

2018/2019 EXCHANGE STUDENT

GUIDEBOOK

A guide for students coming to the United States



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Welcome to Berkeley College!

Welcome to the United States and Berkeley College! This guide contains important reference information. Please read it carefully.

The International Department is your source for information at Berkeley College. Our staff at the 41st Street building at the New York City location can assist you with many matters related to life at Berkeley and in the community. We will provide you with important information about your Student Visa status, housing, medical insurance, visa benefits, cross-cultural activities, and community involvement.

You are beginning an exciting experience. Please take your studies in New York seriously, but allow yourself to enjoy and learn from your new environment. If you have questions or just need to talk to someone, the International Department staff is available to help you at any time.

We look forward to your arrival!

- The International Department



How do I apply for a visa?

To enter the United States and attend Berkeley College, you will need to make an appointment with your nearest American Embassy or Consulate to apply for a visa.

Before you apply for the visa, you should understand the process and rules governing the issuance of a visa. Please note: the J-1 visa has a *two-year home country physical presence requirement* for certain categories of the visa.

Your first step is to pay the one-time SEVIS Fee - \$180 for a J-1. This fee must be paid at least three business days prior to applying for your visa. To complete the application online, visit www.FMJfee.com. After paying the fee, you will be issued a receipt online. Your second step is to make a visa appointment.

Be sure to bring the following documents to the Consulate or Embassy:

- Berkeley College DS-2019
- Paid SEVIS Fee Receipt
- Valid passport
- Official documents of financial support from your sponsor
- Acceptance letter from Berkeley College

How do I prepare for the visa interview?

1. Be ready to clearly explain why you want to come to the United States to study at Berkeley College.
 - Why do you want to study in the United States?
 - Why are you going to take this particular program of study?
 - Why did you choose Berkeley College?
 - What career will your studies prepare you for back home?
2. Practice your English!

What is the procedure for entering the United States?

In most cases, the U.S. Embassy/Consulate will give you an envelope containing your DS-2019 and your original financial documents to present to the immigration inspector at your U.S. port of entry.

When you arrive at immigration inspection, present your passport, the envelope containing your DS-2019, SEVIS fee receipt, and financial documents given to you by the Embassy.

The inspector will:

1. Create an electronic Form I-94 in your name with an admission number.
2. Return to you the DS-2019.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your passport and other documents should be kept in a safe place. It is wise to make photocopies of them in the event they are lost or stolen.

HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND FINANCES

Health Insurance Requirements

The United States does not have a nationalized healthcare system. This means that you must pay all costs for medicine and treatment by physicians and hospitals. In order to participate as a J-1 Exchange Visitor, **it is mandatory that you purchase a health insurance plan** which includes accidents or illnesses up to \$100,000; a \$500 or less deductible; medical evacuation of \$50,000 or more and repatriation of \$25,000 or more. Berkeley College does not offer a student health insurance plan and requires that J-1 Exchange Visitors demonstrate health insurance coverage prior to arrival. We recommend ISO Student Health Insurance whose plan exceeds the minimum requirements – www.isoa.org

The International Department can also provide you with information regarding other health insurance plans available in the United States.

How much money should I bring?

You will need enough money to pay for your books, housing, and personal expenses. We estimate expenses to be about \$2,400 per month.

What is the best way to carry my money?

You will need to make careful plans for currency exchange in U.S. dollars before leaving home. When you arrive in the United States, you should bring the amount of money described above in a form that is safe and immediately available for your use.

The easiest and perhaps the safest method of carrying large sums of currency is to use traveler's checks in U.S. dollars. They will provide you with immediate funds until you can open a bank account. Traveler's checks can be changed into currency. Please note, however, that traveler's checks are not an accepted form of payment in taxicabs and some smaller stores.

U.S. currency in cash should be carried in small amounts only. \$100-\$200 would be a reasonable amount of cash to carry with you when you arrive (in addition to traveler's checks). You should carry bills in small denominations such as \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1, as well as some coins.

Should I carry a credit card?

We recommend that you carry a credit card in case of an emergency. Having a credit card will ensure that you will never be without money. You should apply for your credit card in your home country, as it is very difficult to apply for a card as an international visitor to the United States.

How do I open a bank account in the United States?

Please visit the International Department for information on how to open a bank account. Generally, you will need your passport, DS-2019, I-94 printed copy, Berkeley ID card, and letter of recommendation from the International Department. In some cases it is also helpful to have a letter of reference from your bank at home.



REPORTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT

Upon your arrival, you must report to the International Department on time and prior to the start of classes.

- Call or email the International Department to inform us of your arrival. Our telephone number is 212-687-3730, and our email address is NAJ@BerkeleyCollege.edu.
- Submit your address and telephone number to the International Department.
- Submit copies of your passport, DS-2019, insurance coverage, and printed electronic I-94 to the International Department.
- Attend the mandatory orientation program offered on the first Monday of class.



EXPECTATIONS

Attendance:

Attendance in all classes is very important for a student's success. This is an accelerated program where each class meets only one day per week. Class time is interactive, and participation is a very important part of the learning experience. Attendance will be checked each class, and all students are expected to arrive on time. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professor of an absence and to make up assignments. Three or more absences will result in a failure for the course.

Students should check with their home institutions to be aware of the policy regarding failure in any course. Some institutions require students to repeat the entire year if they fail a course at Berkeley.

Conduct:

Students are expected to abide by all public laws; to comply with the policies, procedures, and rules of Berkeley College, including those stated in the Berkeley College Student Handbook, which is available on the Berkeley College website; to obey any lawful directive of an authorized member of the Berkeley College faculty or administration; to provide true and complete information to the College when called upon to do so; to promote the safety of the College community; and to demonstrate a positive attitude, diligence, and courtesy toward faculty, staff, and fellow students.

Smoking and the consumption of recreational drugs or alcohol are not permitted on campus or at College functions.

The College reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal, against any student who violates any public law or any College rule, policy, or procedure; disobeys such lawful directive; knowingly provides false, incomplete, or deceptive information to the College, including but not limited to inaccurate financial information or work-study time records; harasses, intimidates, or endangers the safety, security, or welfare of the College or any member of the College community; or otherwise interferes with the orderly and continuous administration and operation of the College or any of its units.

Communication:

The use of all personal electronic devices such as cell phones or smartphones is prohibited in class. Laptop computers are permitted only with the consent of the individual instructor.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

The principles of academic integrity encompass simple standards of honesty and truth. Each member of the Berkeley College community has a responsibility to uphold standards and to take action when others violate them. Faculty members have an obligation to educate students about the standards of academic integrity and to report violations of these standards. Students are responsible for knowing what the standards are and for adhering to them. Students also should bring any violations of which they are aware to the attention of their instructors. Any breach of academic integrity is a serious offense that may result in disciplinary consequences.

Plagiarism is a violation of the integrity of the academic community. Representing someone else's work as one's own is a serious academic offense and may result in failure, suspension, or dismissal.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Once I complete my Exchange Program, when will I receive my grades and a transcript?

An Unofficial Transcript of grades will be sent to your home institution coordinator within five weeks of completion. "Unofficial" means that it is not printed on official paper from our Registrar's Office. It is a paper version of grades only.

2. How can I receive an Official Transcript?

In order to have an Official Transcript sent, you must visit Berkeley College's website and fill out a Request Form at BerkeleyCollege.edu/academics_bc/registrar.htm. Official transcripts are not issued to students with unpaid balances.

3. Will I receive a certificate of attendance upon program completion?

Yes, certificates of attendance will be mailed to your home institution within six to eight weeks of program completion, listing the courses completed at Berkeley College. Grades will not be listed on the certificate.

4. Am I allowed to receive a salary during my internship?

According to immigration regulations, if you are in J-1 Exchange Visitor status, you are eligible to receive payment during your Academic Training/Internship which follows your initial academic program.

5. Can I participate in an internship before my academic program or several months after I complete my courses?

You will only be authorized to participate in an internship immediately after completion of your academic program. There is a one-week break between the academic program and the internship. The internship must begin the week immediately following the one-week break.

6. Can I travel outside of the United States during my program?

Yes, it is possible to travel outside of the United States. Students should inform the International Department about any trips abroad. We will review and sign your DS-2019 before your departure.

7. Can I stay in the United States after I finish my program?

Yes, you may stay in the United States for up to 30 days after completion of your J-1 Exchange Visitor program. During this period, you are welcome to travel within the United States.

8. How will I find an internship after completing my academic program?

Internship sponsors are regularly recruited and developed through the Career Services Department. A Career Services Counselor will work with study abroad participants to guide and suggest possible internship opportunities for them based on their experience, academic and language ability, and future career interests. Students who elect to conduct their internship through Berkeley College's Career Services must adhere to the following:

- Students must agree to intern for a minimum of 25 hours per week for a 12-week period, or an 11- week period during the summer quarter.
- Students must meet with their designated Career Services Counselor at least one month prior to the internship start date to search for and apply for internships.
- Students must prepare application materials such as a resume, a cover letter, and writing samples in order to apply for each specific internship opportunity.
- Students must abide by the Internship Code of Conduct, which is available through the Career Services Department.

If a student locates his or her own internship without the help of Berkeley College, the student must notify the

Career Services Counselor at least two weeks prior to the end of the academic program. Students must provide Berkeley College with contact information for the internship company.

9. Am I eligible for a social security number?

The International Student Office can help you obtain a social security number if needed for an approved internship.

Housing



Housing in Manhattan

Please be very careful when renting apartments through the Internet and sending money in advance of arrival. Unless you are working with a formal housing agency listed below, or a real estate agent who has been recommended to you, it is very risky. Unfortunately, some students have sent money in advance to people they thought were legitimate, only to arrive and find that their money and the person were nowhere to be found. We have heard particular stories of this nature with regard to craigslist.org.

Short-Term or Long-Term Options

Educational Housing
212-977-9099
www.studenthousing.org

The Markle Evangeline Residence for Women
212-242-2400
www.themarkle.org

Sara's Homestays and Furnished Accommodations
www.sarahomestay.com

De Hirsch Residence
1395 Lexington Avenue
212-415-5650
www.92y.org/residence

International House
500 Riverside Drive
212-316-8400
www.ihouse-nyc.org/s/707/start.aspx

The Westside YMCA
5 West 63rd Street
212-875-4100
www.ymcanyc.org/west-side/guest-rooms/accommodations/

Vanderbilt YMCA
224 East 47th Street
212-756-9600
www.ymcanyc.org/vanderbilt/guest-rooms/accommodations/

**PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU SOON!**

INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT STAFF

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Additional information for prospective students can be found at BerkeleyCollege.edu/InternationalProspect
Berkeley College reserves the right to add, discontinue, or modify its programs and policies at any time.
Modifications subsequent to the original publication of this information may not be reflected here. For the most up-to-date information, please visit BerkeleyCollege.edu.