
- If you withdraw without notice there is no grace period.

Getting Ready for Departure

Before you leave GCC, make sure everything is settled and all your arrangements are made.

- Inform the International Student Advisor that you are leaving GCC.
- Make arrangements for your return travel.
- Make arrangements to transport your personal belongings home and investigate custom regulations.
- Settle all of your college and personal accounts before leaving the U.S. Remember to fill out a forwarding address form at the post office, so that mail may be sent to you after you return home.
- Close your bank account.
- File any pending medical claim forms before you go and pay any balance that you owe.
- Make sure that all your academic responsibilities are completed.
- Pay any outstanding library fines and parking fines, otherwise you will not receive your grades.
- If you are on a GCC payroll and do not have direct deposit, make arrangements with the appropriate office to have your checks forwarded to you. Also leave an address for that office to mail you your W-2 form next January for Income Tax filing purposes.

If you live off-campus:

- Give a 30-day written notice to your landlord with the date that you will be vacating your apartment.
- Arrange for an apartment walk through inspection with your landlord
- Agree on a date to receive your security deposit refund, request in writing.
- Contact the phone company to disconnect your phone. Call the long distance carrier to be sure that all charges are paid before you leave.

GRADUATION

When you are preparing to graduate you need to make sure you complete all the requirements not only for Genesee Community College, but also the requirements for immigration. Please make sure you have completed the necessary procedures and review the options that you have after graduating.

To receive your diploma from Genesee Community College you need to:

- Request a diploma at the beginning of the semester in which you will graduate. **If you do not request a diploma you will not receive one.** To do this, you fill out the Diploma Request Form online. Remember to put an address where you will be able to receive your diploma two to three months later. We recommend you send them home unless you are certain of your address.
- If you wish to participate in the Graduation Ceremony, you need to order your cap and gown at the Bookstore. There is only one ceremony per year, held in the spring. If you will graduate in the summer (with 6 credits or less to complete) you may ask to walk in the spring ceremony, however your name will be printed in the following year's Graduation Ceremony.

Options after you graduate concerning immigration:

Note: Your F-1 Student Status officially ends 60 days after graduation unless you have either applied for OPT or School Transfer.

- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
 - If you wish to apply for Optional Practical Training to gain valuable work experience in the U.S. you must do so at least 2 weeks before your Program End Date (#5 on I-20). However, we strongly suggest that you apply two to three months before you plan to start working (no later than 60 days after your completion date). We recommend this because your application must be sent to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and it could take up to three months to process your application.
- Transfer to another U.S. college or university
 - If you wish to transfer to another college you must make this request no later than 60 days after your program end date. If you do not request a school transfer by this date and remain in the United States you will be out of status.
- Exit the U.S.
 - Your F-1 Student Status officially ends 60 days after graduation unless you have either: applied for OPT or School Transfer. If you are leaving the U.S. after Graduation you must do so no later than 60 days after graduation.
- Other Information:

- If you plan to continue to study at Genesee Community College, you must talk with the International Student Advisor before your Program End Date.
- If you wish to remain in the U.S. but will not continue studying, you should seek advice from an immigration lawyer about the possibility to change your visa status.

TRANSFER INFORMATION FOR F-1 STUDENTS

The Department of Homeland Security requires that F-1 students complete a "school transfer" when changing to a new school. Your student record in SEVIS will then be released from Genesee Community College and sent to the institution to which you are transferring. You will then be issued a new Form I-20 from the new institution. The four steps below must be followed before the SEVIS record can be released to your new institution.

1. Notify the International Student Advisor of your intention to transfer to another institution.
2. Proof of acceptance to your new institution. Email or bring a copy of your acceptance letter to the international student advisor's office in the Advisement Center, C222. **You must do this in order to be released to your "new" school.**
3. Schedule a "release date" with the International Student Advisor for your F-1 record to be transferred to the new institution. Your new Form I-20 from your new institution cannot be issued until after the release date has been reached (unless you are traveling before reporting to transferring school, in which case talk with your new institution about your travel plans).
4. Complete the F-1 SEVIS Transfer Request Form and submit it to the International Student Advisor's office (C222) as soon as possible.

Important: If you are completing (or have completed your program of study or Optional Practical Training, you only have a 60-day period following this completion to have your F-1 record transferred to the new institution. Your F-1 student status ends 60 days after you complete your program of study or OPT!

Please contact the International Student Advisor if you have any questions about transferring.

Community Resources and Contacts

TRANSPORTATION

There is limited transportation in the city of Batavia. There is one bus company called the B-Line Bus Company and a couple of Taxi Services.

Batavia Bus Service (also called the B-Line)

Batavia Bus Service operates convenient, reliable public transportation throughout Genesee County. Whether you want to travel to school, shopping or a medical appointment, B-Line can take you there!

B-Line operates three loops within the City of Batavia Monday through Friday. You can catch the bus at any corner along each route. One loop services GCC daily.

Call for 343- 3079 for more information or visit the website at www.rgrta.com

Batavia Cab Company

551 Ellicott Street
343-5130

Mike's Taxi Service

139 Summit Street
343-3309

If you wish to travel outside of Batavia, the **Greyhound/Trailways** bus can take you in the Buffalo or Rochester directions, where you can then take the Amtrak train or an airplane anywhere else you desire. The bus stop in Batavia is located at the gas station near the Thruway tolls (I-90).

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

Batavia Bus Station: 585-343-5130

Show your GCC Student ID for a discount rate!!

Bicycles

In good weather, bicycling can be another efficient way to get around Batavia. Aside from saving you the cost of transportation expenses, this can be good exercise as well. Make sure to wear a helmet for safety.

NEW YORK STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE

You may legally drive in New York State if you have a current Driver License in your home country and the license is in your possession while you drive. In addition to your foreign driver license, it is advised that before coming to the U.S. you obtain an International Driving **Permit** as well. You are not required to have an International Driving Permit to drive in NYS, but the permit has value. The permit verifies, in several languages, that you have a valid foreign driver license. A police officer who cannot read the language on your foreign driver license can read the permit.

If you would like to obtain a New York State Driver License, you must go to the Department Motor Vehicles located on Court Street in Batavia. Detailed information about how to obtain a NYS driver's license is available in the International Student Advisor's office.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long can a foreign student drive with an International Driver License?
 - A. The student may drive with the International Driver License as long as the International License is valid and the foreign license is valid. The International license is basically a translation of the foreign license and should be accompanied by the foreign license at all times.
2. If the student has an International Driver License, can they automatically get a New York State Driver License?
 - A. No, they cannot. In order to obtain a New York State Driver License, the student must go through the permit process. This involves taking a written test, a five-hour safety course, an eye test, and a road test.
3. Is it true that a foreign student has to hand over his foreign license to the DMV if he/she applies for a NYS Driver License?
 - A. Yes, the foreign license is surrendered after passing the New York State road test.
4. What is the procedure to obtain a New York State Driver License?
 - A. The person must:
 - Study the NYS Driver's Manual
 - Apply for a learner permit
 - Pass a vision test
 - Pass a written test
 - Pay the required fees
 - Attend a five-hour safety course and receive a completion certificate
 - Pass the road test

How to Buy a Used Car

If you choose to live off-campus, it might be wise to purchase your own car. Budget-conscious students are better off purchasing a used vehicle in great condition. There are two ways of purchasing a used car: through a car dealership or a private owner.

Practical tips for buying a used car

- Check out the car's repair record, maintenance costs, and safety and mileage ratings. Look up the "blue book" value and be prepared to negotiate the price. Go to [Kelley Blue Book](#) to obtain how much the car is worth.
- Always test drive the car on hills, highways, and in stop-and-go traffic.
- Have the car inspected by a mechanic. It is normal practice in the U.S. when buying a used car to hire a mechanic at your own cost to examine the vehicle before purchase.
- Be sure to get a receipt
- Get the "title" for the vehicle

- If buying a car from a dealership:
 - You have the right to see a copy of the dealer's warranty before you buy.
 - Warranties are included in the price of the product; service contracts cost extra and are sold separately.
- If buying a car through a private owner:
 - Buying a car from a private individual is different from buying from a dealer. A private sale probably will be "as is", which means you will have to pay for anything that goes wrong after the sale.
- You must purchase automobile insurance if you buy a car. This can add a substantial cost to car ownership. Please be sure to consider the cost of insurance when planning your car budget.
- You must also “register” your car with the DMV each year. There is a fee for the car registration.

Car Insurance

- There is a minimum amount of coverage that you must carry on your automobile. This is determined by the State of New York.
- This minimum coverage must be in effect as long as your car is registered in New York . (This means that, even if you are not driving the car for some reason, you must still pay your car insurance bills if your car is registered in New York).
- You must purchase an automobile liability insurance policy from an insurer licensed by the New York State Insurance Department and authorized to do business in NYS.
- The insurance must be in the name of the person who has registered the car.
- The cost for auto insurance is called the “Premium”. The amount that you must pay out of your pocket if you get into an accident is called the “Deductible.”
- Please visit www.ins.state.ny.us/cauto.htm for specifics about New York State's minimum insurance requirements and for very helpful hints about insuring your car.

There are many insurance companies to choose from. Many have competitive rates, especially for “good” drivers (no tickets or accidents). There are also insurance agents in Batavia who will help you compare companies and find you the best rate.

SHOPPING CENTERS & DIRECTIONS

Grocery Stores

- Tops - Batavia does not have an Asian market, but of all the stores in Batavia, Tops has the greatest variety of foods. If you are looking for traditional/cultural foods, this is a good place to start!
- Aldi - Aldi is the place to shop for food on a budget! Food and supplies are priced very low here. You must either bring your own bags, or buy bags at the store. You also bag your own groceries.

Department Stores

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Wal-Mart</u> 4133 Veterans Memorial Drive, Batavia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clothing, Food, Miscellaneous | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>K-Mart</u> 8363 Lewiston Road, Batavia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clothing, Food, Miscellaneous |
|--|--|

- Target
4300 Veterans Memorial Drive, Batavia
 - Clothing, Food, Miscellaneous

Clothing/Shoe Stores

- JCPenney
40 Batavia City Centre, Batavia
 - Men's and Women's Fashions/Shoes
- Maurices
8351 Lewiston Road, Batavia
 - Women's Fashions
- Fashion Bug
4152 West Main Street Road, Batavia
 - Women's Fashions/Shoes

- Bed, Bath and Beyond
4222 Veterans Memorial Drive, Batavia
 - Household items

- Charles Men's Shop
200 East Main Street, Batavia
 - Men's Fashions – Suit & Tie
- Peebles/Cato
4140 Veterans Memorial Drive, Batavia
 - Women's Fashions
- Famous Footwear
4218 Veterans Memorial Dr #b3a, Batavia
 - Men's and Women's Shoes
- Shoe Department
4140 Veterans Memorial Drive, Batavia
 - Men's and Women's Shoes

Shopping Malls

* For the New York State Thruway you will need to pay a toll. To Buffalo or Rochester it costs about \$1.50

- Galleria Mall – Cheektowaga, NY (Buffalo) <http://www.waldengalleria.com/>
- Market Place Mall – Henrietta, NY (Rochester) <http://www.themarketplacemall.com/>
- Eastview Mall - Victor, NY (Rochester) <http://www.eastviewmall.com/>

POSTAL INFORMATION

Unfortunately, Genesee Community College does not have postal facilities available to students on campus. However, there is a brown, wooden OUTGOING MAILBOX located on campus in the cafeteria by the Public Safety Office. If you are a resident of College Village and mailing an item that has the postage attached already, then you may mail this item from OUTGOING MAIL box located in the Game room at College Village.

The closest full service post office to the campus is located in Batavia on Main Street at Jackson Square. At this location you can purchase stamps, money orders, and mail packages. For specific mailing instructions and questions you may contact the Post Office directly at 585-343-0491.

A first class stamp for a 1 ounce (typical size) letter being mailed within the United States is \$0.44. Mail to be sent overseas, outside of the United States, or is heavier than 1 ounce should be weighed before mailing, and sent directly from the Batavia Post Office. A regular letter less than 1 oz is currently \$0.79 to Mexico or

Canada and \$0.98 to other international destinations. For larger letters extra postage may be necessary. If you send anything other than a letter you must fill out a customs form at the Post Office.

When addressing mail within the United States, always use the zip code, a five or nine digit number appearing after the state abbreviation. The zip code for Batavia is 14020.

All residents of College Village should have mail addressed from friends and family that includes your assigned box number. Please follow the sample below:

Bobby Smith
Box ###
8170 Batavia-Stafford Townline Rd
Batavia, New York 14020-9720

If you live in an off campus apartment, you should check with your landlord on how to have mail addressed.

For addressing mail overseas or outside of the United States, the country name should be on the last line of the address in capital letters, as sampled below:

Bobby Smith
156 St. James Place
Brampton, Ontario W5P8HQ
CANADA

NOTE: We have been informed by the U.S. Postal Service that if you find it necessary to send your passport, or any other very important documents, through the U.S. Mail (i.e. to a foreign consulate) that you should send it REGISTERED MAIL. The reason for this is that this mail is under lock and key at all times, and the route of transport is totally traceable. Federal Express is faster but the mail is not under lock and key, and the transportation route is not as traceable.

Telegrams

Western Union Telegraph Company offers the only public telegraph service. To send a telegram anywhere in the world, call 1-800-325-6000.

For expedited deliveries and large packages:

UPS

If you have larger packages to mail out, you may bring them to the GCC Bookstore. They will weigh your package, explain delivery and insurance options, and send the package out for you.

FedEx

There are two FedEx locations in Batavia. Office Max, at 4160 Veterans Memorial Drive is an authorized FedEx shipping center, and there is a self-service drop box outside HSBC Bank at 69 S Main St. here in Batavia. The drop box contains envelopes and a form that you need to complete. If you need help filling out this form, please make an appointment with the International Student Advisor. You should keep the first page of this form for your records and so you can track the shipment online. This is for documents or letters only. For more information search the FedEx website at www.fedex.com.

DHL

There is a drop box at the back of the Office Max store. The employees there will help you fill out the necessary forms to send letters or packages.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Length:

| | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1 INCH | = | 2.54 CENTIMETERS |
| 1 FOOT | = | 12 INCHES = 30.48 CENTIMETERS |
| 1 YARD | = | 3 FEET = 36 INCHES = 91.44 CENTIMETERS |
| 1 METER | = | 39.4 INCHES = 3.28 FEET = 1.09 YARDS |
| 1 MILE | = | 5280 FEET = 1.609 KILOMETERS |
| 1 KILOMETER | = | 0.62 MILES |

Liquid:

| | | |
|----------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 OUNCE | = | 29.573 MILLIMETERS |
| 1 CUP | = | 8 OUNCES |
| 1 PINT | = | 16 OUNCES = 2 CUPS = 4.73 LITERS |
| 1 QUART | = | 4 CUPS = 0.946 LITERS = 2 PINTS |
| 1 LITER | = | 1.057 QUARTS |
| 1 GALLON | = | 4 QUARTS = 3.785 LITERS |

Weight:

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------|
| 3 TSP. | = | 1 TABLESPOON |
| 1 OUNCE | = | 28.53 GRAMS |
| 1 POUND | = | 16 OUNCES = 454 GRAMS |
| 1 TON | = | 2,000 POUNDS |
| 1 KILOGRAM | = | 2.2 POUNDS |

Abbreviations:

| | | | | | |
|------|---|------------|----|---|-------|
| TSP | = | TEASPOON | C | = | CUP |
| TBSP | = | TABLESPOON | OZ | = | OUNCE |
| LB | = | POUND | | | |

U.S. TAX INFORMATION

Which form should I file?

Form 8843 - Must be filed by ALL international students present in United States to exclude the days of presence from the Substantial Presence Test.

Form 1040NR-EZ - Must be filed by all international students who have received any type of U.S. income other than interest received from U.S. banks and credit unions.

Social Security and Medicare Taxes - International students nonresident for tax purposes are NOT subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes. If your employer has withheld Social Security and

Medicare tax in error, you can apply to get a refund for the taxes withheld in error by filing Form 843 and Form 8316.

Why File your Taxes?

Filing your taxes online with ISTAXES is very easy, but you are probably asking why you need to do it? Well here are the top 6 reasons to file your taxes:

1. *You may receive an income tax refund* - Most international students filing a nonresident tax return receive a tax refund.
2. *Take advantage of tax treaty benefits* - Tax treaties reduce the tax liability of international students working in United States working in United States. Using tax treaty benefits can save you a lot of money and increase your tax refunds. ISTAXES calculates the tax treaty benefits for students for each country and helps students increase their tax refunds.
3. *Not incur penalties and interest* - Late filings can cause this to occur.
4. *Meet requirements of U.S. visas* - Abide by laws of USA is required to keep USA Visa.
5. *Start Statute of limitations running* - Once return filed, tax authorities usually have just 3 years to make additional tax assessments. If no return is filed taxing authorities are not limited.
6. *Avoid being taxed on your worldwide income* - ALL international students on F, J, M & Q Visa must file Form 8843 to exclude the days of presence from the Substantial Presence test which determines your tax residency. Failure to file Form 8843, Statement for Exempt Individuals, at least in theory could subject them to USA income taxes on their worldwide income.

***For more help filing your taxes visit: <http://www.internationalstudent.com/tax/> and <http://wings.buffalo.edu/intlservices/tax.html>*

LOCAL BANKS

Bank of Castile – (owns ATM machine at
Genesee Community College so there is no charge to
withdraw money.)
408 East Main Street
Batavia, New York 14020
585-344-2898

Bank of America
100 Main Street
Batavia, NY 14020
585-343-1741

M & T Bank
55 Main Street

Batavia, New York 14020
585-344-1700

HSBC

69 Main Street
Batavia, New York 14020
585-344-0500

Key Bank

219 East Main Street

Batavia, New York 14020
585-343-3147

Five Star Bank

567 East Main Street
Batavia, New York 14020
585-345-1480
(Also inside Tops Grocery Store)

US Currency:



1 cent = Penny



5 cents = Nickel



10 cents = Dime



25 cents = Quarter



1 dollar = “a buck” (slang)

(2 dollars = 2 bucks, 3 dollars = 3 bucks...etc)

GENERAL BANKING INFORMATION

To open an account most banks require copies of the following:

Passport, VISA, I-20 and/or student ID card. You do not need a Social Security Card to open a bank account, but the bank will want a copy if you have one, or maybe a letter from the Social Security office saying that you are not eligible to have a social security number.

It is not wise for you to carry a large amount of money with you at any time; to secure your funds you should open an account at a local bank. Their services will vary, but often include checking and savings accounts, foreign currency conversion, loans, safe deposit boxes, and financial planning information.

Checking Account

By depositing money in a checking account, you will receive a check book with your name, account number, address, and telephone number on it. For your convenience you can write checks up to the balance without using cash. There is usually a small service charge for a checking account unless you maintain a specified balance. When you open your account the bank may give you “starter checks”. Many stores do not accept starter checks. If you need cash you should write a check at the bank to get money out of your checking account.

Savings Account

A savings account is used for money you do not need to pay monthly expenses with. It will earn a percentage of the average balance you maintain in the account, usually quarterly. Those banks which have a low service charge for checking accounts sometimes do not pay the highest interest rates. You should make some comparisons. A savings and loan institution will likely pay somewhat higher interest. If you receive a large amount of money for annual or semi-annual support, you should deposit most of it in a savings account.

Credit or Debit Card

Banks issue credit cards (Master Card and Bank America Card/Visa) which can be used to purchase goods and services from a great variety of stores and commercial organizations. There are two types of cards supplied by the banking institution: A “**debit/credit card**” which will directly withdraw money from your checking account, and strictly a “**credit card**” which will debit an account and you will receive a monthly statement. If you obtain strictly a “credit card” it is very important that you promptly pay the charges on your monthly statement. If you do not, a penalty will be assessed and your credit rating may be seriously affected. When you use a “debit/credit card” it is very important to make sure you have enough money in your account. Otherwise, you will be charged extra. Also, be careful which ATM machine you use if you wish to get cash from your card. Some ATM machines charge you a few dollars if you are not a member from a specific bank. The ATM machine at the college is through The Bank of Castile.

How to Write a Check

1. Enter the date in the blank in upper right corner. Include the month, the date, and the year. You can write out the date, January 4, 2010 or you can use all numbers 01/04/10.
2. Write the name of the person or company you are paying on the “Pay to the Order of” blank. Make sure to get the spelling right.
3. To the right of the Pay to the Order of blank is a blank with a dollar sign. Using numbers, write the amount in dollars and cents. Be sure to clearly place the decimal point between the dollar numerals and the cents numerals. For example: \$32.15.

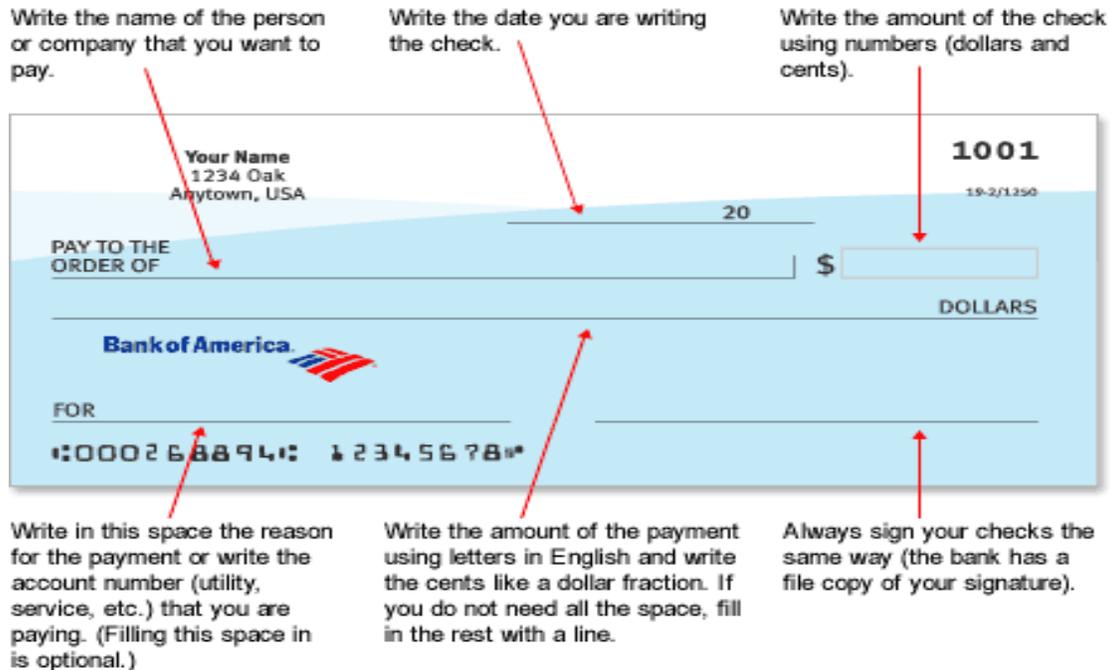
4. The next line is used to confirm the amount of the check, just in case your handwriting is hard to read on the dollar-sign blank. In clear handwriting, write out the amount using words and fractions. Write out the dollar amount. Then add "and" followed by the cents amount written as a fraction. Put the cents in the numerator's position and 100 in the denominator's position. If you have any room left on the blank, draw a line to the end of the blank. That's so no one can add anything to what you've written on that blank.

For example: Thirty-two and 15/100 ----- dollars.

5. The Memo line in the lower left hand corner is a reminder line. You can write "basketball shoes" on this line, for example.. If you write several checks to the same place, like a sporting goods store, this line helps you identify which check paid for shoes, which check paid for sweatbands and shorts, and which one bought socks and a sweatshirt. Memo lines help you stay organized.
6. The signature line, the line in the lower right corner of the check is where you write, not print, your name. Decide how you are going to sign your checks. This is a formal document, so you probably want to sign it Thomas or Amanda rather than Tom or Mandy. You may also want to use your middle initial: Jonathan W. Robertson. Once you decide on your signature, and then sign the same way on all your checks. Your bank will keep your signature on file as a way to verify your signature on checks and other documents. You should always sign your name in the same way.

Practice Writing A Check

Okay, now write a check. On the next page, there is a blank check that you can use to practice on. Here's the information you will use. The check is in the amount of \$27.83. You are paying for a pair of jeans at The Mart. The date is October 29, 2006.



For the date you should always write the month first. March 10, 2009 should be written 03/10/2009. If you write 10/03/2009, it will be read as October 3, 2009. You should have written The Mart----- after “Pay to the Order of”. In the box you should have written 27.83 and on the line before “dollars” you should have written twenty-seven and 83/100------. The “Memo” is optional; you could write “jeans” if you wish. On the last line you should have signed your name.

Numbers on your check

There's a long list of numbers printed at the bottom of your check. These numbers are used by electronic processing systems.

- The first group of numbers — routing numbers — identify your bank. They are used to process your check.
- The second set of numbers contains your checking account number. You'll find this number printed on your deposit slips too (located at the back of your packet of checks). You should memorize this number.
- The third set of numbers is the number of the check you just wrote.

Record it in your check register

Many banks offer *duplicate checks*, which means that after you tear out the check you've just written, a sort of tissue paper copy of the check remains in your checkbook. This is the duplicate check. Duplicate checks give you a record of all the checks you write. They can act as a handy record. But whether or not you use duplicate checks, you should keep an up-to-date record of all the checks you have written in your check register. That way you always know how much money you have in your checking account.

Living in the United States

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE U.S.

Academic achievement is your primary goal in the United States, but a good social life is important, too. Recreation, diversion, friends...all contribute to a balanced life. The more you know about social customs in the United States, the less likely you will be to experience severe culture shock.

Degrees of Friendship

As is probably true in your own culture, it takes time for friendship—a close relationship—to develop between Americans. Nevertheless, most Americans are very “friendly” and appear to be very open when you meet them. You may hear Americans refer to acquaintances, such as persons who happen to sit together in class, as “friends.” There are, however, degrees of friendship.

In the United States, people often say, “Hi, How are you?” or “How are you doing?” and then do not wait for a response. This is a polite phrase, not really a question. You can respond by saying, “Fine, thanks.” Or you may hear an American say, “Drop by anytime” or “Let’s get together soon.” These are friendly expressions, but they may not be meant literally. It is polite to call someone on the telephone before you visit. Even without an invitation, it is acceptable to call a new acquaintance to see if he or she would like to go to a campus activity with you.

You will have to make an effort to meet people so that friendships can develop. Because crossing borders to study is a unique and powerful experience, you may find, at least initially, that you have more in common with other foreign students than with Americans, and some of your strongest friendships will be made with other foreigners.

Many students believe that there is no better place to make friends than the college dormitory. There may be 30 students living on your floor with different accents, different musical tastes, and possibly 30 different standards of acceptable behavior. Be prepared for very open discussions. Participate in dormitory life and become involved in dormitory activities and functions.

Relationships with roommates work best when the dual arts of flexibility and compromise are practiced. Your roommate may or may not become a friend, but there is no reason you should not develop a good relationship.

Participating in Campus Life

Seek out fellow students with similar interests. You may find them in your classes, but the college also offers a wide array of clubs and organizations representing many student interests. You will find cultural and religious associations, sports teams, volunteer service organizations, student government, academic societies, music and theater groups, a student newspaper, and a student radio or television station.

If you want to enhance your leadership skills, you will find numerous possibilities on campus, whether you choose to run for student-government office, lead an international student club or other campus organization, volunteer in the community, or lead a volunteer group. All these opportunities give you a chance to meet others and work with them on issues that matter to you. That’s the best way to develop friends.

Practicing Your Religion

The United States is a multicultural society founded on tolerance and mutual respect; you should not hesitate to seek out opportunities to practice your religious beliefs. Organized religious groups of many denominations are likely to be found in the surrounding community. The international student adviser will be able to help you locate such organizations.

Although America has a higher rate of church attendance than most other western societies, many Americans are uncomfortable discussing religion. Some Americans may shy away from the topic altogether. Others will want to share their religious views with you. Most people are sincere and straightforward, but some may try to take advantage of you or convert you to their religious beliefs by offering you their friendship. If you begin to feel uncomfortable in such a situation, politely but firmly explain that you are not interested.

Alcohol and Smoking

U.S. laws concerning the sale and consumption of alcohol may seem very liberal or very constraining to you, depending on your nationality. In the United States, it is illegal to purchase alcoholic drinks, including beer and wine, until you reach the age of 21. Laws governing alcohol can vary from state to state. For example, it is illegal in some states to walk along the street with an open container of beer. In some states, alcoholic beverages can be purchased only in special, state-run stores.

Genesee Community College restricts the consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus. If you live in College Village, be sure to read the contract thoroughly so you understand the policies. Remember that you do not have to drink to act like an American.

Do you smoke? In New York State, all public buildings are designated “smoke free,” meaning that you cannot smoke in any part of the building. Some buildings may have spaces designated for smokers. If you are a guest in someone’s home, room, or apartment, always ask permission before you smoke. Even if you are in your own room, it is polite to ask your guests if anyone objects to your smoking before you reach for a cigarette.

Dating

You may be surprised by the informality of relations between men and women in the United States. Couples go out alone in the evening to attend a movie, concert, lecture, or party; students may get together for a “study date.” In the past, the man usually asked the woman, and the man paid the expenses of the movie, concert, or meal. Today, a woman may ask a man to go out with her. Whether the man or woman offers the invitation, students often share the expenses.

Relationships between American men and women of college age range from simple, casual friendships to strong emotional and physical commitments. As your friendships develop past acquaintance, you may not always understand what your partners expect of you. Whatever the relationship, the best policy is honesty. Express your feelings and intentions so you can avoid misunderstandings and even greater discomfort. If your date appears interested in a sexual relationship and you are not, it is very important that you say no clearly. If someone seems to be saying no to you, listen. Unwanted sexual attention is a very serious matter in the United States.

Be aware that alcohol and dating can be a problematic mix, particularly in a cross-cultural setting.

Emerging Differences

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new place. People may walk and talk more quickly, traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. Such differences are easy to see and quickly learned. The housing arrangements at your university or college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing. The international student office is often the best place to go for help with such matters.

At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds, and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or “quaint.” There will be many opportunities to meet people off campus; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles. Your “cultural comfort level” will vary over time as you move in and out of your home culture.

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences—rather than similarities—will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic and social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. Culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community. The “cultural baggage” you bring with you contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

CULTURE SHOCK / CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Culture shock is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through. Some people are more affected by it than others. Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability. According to Katherine Schneider, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire Counseling Services, there are four phases of adjustment that a student can expect to go through.

1. Honeymoon Phase: Everything is great, nothing is wrong; you’re having a wonderful time.
2. Shock: There are so many differences in this country that you don’t know how to deal with them. You didn’t think things would be like this.
3. Negotiation: You learn to deal with the problems set before you and try to integrate them with your own beliefs.
4. Acceptance: You are able to live well in the environment with the differences you are experiencing.

Symptoms of Culture Shock:

1. Feeling very angry over minor inconveniences
2. Irritability
3. Withdrawal from people who are different from you
4. Extreme homesickness
5. Sudden intense feeling of loyalty to own culture
6. Overeating or loss of appetite
7. Boredom
8. A need for excessive sleep
9. Headaches
10. Upset stomach
11. Small pains really hurt
12. Depression and a feeling of helplessness
13. Loss of ability to work or study effectively
14. Unexplainable crying
15. Marital or relationship stress
16. Exaggerated cleanliness
17. Feeling sick much of the time

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

Coping with Culture Shock

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Maintain your perspective: Try to remember that hundreds of people have come to Batavia from other countries before you and have survived (even when they arrived in the cold winter!)
- Work on and learn local English: This is an extremely important concept. It is much easier to understand a culture when you can understand the language being used. Ask about any slang terms that you do not understand.
- Keep active: By getting out of your room or apartment, you are able to experience first-hand what Americans are doing. If you visit public places, such as a shopping mall or sporting events, you will be able to watch and learn how American customs are practiced.
- Make American friends: By having friends you can talk to, you are able to ask them questions about what you do not understand.
- Exercise: By finding an activity that you can enjoy, you will be able to reduce stress and depression. Americans like to run and walk on paths. They also like organized games. By contacting the Athletics department (343-0055 Ext. 6246), you will be able to find out what programs are available.
- Community activities: Talk with your host family, Resident Assistant, Student Activities, or other Americans about community activities, religious services, or volunteer opportunities to help you become a member of the community while you are here.
- Introduce yourself to other international students: Other international students may be experiencing the same problems that you are. By talking to them, you may be able to find out ways that they are coping with problems.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you—and you toward them—are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

Remember that you will change while you are here; you will learn new ideas, adopt new attitudes, and begin to behave in new ways. This may happen so gradually that you are not aware of it. In any new situation, try to keep your expectations realistic, expect change, and try not to pass judgment on the people you encounter.

Personal Counseling

Counseling Services recognize the challenges faced by individuals, and has provided assistance to many international students. Many international students simply feel that some things are not going as well as they had hoped. As an international student, you may experience some feelings that are quite intense because you have the added pressure of adjusting to a new culture, language, and different academic environment. Either way, Counseling Services is here to help. Some things you may want to talk with a counselor about are:

- Understanding and adjusting to U.S. culture and way of life
- Separation from family and friends
- Language difficulties
- Relationship concerns
- Dating people from different cultures
- Adjusting to new roommates and making new friends

Although counseling is not a common practice in many countries and cultures, in the United States it is increasingly used as a process that is helpful for dealing with personal stress and difficulties. Meeting with a professional counselor at Counseling Services, allows a person the opportunity to discuss concerns and problems with someone in a safe, friendly, confidential environment.

Individual counseling:

If you want to talk in a one-on-one private setting, individual counseling is available. A counselor can meet with you on a regular basis and listen to you and help you with your concerns.

Crisis Services:

If you are worried about yourself, your family members, roommates, or friends, you can contact counseling at (585) 343-0055, extensions 6357 or 6219 or you can come directly to the office talk with a counselor without making an appointment in advance. If our office is closed for the day, you can call Public Safety at 585.343.0055 ext. 6240

“Will I Lose My Own Culture?”

Sometimes students worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don’t worry: It is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don’t resist the opportunity to become bicultural, able to function competently in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, so an accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life, to relax and fully enjoy the experience, and recover your sense of humor!

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

While living in College Village offers certain conveniences, some of you may choose to move to an apartment in the town of Batavia. Living in an off-campus apartment has both advantages and disadvantages. Apartment listings in Batavia can be found at:

<http://www.genesee.edu/campuslife/housing/offcampus.cfm>

<http://th-www2.thedailynewsonline.com/classifieds/rentals/>

Things to consider:

- You can choose your own roommates
- It may be quieter and more private than College Village
- Can be a cheaper housing option
- Make sure the apartment you choose is on the B-Line bus route unless you plan to buy a car or bicycle

The bus does not come to GCC after 4:45, so you probably cannot take evening classes

STUDENT HOUSING: College Roommate Etiquette Tips

A Good Manners Guide to Keeping your Dorm Room Peaceful

Mar 16, 2007 - Naomi Rockler-Gladen

Living in a small college dorm room with a roommate is not easy! To keep your living arrangements peaceful, here are some tips:

One of the most difficult relationships you'll ever have may be with your college roommate, especially the fellow student you share a room with freshman year. Think about it: you're sharing a tiny dorm room with someone who's probably a total stranger. On top of that, you're trying to adjust to college life, academics, and the new experience of living away from home. It's inevitable that you are going to get on each other's nerves!

So how can you be a good roommate? First and foremost, be polite. You don't have to be best friends, but things will be much easier if you mind your manners and treat each other with respect. Here are some dormitory etiquette tips to keep the relationship with your roommate as smooth as possible!

- **Clean up after yourself.** Keeping your room neat can seem unimportant when you've got exams and a million things to do. However, this isn't your room alone, so being a slob is rude. Be sure to pick up your laundry, throw away your trash, and make your bed. After all, it's just a *room*. It doesn't take that much effort to clean it.
- **When your roommate wants quiet, be quiet.** Doing otherwise is very rude. When your roommate is studying, go chat with your friends somewhere else. If you want to listen to music and your roommate does not, get some headphones.
- **Never wake a sleeping roommate.** Sleep is a valuable resource for a college student, so don't be the reason your roommate doesn't get enough. Be quiet when you're coming in late at night, and respect the need to nap.
- **Do not use your roommate's stuff without permission.** This goes for everything, including food. Similarly, don't snoop through your roommate's things. It can be tempting, but resist the urge.
- **Be reasonable about visits from friends.** Of course you can have friends over, but make sure you are not monopolizing the room. If a friend is going to stay overnight, be sure to ask permission. It's also important that your visitors are polite to your roommate. By the same token, be polite to your roommate's visitors.
- **Be reasonable about visits from "special" friends.** Visits from boyfriends and girlfriends can cause serious roommate conflicts. Never invite your date to sleep over unless you are *sure* it's okay with your roommate, and be careful not to abuse that privilege. You and your roommate might want to devise a "necktie" system to keep roommates away at inopportune times. However, only do this if your roommate is comfortable with the idea, and be sure your "necktie" incidents don't keep your roommate out too often. Never get physical when your roommate is around, even if he or she is asleep! This brings up a related issue:
- **Don't do anything that makes your roommate uncomfortable.** It's always a bad idea to keep illicit drugs or alcohol in your room, but if your roommate objects, it's an even worse idea. This rule goes for more minor issues as well, including grooming. If your roommate is grossed out when you cut your toenails in the room, then don't.
- **Never gossip about your roommate.** It's tempting to vent about your roommate's annoying habits to your buddies down the hall, but don't. If your roommate finds out (and there's a very good chance this will happen), he or she will be hopping mad. If you have issues with your roommate, talk to your roommate about them. This isn't the easiest thing to do, but it's a heck of a lot more mature than gossiping with your friends.
- **Never spread your roommate's secrets.** Even if your roommate doesn't share his or her secrets with you, you're bound to stumble upon some private and juicy information. Spreading this kind of information isn't just rude: it's bad karma.
- **Do not break your roommate's things.** If you do break something, apologize profusely and pay for it immediately. It also goes without saying that you should not *steal* your roommate's things.
- **Never make fun of or belittle your roommate.** A little gentle teasing is okay, especially if you become friends. But keep your opinions to yourself about your roommate's funny little quirks.

Freshman year is stressful enough without having to worry about your roommate situation, so make an effort to be a good roommate. Common sense manners can go a long way to keep things harmonious in your little dorm room. Best of luck!

CLIMATE

Batavia has a humid continental climate heavily influenced by both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The humid continental climate is marked by variable weather patterns and a large seasonal temperature variance. There are four distinct seasons: winter, spring, summer, and fall, each with their own remarkable qualities.

Winters are long and cold, often lasting from around mid-November to early April. Western New York is notorious for its lake effect snows, which can result in highly localized, sometimes intense and even historic snow events. Batavia receives approximately 90-95 inches of snow annually, and the average winter temperature is 23°F (-5°C). **Winter jackets, hats, gloves, and boots are a must!**

Spring in Western New York arrives slowly, with average daytime temperatures in April being around 54°F (12°C). It is not unheard of for snow to fall as late as April or May, with occasional thunderstorms as well. The average annual rainfall is 35-40 inches. **A light jacket and an umbrella are usually sufficient for this time of year.**

Summers are generally very pleasant. Thanks in part to breezes blowing over Lakes Erie and Ontario, the temperature tends to stay very comfortable at 70°F - 85°F (21°C - 29°C). **Remember your sunscreen!**

Fall offers a fairly mild climate with plenty of sunny weather. Average daily temperatures range from 60°F - 70°F (15°C - 21°C). **Be prepared with a light jacket, particularly at night.**

U.S. HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| January 1..... | New Year's Day |
| January 19..... | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| Third Monday in February..... | President's Day (Washington and Lincoln) |
| April 1..... | April Fool's Day |
| Second Sunday in May..... | Mother's Day |
| Last Monday in May..... | Memorial Day |
| Third Sunday in June..... | Father's Day |
| July 4..... | Independence Day |
| First Monday in September..... | Labor Day |
| October 31..... | Halloween |
| November 11..... | Veteran's Day |
| Fourth Thursday in November..... | Thanksgiving |
| December (date changes yearly)..... | Hanukkah |
| December 25..... | Christmas Day |

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Your first impressions of academic life in the United States may be confusing. Foreign students often comment that U.S. students are competitive but don't seem to study very hard, and that beyond the informality of the classroom the professors are very demanding. Some of these apparent contradictions can be explained by the values that underpin them. Creativity, tolerance, and flexibility are, in general, valued above tradition and respect for authority in the United States. Teaching styles and classroom attitudes vary widely and are influenced by many different factors. Even where tradition does dictate professorial or student behavior, the patterns may not be evident to someone coming from a different tradition.

Homework

- The typical undergraduate course involves three hours of lectures each week, an additional lab or discussion section, reading assignments, quizzes and tests, a mid-term examination, and a final examination, as well as one or more research papers or projects. Keeping up with the work is important.
- Foreign students are sometimes dismayed by the amount of reading assigned for their courses, especially if English is not their native language. It is important, therefore, to be clear about the role of the reading assignments in a course. In some courses, the reading is central; you must read the texts closely and know the material for exams. In other courses, readings may be supplementary or optional. It probably will not be possible for you to read thoroughly everything that is assigned. You will have to prioritize: read the most important material first and carefully; then skim the less important assignments.
- If you find yourself falling behind or feeling terribly pressured about your assignments, discuss your problem with the professor or teaching assistant after a class or during office hours. Don't hesitate to get help if you are having academic problems.
- Research papers are another aspect of homework that may seem overwhelming. Some students are unable to express themselves clearly or eloquently in written English; others do not know how to use the research tools in the library; others may not be familiar with American academic writing styles and conventions. Many American students share these problems, and help is not far away. In your writing, you will be expected to know when and how to "paraphrase" or summarize another writer's ideas in your own words.
- If you are not a native English speaker this may seem difficult-even foolhardy-and you may be tempted to quote your sources word for word. Because this practice can lead to a charge of "plagiarism" (see below), it is essential that you acquire the skill of paraphrasing. You will find that if you truly understand the ideas you are dealing with, you will be able to express them clearly. Find an instructor or U.S. student, perhaps a volunteer tutor or conversation partner, who will read your papers, point out passages that are unclear, and help you find phrasing that conveys your meaning. You may have to sacrifice the elegance of the original quotation, but your paper will gain coherence from the effort you put into synthesizing all of the material you use.
- The ability to use computers is essential to success in a U.S. college or university today. Most U.S. professors do not accept handwritten papers (except exams). U.S. students typically type their papers on computers, which are available for student use in the library or computing center.

Professors

- Most professors will have scheduled office hours during which you can meet with them to ask direct questions about the course material, inquire about your progress in the course, and discuss your performance on exams and papers. In general, the relationship between professors and students is more familiar in the U.S. than in other countries. Professors and students can even establish relationships of friendship outside the classroom. A professor's informal style of dress or speech must not be taken to mean that he or she has a relaxed attitude towards assignments, class attendance, or the quality of your work. Informal attire and the omission of titles on interpersonal communication are common in the American educational system.

Academic Honesty

- International students new to the American college or university face tremendous cultural adjustment challenges and, in varying degrees, experience culture shock. Even students who are fluent in English may not be familiar with the colloquial speech often used in the American classroom. Some students are also limited in their ability to express themselves in academic terms, participate fully in discussions, or understand explanations which are provided during the early part of the semester.
- Some students experiencing language difficulties may be more inclined to use the faculty member's words, rather than feel comfortable using their own. Plagiarism may be an unfamiliar concept in some countries. Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas without acknowledgment of their source. Although in some cultures incorporating the words of revered scholars is an important part of the style of academic writing, it is not acceptable in the United States; indeed, it is considered a serious offense. The consequences of proven or even suspected plagiarism can be severe (for example, a failing grade or expulsion from class or the university). Borrowed words and ideas must always be clearly documented. If you expect to experience writing difficulties, you should get help as soon as possible.
- An important distinction exists between group work and individual work. In general, papers, homework assignments, quizzes, and tests should be done individually, and evidence (or even suspicion) of collaboration can result in a failing grade for the work or expulsion from the class or institution. Studying with others is a good idea, but before you collaborate with others on homework, papers, or tests, make sure the professor has specifically authorized such collaboration.

American Classroom Etiquette

- There are some American student behaviors that you may find surprising or that would be considered disrespectful in your country. For example, students may sit in class with their feet on the chair or desk in front of them. They may eat and drink in class. Students may interrupt lectures to ask questions or even to raise objections to what is being said. In general, none of these behaviors indicate disrespect unless done in a belligerent or aggressive manner. In fact, one way in which an American student shows respect for his or her teacher is by being an active participant in class.

Attendance

Be present for the first day of classes. Professors usually discuss their attendance policies and other expectations in the first meeting of each course. Many faculty members are strict about attendance. Some may fail students from the course who miss even a small number of classes.

**Please remember that you are expected to attend your classes regularly according to your visa requirements. Failure to attend your classes may result in you losing your rights and privileges as a student in valid F-1 status.

Grading System

International students sometimes find that their U.S. classmates are preoccupied with grades. This can be explained partly by the spirit of individual competition that is fostered and supported by American Society. Also, grades are an important factor in gaining admission to transferring to another institution, graduate school or getting a job after graduation. The grading system used by most colleges and universities to evaluate students' academic performances is based on a four-point scale. Undergraduates are expected to complete their studies with a "C" average or better.

Grade Equivalencies

A=4.0

B=3.0

C=2.0

D=1.0

F=0.0

Calculate your GPA (Example)

| Course | Letter Grade | Course Units (credits) | Quality Points |
|--------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| ESL 100 | A (4.0) | X 3 | = 12 |
| REA 101 | B (3.0) | X 3 | = 9 |
| MAT 102 | A (4.0) | X 3 | = 12 |
| CHE 101 | C (2.0) | X 4 | = 8 |
| TOTAL | | 13 | 41 |

Divide the **Total Quality Points** by the **Total Course Units** to calculate your GPA.

$$\underline{41} \text{ (Total Quality Points)} / \underline{13} \text{ (Total Course Units)} = \underline{3.15} \text{ GPA}$$

U.S. SLANG & PHRASES

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 24/7: | 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: all the time; always available; without a break. |
| Ace a test: | To do extremely well on an exam |
| All-nighter: | To stay up all night doing something; usually when someone stays up all night to do homework or to study for a test. |
| At your fingertips: | Easily found or recalled |
| Average Joe: | An ordinary person, a regular guy (usually used for men.) |
| AWOL: | Military acronym for "absent without leave," leaving without permission |
| Ballpark: | Approximate or approximation. A "ballpark figure" or "ballpark idea" is a good estimate or guess at something. |
| Blow off: | To ignore or not attend to; "I said hi to him and he blew me off." Can also refer to skipping class. "I blew off my classes today so I could go see that new movie." |
| Bogus: | Non-existent, fake |
| Boonies: | A rural area |
| Bounce: | To leave; to go. "I'm gonna bounce or I'll be late to class." |
| Buck: | A dollar |
| Burned out: | Mentally exhausted; extremely tired, when someone is tired or has had enough of something |
| BYOB: | Bring Your Own Beverage/Bottle/Beer, most often seen on an invitation to a party |
| Call off: | Cancel |
| Chick: | A female, sometimes offensive to women. |
| Chill/chill out/chillin: | To relax, to calm down. "We were just chillin in front of the TV." |
| Check out: | To look at or look over (for example, "check out that guy's motorcycle" or "check out the reading list for this class"). |
| Commuter: | Someone who lives at home and uses some sort of transportation to get to work or school |
| Couch potato: | Lazy person who spends a lot of time watching TV |
| Cram: | Study frantically the night before a test |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Crash: | Stay overnight at someone's place, usually without notice or formal arrangement, to go to sleep after being very tired |
| Digits: | Usually refers to a phone number, as in, "What's your digits?" |
| Dis: | To insult someone (for example, don't dis me!). |
| Ditch: | To skip or leave something or someone. |
| DL: | Acronym for "down low," said of something you wish to keep secret |
| Down to earth: | Practical; straightforward, simple person |
| Dude: | An informal way of addressing someone, usually a male (for example, "hey dude, are you going to class?" or "dude, nice car"). |
| Fed up: | Disgusted with |
| Flick: | A movie, e.g.: "Do you want to catch a flick at nine?" |
| Flip out: | To lose control |
| Freaked out: | Upset, anxious |
| Ghetto: | Generic bad; dirty, cheap, of poor quality, bad, messy. "The stereo in my car is so ghetto that the radio skips when I go over a bump." |
| Guts: | Courage; if someone "has the guts" or "has a lot of guts" or "has real guts", they have the courage necessary to do something. |
| Hammered: | Extremely intoxicated or under the influence of drugs |
| Hang in there: | Don't give up; keep trying |
| Hang out or Hangout: | To pass the time idly or at ease (let's hang out tonight); a place where you can do so (let's go to my favorite hangout). |
| Hangover: | The physical aftermath of heavy drinking, such as headache or nausea |
| Hardcore / Hard core: | Intense |
| ID: | Abbreviation for identification |
| Iffy: | Uncertain, unsure, doubtful. |
| Jock: | An athlete, particularly a male athlete. Usually used to describe someone who is good at sports but not good at academics. This word can be used as an insult or as simply a reference to a person's athleticism. |
| Lighten up: | Relax, don't be so serious |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| MIA: | Military acronym, this means “missing in action;” often used in trivial contexts, e.g. “my phone is MIA in the boonies.” |
| Munchies: | Hunger, i.e. "I've got the munchies."; can also be a noun meaning "snacks" |
| My bad: | My fault. |
| Nerd: | An overly intellectual person with poor social skills. This word can very easily be insulting. |
| Nine-to-five: | A day job, because most corporate schedules begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. |
| No-brainer: | Obvious, easy to answer. |
| On the house: | Free, no cost |
| Out of the question: | Impossible |
| Over my dead body: | Not if I can stop it! |
| Psyched: | Excited about something that is about to happen |
| Psyched up: | Mentally prepared for something, excited |
| Ride shotgun: | Ride in the front passenger seat of a vehicle. |
| Rip off: | (verb) to over-charge; (noun) a poorly made item that costs too much |
| Screw up: | To not do well on something |
| Shady or Sketchy: | Strange, not entirely safe |
| Sad: | Inferior, of poor quality, in bad shape, pathetic (for example, my marks in that class are really sad, or that's a sad-looking pair of gym shoes). |
| Sweet: | Generic positive: great, awesome, wonderful, terrific, nice. |
| Take for granted: | To assume |
| Uncle Sam: | The US government, the USA. |
| Uptight: | Worried, tense |
| Vibe: | The impression imparted by a person or place, e.g.: “That diner by the airport has a sketchy vibe.” |
| Vent: | To complain about something in order to relieve stress |
| Word: | A greeting or a sign of agreement. |
| Zone out: | To lose concentration and focus. |

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

Batavia Downs Casino & Racetrack
<http://bataviadownscasino.com>

Batavia Ice Arena
<http://www.bataviaicearena.com>

City of Batavia
<http://www.batavianewyork.com>

City of Buffalo
<http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us>

City of Rochester
<http://www.cityofrochester.gov>

Darien Lake Amusement Park
<http://www.godarienlake.com>

Darien Lake Performing Arts Center
<http://www.livenation.com>

Fashion Outlet of Niagara Falls
<http://www.fashionoutletsofniagara.com>

Free Concert in the Park
<http://bataviaconcertband.org>

Friday Nights in the Square (free concerts)
<http://downtownbataviany.com/Events/tabid/266/Default.aspx>

Genesee Center for the Arts
<http://www.genesee.edu>

Genesee County Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.geneseeny.com>

Genesee Country Museum
<http://www.gcv.org>

Go Art!
<http://www.goart.org>

Holland Land Office
<http://www.hollandlandoffice.com>

Jell-O Museum
<http://www.jellogallery.org>

Letchworth State Park
<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/79/details.aspx>
<http://nyfalls.com/letchworth-main.html>
<http://www.fingerlakeswest.com/letchworth.html>
<http://www.trails.com/letchworth-state-park.html>

Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises
<http://www.lockportlocks.com>

Mancuso's Bowling Alley
<http://downtownbataviany.com/Events/tabid/266/Default.aspx>

Niagara Falls
<http://www.infon Niagara.com>
<http://www.niagarafallslive.com>
<http://www.niagara-usa.com>

Oliver's Candies
<http://www.oliverscandies.com>

Polarwave Snowtubing
<http://www.polarwavebatavia.com>

Terry Hills Golf Course
<http://www.terryhills.com>

Waterloo Premium Outlets
<http://www.premiumoutlets.com>

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

Batavia Muckdogs Minor League Baseball
<http://batavia.muckdogs.milb.com>

Buffalo Bandits (lacross)
<http://www.bandits.com>

Buffalo Bills (football)
<http://www.buffalobills.com>

Buffalo Bisons (baseball)
<http://www.bisons.com>

Buffalo Sabres (hockey)
<http://www.sabres.nhl.com>

Rochester Knighthawks (lacross)
<http://www.knighthawks.net>

Rochester RazerSharks (basketball)
<http://www.razersharks.com>

Rochester Red Wings (baseball)
<http://www.redwingsbaseball.com>

Rochester Rhinos (soccer)
<http://www.rhinosoccer.com>

Studying at Genesee Community College

WHERE TO TURN FOR ANSWERS

| Contact: | If you need help with: |
|--|--|
| 1. International Student Advisor <i>Amy Cleveland (x 6409)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic problems • Curriculum requirements • Drop or Add courses • Changing major • Graduation requirements • SEVIS Transfer procedure • Changing address • Visa or immigration questions • Employment questions • Travel requirements |
| 2. ISO Club Advisors <i>Amy Cleveland (x 6409)</i> <i>Kate Klaiber (x6255)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO Events |
| 3. Professor teaching the course | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details about specific course • Late assignments • Problems understanding lecture or assignments |
| 4. Counselor <i>Jeannie Burdick (x 6357)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and Adjustment Issues |
| 5. Center for Academic Progress <i>CAP (x 6351)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring • Testing |
| 6. Student Health Office <i>(x 6835)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health / Medical problems • Health Insurance |
| 7. Student Records Office <i>(x 6218)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Transcript • Submit Add/Drop Registration Form |
| 8. Business Office <i>(x 6212)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay your tuition bill • Problems with your tuition charges |
| 9. Student Activities <i>(x 6261)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become involved in clubs and organizations on campus |
| 10. College Village <i>(585-343-0163)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance in your room/apartment • Roommate issues, Keys, etc. |
| 11. Security <i>(x 6240)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any time you feel threatened or unsafe • Report crimes • Lost and found |

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD

All GCC Students are required to carry a student identification card. You can obtain one by going to the Student Activities Office in the Student Union. They will take your picture and you will get your card the same day. **You must wait at least 24 hours after class registration.**

You can use this card for a variety of purposes:

1. Library – you will need this card to check out books and other library materials.
2. Fitness Center
3. Athletics
4. Student Discount – anywhere you go that requires you to show proof that you are a student
(movies, restaurants, sporting events, travel discounts, etc.)

DINING SERVICES

Food Plan Available!

The College has initiated a food plan for students and staff. The plan allows the purchase of meal plans and declining balance options.

[Meal Plan Enrollment Form](#)

You may add additional dollars to your food plan at any time by entering a VISA, Mastercard or American Express credit card number on the GCC Dining Services webpage. These dollars can be utilized in each cafeteria location and the vending machines by using your ID card.

Hours:

Main Café

Monday – Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Friday 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Student Union Café

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- ❖ Check out our Meal Deals in both cafes - \$2.95!
- ❖ Self Serve on Tuesdays and Thursdays in main café.
- ❖ Breakfast Pizzas every Friday in main café.
- ❖ Moe's Pizzas in Student Union café every day!
- ❖ New!!! Nutri Cart 11 AM - 2 PM Monday - Thursday
Featuring Grab n Go, Smoothies and fresh popped Popcorn
- ❖ Breakfast and Lunch pizza available at The Junction daily
- ❖ Fill your plate every day at the self serve in G's café for one low price.

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

The GCC student Health Center, located at the bottom of the stairs to the right as you enter the Student Union, is staffed Monday through Friday by a Registered Nurse. Hours of operation vary with the college calendar. When the office is closed, (evenings, weekends, and vacations) students may contact security if an emergency arises (x 6240).

Services Available (All are confidential)

- Basic First Aid
- Health Education- awareness of current health issues, prevention of disease. Promotion of health and wellness are emphasized. Current literature is available to all students.
- Provide information regarding mandatory accident and optional Health Insurance. Students are encouraged to carry a comprehensive insurance plan.
- Assist eligible students to complete and process accident and Health Insurance claims.
- Evaluation of medical conditions and immunization status, if needed: referral to off-campus clinics and physicians when necessary. (Transportation to off-campus clinics is the responsibility of the student.)

Immunization Requirements

New York State Public Health Law 2165 now requires all students attending New York State colleges and universities to show proof of immunity against measles, mumps and rubella. Full-time and part-time students, registered for 6 credit hours or more, must show proof of immunity within 30 days of the start of classes. Persons born before January 1, 1957 are exempt from the requirement.

Proof of immunity, in accordance with these requirements, is a condition of registration and continued class attendance. Proof of immunity is:

- Measles: TWO doses of live measles vaccine given after 1967 and after 12 months of age, or physician documentation of measles disease or a blood test showing immunity.
- Mumps: one dose of live mumps vaccine given after 1968 and after 12 months of age, or physician documentation of mumps disease, or a blood test showing immunity.
- Rubella: one dose of live rubella vaccine given after 1968 and after 12 months of age, or a blood test showing immunity. (Physician documentation is not acceptable proof of immunity against rubella.)

Students, who have proof of at least one valid measles, mumps or rubella vaccine should go to the local Health Department or doctor for a second dose of measles or MMR vaccine.

All immunization information should be submitted directly to the Health Center. Please be sure that all documents are properly identified with your current name and your social security number.

GCC Health Center
1 College Road
Batavia, NY 14020
Phone: 585-345-6835 fax: 585-345-6816 (attn. Health Center)

Medical Insurance

Student Accident and Health Insurance is mandatory for all international students at GCC to purchase. This cost will automatically be included on your bill. The insurance coverage is limited, and includes no dental or eye doctor insurance. For this reason, we recommend that students come to the U.S. with supplemental insurance of their own.

MEDEX Plus is a travel program that provides worldwide medical and travel assistance, emergency evacuation and repatriation. This is required of ALL International Students, even if you already have your own insurance.

You will receive a card and a program description when you enroll in the program. This program membership will be valid during the dates shown on your MEDEX enrollment record.

If you have any questions about this plan, you can call 1-800-537-2029 or speak with someone in Health Services.

Where to go for medical care

If you are feeling sick, do not hesitate to get help. Unless you have a real emergency, however, such as uncontrolled bleeding or a broken bone, do not go to a hospital emergency room for treatment. Emergency rooms are very expensive and, if your condition is not life threatening, you may have to wait a long time for care. **When you need medical care, go first to the Health Center on campus.** Depending on your needs, you may be treated on campus or referred to an outside clinic.

The time you spend with health-care providers may seem very brief, with little opportunity for conversation. The doctor or nurse will ask you many questions; some may appear unnecessary or intrusive, but you should try to answer them as completely as possible. You may think the approach abrupt and impersonal; however, the workers are only trying to be efficient and thorough, characteristics central to American culture. It is expected that patients will ask questions about their health, diagnosis, treatment, and costs. American physicians expect their patients to participate in making decisions about medications and treatment choices. If you ever have difficulty understanding anything about your medical status or treatment, ask for clarification. You can ask workers to talk more slowly, to repeat, or to write something down. If you think you will need a translator, ask when you make your appointment if someone can assist you, or bring a friend.

Foreign students often hesitate to consult professionals about mental-health problems. You may never have had the need to talk to a psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or psychiatrist at home, and you may think only “crazy” people with very severe mental problems are treated by such professionals. It is not uncommon in the United States, however, for students or other individuals with emotional problems to seek professional help. As a foreign student, far from home and lacking your usual support system of family and close friends, you may find it helpful to consult the International Advisor or Counseling Center on campus when dealing with issues of adjustment, depression, or strain. The process will be completely confidential.

Exercise and eating right

An important part of staying healthy is eating a nutritious and balanced diet. Finding the right foods in a new country may be difficult. The food everyone is eating may not appeal to you.

It may help to find some traditional foods from home, especially when you first arrive. If you have special dietary requirements, the campus dining halls may be able to accommodate you. Be sure to check with the food-service director about your requirements if you do not readily find the foods you need. It is perfectly acceptable to be assertive when looking for a diet that meets your needs and preferences.

Exercise can also contribute to your health. If you exercise regularly you will get sick less often, have more energy, and feel less stress. All of these factors will, of course, improve your academic performance.

Staying healthy in a new environment, with all the differences in climate, food, and language, is a challenge. If you have adequate health insurance, get medical care when you need it, eat a nutritious diet, and get regular exercise, you will stay healthy and get much more out of your experience as a foreign student in the United States.

LIBRARY

The Alfred C. O'Connell Library includes over 86,000 volumes of general circulation books and reference works, 200 periodical subscriptions, and several daily and weekly newspapers. 67 online research and information databases provide access to the full text of 14,150+ periodicals, 5,500+ electronic books, and thousands of other types of information resources in a wide variety of topic areas. The Library provides an automated circulation system and an online web-based catalog system which includes access to a variety of electronic databases. The library also maintains a web site with information about the library and links to its electronic and internet resources.

Library Hours

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Monday – Thursday | 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. |
| Friday | 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. |
| Saturday | 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. |
| Sunday | 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. |

BOOKSTORE

You can now access our bookstore [Genesee Community College Campus Shop](#)! Browse our store, order books online, or reserve your copy for pickup!

From this website:

- Click on "Textbooks" near the top of the page
- Follow Step One
 - Select the Term, Department, Course, Section
 - Click "Add Course"
- Follow Step Two
 - Click "View Textbook List"

Our bookstore is leased and operated by Barnes & Noble Bookstores, Inc. Located on the first floor of the Batavia campus, at the north end of the cafeteria, we stock full line of new and used textbooks, trade books, supplies, gift items, and imprinted clothing.

The Bookstore offers many ways to buy your textbooks. You can [buy new textbooks](#), [buy used textbooks](#), [rent textbooks](#), and [buy eTextbooks](#). You may also save money by buying textbooks through an online website like half.com or amazon.

TUTORING CENTER

Every semester, professional and peer tutors provide GCC students with hundreds of hours of tutoring. Tutoring is provided free of charge. Students seeking tutoring should contact the [Tutorial Coordinator](#) for assistance. The Tutorial Coordinator's office is in room D 209 within the Center for Academic Progress.

Math

Professional and student math tutors are available on a drop-in basis. Math tutors are located in the Math Learning Center in room D 360.

English

Professional tutors and English faculty are available by appointment to assist students with all writing assignments. They are located in the Writing Center. The Writing Center is located in the Humanities Suite, second floor, B wing.

Foreign Language

Tutorial assistance for Spanish and French is available in the Language Lab in room A-312.

Distance Learning

Tutorial Support for Distance Learning Students is available on a limited basis. Tutoring may be requested by contacting the Tutorial Coordinator at tutoring@genesee.edu.

For all other subjects, please submit a [Request for Tutoring](#) form or stop by the Assisted Learning Lab Rm. D209 and check on availability of tutors.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Campus life in the United States, especially in urban areas, is sometimes perceived as dangerous by foreign students and their families. This perception is heightened by international media coverage of violent incidents, which, fortunately, occur very infrequently. Universities and colleges in the United States want to provide you with a safe and secure environment in which to pursue your academic and social goals.

Genesee Community College Public Safety operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and is the College's law enforcement agency. Public Safety facilitates the reporting, prevention, and investigation of criminal activities and provides prompt response to other emergencies. The Public Safety Office is located at the Batavia campus, on the East side of the main building, between the Cafeteria and the William W. Stuart Forum, in a busy, visible, high-traffic area. Members of the academic community and visitors to the campus are encouraged to report crimes to Public Safety in person, or by telephone at 343-0221, Ext. 6240. Crimes and emergencies can be reported from any of the College's emergency telephones which are located throughout the campus, and from "house" phones or pay phones near building entrances. The academic community and visitors can also contact Public Safety by e-mail at gccsec@genesee.edu, or visit the web site at www.genesee.edu/resources/public_safety. "Silent Witness" reporting is available on the web page for voluntary, confidential reporting of suspected crimes.

In order to ensure that the college community is aware of criminal behavior or other threats that exist on campus, Public Safety provides timely warnings through "security alerts" posted on the front page of the GenESIS portal so that they are seen by students, faculty and staff when they log in to access academic courses, support, and administrative systems of the College. In the event of an emergency situation, Genesee has joined NY Alert in order to notify students, faculty and staff members in ways that work best for each person, including email, texting, telephone or fax.

"Better safe than sorry" goes the American saying. No matter how safe your campus and community appear to be, you should acquaint yourself with your new environment by reading the safety information your institution provides. Below are some tips to keep yourself and your property safe.

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and campus by walking around in the daylight.
- Note the address and telephone of your country's nearest consulate or embassy.
- Locate the police station that serves your neighborhood.
- Locate the nearest fire-alarm box and learn how to report a fire.
- Identify the hospital emergency room nearest to your home and know what to do in case of an accident.
- Keep "emergency" numbers near your phone at home (911 is the general emergency number in the United States.)

Sadly, crime is a fact of life in the United States. University and college campuses are not immune from these problems, but help is available. The primary duty of the police is to serve and protect you, and you should not hesitate to seek their help at any time.

The most common crime on U.S. campuses is theft of property left unattended or in an unlocked room, car, or apartment. More serious crimes—such as drug dealing, assault, and rape—also occur. Some behaviors, such as sexual harassment and spouse abuse, are crimes in the United States, even though they may not be crimes in your country. (See Chapter 12.) Protect yourself by exercising good sense and caution:

- Keep your dorm room or apartment locked whenever you are away.
- Do not leave your books, backpack, or purse unattended anywhere (library, fitness center, etc.)
- Do not walk alone at night.
- Buy a good lock for your bicycle and use it.
- Use caution with strangers who are overly friendly, who offer you gifts, or who ask you to accompany them to an unknown place.
- Ask a reliable friend or your foreign-student adviser if you are in doubt about a person or an activity.

Sexual harassment is a particularly American concept and a very hot topic on campus and in the workplace. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical or verbal behavior of a sexual nature. Learn how sexual harassment is defined at your campus and what behaviors you should avoid. If you feel you are being sexually harassed it is important that you tell someone. Your foreign-student adviser can direct you to sources of information at your institution.

Spouse abuse, or domestic violence, is a crime in the United States. You may feel that all domestic matters, especially those that occur within your home, are private matters, but in the United States they cease to be private once one party uses physical violence. In most states, if a couple is fighting and the police come to the scene and find evidence of assault, they are required to arrest the attacker and put him or her in jail. In some cases, both participants may be arrested. If a woman feels she is being victimized by her husband or a person with whom she is living, she should seek help immediately. Help for men whose anger becomes uncontrolled and results in domestic violence can also be found.

If you are accused of committing a crime and have been arrested, remember that you do have certain rights. You should notify your foreign-student adviser as soon as possible. You also have the right to notify your government about your arrest or detainment. If you choose to do so, the police must inform the appropriate foreign consulate or embassy immediately. Your consular officers have the right to visit you and arrange for your legal representation. Many countries (for example, China, Nigeria, and Singapore) require that the consul be notified when their nationals are confined or detained. In these cases, you have no choice in the matter of whether the authorities notify your consulate; they must do so. Depending upon the severity of the crime of which you are accused, you should obtain legal assistance.

HONORS PROGRAM

The Genesee Community College Honors Program is designed to encourage academic work of depth, originality, and quality by students demonstrating superior potential. The focus of the program is an academic experience that will be challenging and encourage independent, creative, and interdisciplinary study by selected students.

Students successfully participating in the program are eligible for additional financial aid and their Honors work is recognized on official transcripts. Early registration for classes, recognition at official college functions, and the opportunity to work with highly motivated faculty and students are additional benefits of participating in this program. The program is open to full and part time students studying at any of the Genesee Campus Centers.

Admission to the Honors Program

Qualifications/Criteria

Candidates will demonstrate evidence of exemplary academic achievement such as: a high school average of 87, an ACT combined score of 24 with no subscore lower than 21, a combined SAT score of 1000 with no subscore lower than 450, or completion of 12 hours of study at an accredited institution of higher education with a QPI of 3.5, and/or approval of the Honors Committee.

Applying to the Program

Candidates will submit an Honors Program application to the Program Committee, which contains the following:

1. A written statement explaining why you should be considered for the program and describing a significant accomplishment. The accomplishment may include, but is not limited to, a work of art, an award, essay, musical composition, scientific experiment, speech, or other evidence of leadership.
2. Two letters of recommendation, one from an individual who works or has worked with you in an academic setting and one from a person outside the classroom who is not a relative.
3. A completed application to Genesee Community College or a current college transcript.

Admission to the Honors Program is selective and limited. The dean will review applications and then may invite candidates to an informational interview with representatives of the Honors Committee. Candidates should be prepared to discuss their accomplishments, academic interests, and plans as related to the program.

**GENESEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HONORS PROGRAM APPLICATION**

NAME _____ ID # _____ - _____ - _____

DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ COUNTY _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

TELEPHONE
NUMBER(H) _____ (W) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

HIGH SCHOOL (OR COLLEGE) QPI _____ SAT
(Combined) _____

ACT (Combined) _____

HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE MOST RECENTLY ATTENDED

HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE ADVISOR _____ TELEPHONE

STUDENT STATUS AT GENESEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
(NEW) _____ (CONTINUING) _____

TWO REFERENCES (LIST NAME, TITLE, ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER)

WRITTEN STATEMENT: (PLEASE ATTACH YOUR WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THIS APPLICATION FORM).

Rev 11/28/01 **

The Honors Coursework Essentials

HON 201-204 HONORS SEMINAR

(1 credit hour) The Honors Seminar is required each semester that a student is enrolled in the Honors Program. This course is designed as a common ground for all students in the program, usually based on a theme for the semester. Students will deliver presentations based on their seminar work and on mentoring and enriched course projects.

HON 210 INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS

(3 credit hours) This Interdisciplinary course is the exploration of a topic studied from several disciplinary viewpoints. Interdisciplinary courses may be developed specifically to meet the needs of the Honors Program, or they may include Honors students and general admission students together.

ENRICHED COURSE

(3 credit hours) Enriched courses are extensions of standard courses where the already enrolled Honors student establishes an agreement with the instructor and the Honors Advisory Committee to do additional project work. Such projects are presented to the Honors Committee and invited guests upon completion.

HON (111-114; 121-124; 131-134) MENTORING

(1-3 credit hours) Mentorships involve Honors students working individually with selected faculty or staff on an independent project. Such projects are formally approved by the Honors Advisory Committee, and are presented to the Honors Advisory Committee and invited guests upon completion.

Examples might include exploration of the role of women in the civil war, construction of an antique musical instrument, researching the political decision-making process in a small community, or studying the creative processes of a writer, among others.

Program Completion

To complete the full Honors Program, you must accumulate a minimum of 12 Honors Credits with no more than six credits in any one-program component (seminar, mentoring, enriched courses, Interdisciplinary course). To be credited towards the Honors Program courses must be graded at a minimum of B. However, successful completion of any Honors courses is noted on official transcripts.

Perks & Opportunities for Honor Students

As an Honors Students you are eligible for:

1. Honors financial aid each semester that you are active in the program. Part-time students must take at least 6 credits to be eligible for Honors financial aid, which will be prorated, based on the credit load.
2. Early registration for classes.
3. Honors designation on all [Honors courses](#) on official transcripts.
4. Recognition at college functions such as the Student Government Awards Banquet.
5. Attendance at selected college sponsored special events at reduced cost.
6. Consideration for admission to Honors programs at selected area colleges upon transfer.

You have the opportunity to:

1. Register for additional Honors activities during any semester that you are involved in the program
2. Participate in field trips, social activities, and other Honors experiences when offered.

Responsibilities

To remain in the program, you must maintain a QPI of 3.5. You are permitted one semester of Honors probation. During that semester you must increase the QPI to a minimum of 3.5. Students not meeting the 3.5 QPI at the end of the probationary semester may be withdrawn from the program. To be credited toward the program, Honors Courses must be at least a "B" grade.

You are expected to:

1. Register for a [one-credit Honors Seminar](#) each semester that you are active in the program.
2. Register for at least one additional Honors activity (interdisciplinary course, mentorship, or enriched course) in addition to the Honors Seminar following your first semester of Honors participation.
3. Maintain Honors academic eligibility.
4. Maintain regular contact with the Honors coordinator.