About the Office of International Education

NYIT’s Office of International Education (OIE) serves approximately 1,400 international students from nearly 100 countries around the world. As part of the Division of Student Affairs, the OIE offers programs and services for all international students and alumni.

Our offices are located at the following NYIT campuses:

**Old Westbury**
- Harry Schure Hall, room 207
- Barbara Multari, director
  - 516.686.7585
- Karen Johnson, assistant director
  - 516.686.7526

**Manhattan**
- 16 W. 61 St., sixth floor
- Robinson Despeignes, associate director
  - 212.261.1514
- Chris Olagunju, assistant director
  - 212.261.1684

All international students are invited to schedule an appointment with an international student advisor, who will be happy to assist you with any concerns you have.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Office of International Education is to support and nurture the growth of the international student community in order to facilitate integration and adjustment to a new school, community, environment, country, and culture, promoting a multicultural environment while enhancing NYIT’s presence in the global community. The OIE also educates and informs international students of the regulations governing their stay in the United States and implements these regulations according to the Department of Homeland Security’s guidelines.

The OIE prepared this handbook to help you, the international student, adapt to student life in the United States. It also offers information on the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
The International Student Advisor

One of the most important contacts at NYIT will be your international student advisor—your personal contact with the school and the person who can assist you throughout your stay.

The international student advisor is a designated school official (DSO) or responsible officer (RO) who delivers a variety of crucial services, including:

- Orientation programs to help you adjust to life in the United States and provide valuable information on a wide variety of issues;
- Assistance for all types of problems, from minor requests for information to major personal concerns (you are advised to contact your advisor as soon as you become aware of a problem before it becomes more serious); and
- Providing an official link to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and other relevant government agencies to keep you updated on your obligations as a non-immigrant alien as well as any changes to USCIS rules and regulations. To the fullest extent possible, international student advisors also will assist you in your interactions with the USCIS.

It is Your Responsibility to Know the Rules

Read this handbook carefully to understand the basic immigration rules that affect your F-1 or J-1 status. The U.S. government will hold you responsible for following these laws. The OIE is available to provide assistance if you are unclear about anything related to your immigration status.

Although this handbook is timely and accurate, be aware that immigration rules and regulations may change at any time. It is your responsibility to keep the OIE updated as to your contact information. Remember to check your NYIT e-mail regularly for any updates from the OIE.

SEVIS Responsibilities of an F-1 Student

Students with F-1 status are responsible for learning, understanding, and complying with U.S. federal laws and regulations governing the F-1 visa. Failure to do so will violate your legal status in the United States and result in serious consequences.

Registration Form: To sign up for classes, you must complete these forms each semester. They must be signed by yourself, your academic advisor and your international student advisor. You must then take the form to the Office of the Bursar and the Office of the Registrar for final processing.

Transcript: This is an official record of your past grades and courses and is available from the Office of the Registrar. Note that a transcript is not available until you complete your first semester as an NYIT student.

Conclusion

This handbook was created to help you understand your rights and responsibilities as an F-1 or J-1 student. You are responsible for complying with the rules and regulations established by the U.S. government.

Remember, we are always available to assist you. It is our hope that the many joys and challenges you experience at NYIT add new dimensions to your education and that your own cultural heritage enriches our academic community.
Identification Number (ID Number): Your ID number is the seven-digit sequence beginning with "0" given to you by the Office of Admissions before you arrive at NYIT. Memorize this number, as you will need it for all official transactions with the school.

When asked for your ID number, always use this seven-digit sequence. This number should not be confused with the ID number provided by the Social Security Administration. Only supply an SSN if you have been granted an actual number by the U.S. government.

Incomplete: This temporary mark is given by professors when you do not complete all the requirements of a course. An incomplete is indicated by an "I" on your grade report. To remove this mark, you must have a valid reason and complete the course requirements within a period of time as specified by your professor. If the remaining coursework is not completed within this time, you will receive a failing grade for the class.

Mid-Terms: Tests in the middle of the semester. Make sure you know which classes require mid-terms, as well as when they are scheduled.

Prerequisite: Many NYIT courses require you to take a preliminary course to properly prepare you. For example, before taking English 102 you may be required to take English 101. Although prerequisites are counted towards tuition and full-time status, they may not count toward your degree requirements.

Your Responsibilities Include the Following:

- Keep your passport valid at all times. You must have a valid passport in your possession. For information on renewing your passport, visit the Web site of your country's embassy or consulate in the United States. More information can be found at www.embassy.org/embassies.

- Report any address changes within 10 days to the OIE and the Office of the Registrar. The OIE is required to provide this and other student data to the federal government electronically. No other school office is authorized to process this data. Students who are subject to the Federal Special Registration Procedures must also report address changes within 10 days to the office of the USCIS.

- Report any name change. Any name change or change in the spelling of your name must be documented and reported to the OIE immediately. It is very important that your records (passport, I-20, visa, NYIT student records) be consistent. Please make sure that all spellings, as well as your date of birth, are correct on all documentation. If you believe there may be a problem, contact the OIE immediately so it can evaluate the situation.

- Report changes in major and/or degree level. A change in major and/or degree level is known as a change in program. Examples include switching from the English language program to a regular degree program, switching from a bachelor's degree program to a master's degree program, or switching from one major to another.

If you change majors or degree levels, you must notify the OIE and present documented proof of the change (a copy of the Change in Program form signed by your new department chairman or a new admission letter). The OIE may be able to help you obtain the appropriate documentation.

In addition, look very carefully at your I-20. It should accurately reflect your current major and degree level. If it does not, you must contact us immediately since that information is registered with the federal government and must be accurate.

- Make sure your I-20 does not expire (see item five on your I-20). You must apply for an extension before your I-20 form expires if you intend to stay at NYIT and cannot complete your program by the form expiration date. Requests for an extension may be submitted up to 60 days prior to the expiration date of the I-20 form. You will need to submit the Academic Advisor's Recommendation form for Extension of Stay as well as a new NYIT Financial Affidavit of Support form.
Maintain a full course of study each semester. U.S. federal regulations [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)] require you to pursue a full course of study each fall and spring semester until graduation or transfer to a new school. Failure to register and attend NYIT as a full-time student is a violation of your non-immigrant status and can result in the loss of F-1 benefits (including employment eligibility both on and off campus), and may, in the future, require you to depart the United States. You are not required to attend classes during the summer or interim semesters, though you are certainly welcome to do so, and there is no minimum course load required during those periods.

A full-time course load varies according to academic level as indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Hours/Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Institute (ELI)</td>
<td>18 hours per week of study for the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>12 credits per semester (may include ELI courses, if needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>9 credits per semester (may include ELI courses, if needed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that withdrawing from or ceasing to attend a class may cause you to drop below full-time status. Even if a class is cancelled through no fault of your own, you are still required to be registered for enough credits to remain full-time. Consult an academic or international student advisor to make sure your status remains full-time.

Limited exceptions to the full-time course requirement
- English language or reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods
- Inappropriate course placement
- Documented medical condition
- Final semester of study

Note: All exceptions require documentation and must be approved in advance by a DSO before you drop courses that reduce your schedule to less than full-time.
Other Terms

- **Advisor**: You have several advisors: an academic advisor who is a member of the faculty to help with academic matters; an international student advisor from the OIE to assist with your F-1 status; and an ELI advisor if you are in the English Language Institute. They will all assist you during the registration process. It is very important that you understand what each advisor does, since they perform different functions.

- **Blue sheet**: This receipt is generated by the Office of the Registrar and contains your name, student ID, major(s), current course schedule, and tuition information. Although it is usually printed on blue paper, you may also receive a white copy.

- **Catalog**: NYIT produces undergraduate and graduate catalogs that contain detailed descriptions of the courses you must follow to graduate. It also contains important information concerning fees, grading, official school policies, and an academic calendar.

- **Credits**: These units are used by U.S. educational institutions to record successful completion of the academic courses required for your degree. Each course has either credits or hours assigned to it (see "Hours" section that follows). These are used to determine your full-time status and how much tuition you owe.

- **CUM**: This refers to a person’s cumulative grade point average (GPA).

- **Drop and Add**: For a limited time after registration, you can change your course schedule. For example, you may drop Economics 101 and add Physics 101, or change from the Monday/Friday section of Philosophy 303 to the Tuesday/Thursday section of Philosophy 303. This change in program is called “drop and add.” There are time limitations to this process, however, and at a certain point fees may apply. In addition, most changes require approval from one or more of your advisors. Check with the Office of the Registrar for more information on the drop and add schedule. If you miss the deadline, you may be required to remain in a class you did not wish to take.

- **Electives**: Students “elect” (choose freely) these courses for credit toward their degree, as opposed to courses they are required to take.

- **ELI (English Language Institute)**: NYIT’s English Language Institute offers international students special preparation for college-level reading and writing.
Campus Talk

The language around an academic campus ranges from formal to slang. In between these two extremes are the everyday expressions that can be heard everywhere. To communicate effectively, you must learn what these expressions mean, and in what situations they should be used. The following are some of the more common expressions you may encounter:

Registration Terms

All students must go through registration. Oftentimes, you will hear someone say, “last name first.” On many forms used by U.S. institutions, your last name (or family name) will appear first followed by your first (or given) name. For example, an international student’s form might read “Tanaka, Masayumi K.” On the other hand, when you are asked to sign a document, your signature must include your first name followed by last name (i.e., Masayumi K. Tanaka).

If you are an F-1 student in your final semester of study, you must get the authorization from the OIE before registering for less than full-time.

Note: Even if your department approves your less than full-time status, authorization may only be granted by your international student advisor.

- **Distance-learning classes.** Only one distance-learning course (three credits) may be applied toward full-time enrollment.

- **Maintain the required health and accident insurance.** F-1 students must have NYIT-approved health and accident insurance. Refer to the section on medical care for more information.

- **Bring your SEVIS I-20 to the Office of International Education (OIE) prior to traveling outside the United States.** This is necessary to determine if an updated OIE signature is required. If you will be traveling and applying for a new visa, you should also request a letter of certification from the OIE to verify that you are a full-time student. Refer to the section on international travel while in F status for more information.

- **Notify the OIE of any accompanying dependents who will join you later.** The OIE prepares an I-20 for any dependents of F-1 students who will enter the United States on an F-2 visa. The OIE is required to report biographical data on F-2 dependents to the U.S. government. **Dependents with F-2 status may NOT accept employment or be enrolled in full-time study.** If they wish to study, they must apply for F-1 status. Spouses with F-2 status are permitted to engage in part-time “avocational or recreational study.” Children with F-2 status may attend full-time at the elementary or secondary level of schooling.
Informality. You find that some people in the United States are informal in dress, in decorum, and in personal relationships.

Time. In the United States, considerable importance is placed on punctuality and people tend to organize their daily activities accordingly. To the foreign observer, Americans may seem hurried, always rushing from place to place, but many consider this to be a helpful way of assuring that things get done in an orderly fashion.

Culture shock is the name given to the feeling of disorientation that sometimes occurs when a person is placed in unfamiliar surroundings. Upon your arrival to New York City, you will no doubt encounter a multitude of new sights, sounds, smells, and tastes that are not the same as in your home country. If your English skills are limited, you may have difficulty expressing yourself. As a result, you may feel confused, unsure or doubtful about the wisdom of your decision to study in the United States.

People affected by culture shock may become nervous or fatigued, feel the need to frequently contact family and friends in their home country, get angry over minor irritations, and become dependent on others who have the same cultural background. These feelings may negatively impact your relationships with U.S. citizens as well as other international students.

Coping With Culture Shock
Although people react differently, here are some suggestions that may prove helpful:

■ Maintain your perspective. Remember that hundreds of people have come to NYIT from other countries and have thrived.

■ Temper your expectations. Your reactions to life in the United States, in New York City, or at NYIT may be based on preconceived notions of what you expected. If you find yourself feeling confused or disappointed, ask yourself if your initial expectation was reasonable.

■ Keep an open mind. People at NYIT may act in ways that people in your home country would not. It is important to understand that the individuals are acting in accordance with their own values, not yours. Do not judge their behavior using standards you would use in your home country.

■ Learn from experience. Moving into a new culture can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. This is a wonderful way to better understand your own values and broaden your mind.

If you feel the need to talk to someone about the new things you are feeling or experiencing, the Office of Counseling and Wellness Services (Old Westbury 516.686.7683, Manhattan 212.261.1755) can provide you with more information.

Report your departure date and the reason for leaving NYIT to the OIE. Periodically, students leave college early or unexpectedly due to a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include early graduation, leave of absence, or termination of studies. As an F-1 student, you are required by federal law to inform the OIE if you plan to leave NYIT before the expiration date on your I-20 form, as well as provide a reason for your early departure.

Obtain transfer authorization prior to leaving NYIT. If you plan to transfer to another college or university in the United States, you must inform the OIE of your new school so a DSO can perform the “transfer out” in SEVIS.

You must depart the United States within 60 days of your I-20 expiration date or the completion of your academic program, whichever is earlier. The exceptions to this rule include those who are applying for optional practical training (OPT), transferring to a new school, or applying for a change of status with the USCIS. For F-1 students, these 60 days include any time between the program end date and the start of OPT.

Reinstatement. If you violate the terms of your non-immigrant status, you may need to apply to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for reinstatement. Our offices will assist you with this process. It is important to file for reinstatement as soon as possible after the violation.

Unless you can show exceptional circumstances, you will be ineligible for reinstatement if you have been out of status for more than five months. When this happens, you will need to leave the country and apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy in your country of citizenship and re-enter the United States on a new I-20.
Plan ahead. There are hundreds of international students at NYIT and most of your requests will have to be processed through both the NYIT and the SEVIS systems. As a result, these requests cannot be completed at the last moment. It is important to plan ahead, especially with time-sensitive requests such as OPT, I-20 extensions, etc. You should always allow adequate time and allow for unexpected delays. Remember that if certain deadlines are not met, you may be in violation of F-1 status.

Employment

Social Security Number

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has the right to approve or deny an application for a Social Security number. In October 2004, the SSA implemented a new evidence rule before issuing a social security number, requiring F-1 students to provide the following:

1. A valid passport, visa stamp, and I-94 card.
3. Evidence of full-time enrollment (i.e., course schedule).
4. An original letter from the DSO that specifies your on-campus employer as well as the nature of the employment.
5. A letter from your on-campus employer that verifies the nature of the employment, the anticipated or actual job start date, the number of hours you will be working, the employer’s identification number, and your student supervisor.

Abide by U.S. Federal Employment Regulations

As an F-1 student, you may work no more than 20 hours per week on campus when classes are in session [8 CFR 214.2 (f)(9)]. These 20 hours include the work you do for an assistantship. You may not work off-campus (including internships for academic credit) without prior authorization from our office and the U.S. government.

Off-Campus Employment

Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is employment directly related to your field of study. CPT may be a paid or unpaid internship, practicum, or other type of employment offered by a sponsoring employer through a cooperative agreement with the school. It may take place during the academic year or the summer.

Shopping

Nearly any product can be bought in such a huge metropolitan area as New York City. Nowadays, most Americans purchase goods in shopping malls, which contain several shops, restaurants, and movie theatres in a single enclosed area. Shopping malls are usually open all week and closed in the evening.

Telephone

The telephone is a fixture of American culture.

Portable cellular phones are everywhere and considered a necessity for most individuals. Unfortunately, you may find it difficult to obtain a cell phone on your own since many companies require a SSN that will not be available until you legally gain employment in the United States. If you have family or friends with cell phones in the United States, you might consider asking them to put you on a “family plan” with their cell phone company. In addition, calling cards and companies that specialize in long distance calling may help you stay connected at a reasonable rate.

Manners and Customs in the United States

Notable Characteristics

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of contemporary American society is its diversity. The United States, and especially the New York area, is truly multicultural. It is difficult to make generalizations about the people of this nation or about specific ethnic, religious, socio-economic, age, occupational, or other groups.

Nevertheless, certain characteristics exist that describe attitudes and practices common among people living in the United States.

Individualism. People in the United States generally consider self-reliance and independence to be ideal qualities. As a consequence, many Americans see themselves as individuals and dislike being dependent on other people.
For more information, visit your local Department of Motor Vehicles or visit the following Web sites:

- If you live in New York: www.nydmv.state.ny.us
- If you live in New Jersey: www.state.nj.us

**Personal Safety**

Large cities can appear to be dangerous. However, by taking precautions and using common sense, your chances of experiencing misfortune are greatly reduced. Remember these street smart tips:

- Call 911 on a telephone in the event of a crime, fire, or medical emergency, whether you are directly involved or simply a witness. This call is free on any public telephone.

- When walking alone at night, have your route mapped out beforehand. Do not walk around as if you do not know where you are going (even if you are lost). Always carry extra money in case you need to take a cab or encounter an emergency.

- Avoid displaying money in public areas. Keep backpacks or purses closed and with you at all times. Wallets should be carried in a breast pocket. Always be aware of pickpockets. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry on the subway or in large crowds.

- Avoid taking the subway late at night; a bus or taxi is preferable. Although it is not common knowledge, in New York City during late hours bus drivers can stop at locations along the bus route in addition to the regular stops. Ask them to do so if it would be safer for you.

- If you are the victim of a robbery, hand over your valuables, and do not resist. Remember that if you stay calm, you are unlikely to be injured.

- Obey all traffic lights and street signals. Although you may be tempted to do so, it is unsafe to cross a street when the signal says “Don’t Walk.” Also, be sure to cross the street using the corner crosswalks. Not doing so is considered jaywalking and illegal.

**At Home and On-campus Precautions Include:**

- Keep your door locked at all times. When moving into a new apartment or house, change all locks. If you lose your house keys, change the locks immediately. Do not leave an extra set of keys in any accessible area outside your apartment.

- When arriving home, have your keys ready in your hand as you approach the door. Never let strangers follow you into your residential building even if they claim to know somebody or say they are residents.

If CPT is required as part of your curriculum, it will be listed under the department’s degree requirements and course offerings. All students in that program are required to complete an internship or practicum.

CPT may be recommended to you if it is beneficial, but is not required for completion of the degree. You may register for a minimum of a one-credit internship, practicum or field study course listed in the college catalog. As an F-1 student, you must be enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year before you are eligible.

**Optional Practical Training**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is defined as paid employment directly related to your field of study. As an F-1 student, you must be enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year before you are eligible. OPT is limited to a total of 12 months. You may be eligible for another 12 months upon pursuing another academic degree.

**OPT Extension**

F-1 students who receive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree included on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, are employed by employers enrolled in E-Verify, and who have received an initial grant of post-completion OPT related to such a degree, may apply for a 17-month extension.
**Medical Care**

There is no overall government-supported system for paying medical expenses in the United States. In other words, there is no national health care program. Consequently, doctor and laboratory fees, hospitalization expenses and medication may be costly should you require these services. Typically, hospital costs in the New York area are between $500 and $1,000 per day, which does not include physician’s fees that may also be expensive.

Put simply, you cannot afford to be without medical insurance. Therefore, NYIT requires that all international students be covered by a health insurance plan. As an F-1 or J-1 student, you will automatically be billed for the International Student Accident and Sickness Plan underwritten by the Aetna Insurance Company of Connecticut. Be sure to pick up the brochure describing your medical benefits from either the OIE or the Office of Wellness Services on your campus.

If you have a minor illness or common aches and pains, do not feel you must go to a hospital. If you do so, and the hospital determines that it is not an emergency, you may be charged for the visit. Instead, go to one of the preferred health care providers listed on the Aetna Web site at AetnaStudentHealth.com.

However, if you believe you have a medical emergency, do not hesitate to seek professional help at the nearest hospital. Your personal health is by far your most important asset.

Your NYIT insurance policy does not cover any other members of your family. It is recommended that you purchase separate insurance coverage for each of them.

**Official State Identification Card**

As of October 2004, it is no longer possible to get a Social Security number (SSN) without having a job or the promise of a job (see Employment section). If you are asked to provide your SSN and do not have one, an official state identification card may be used as a substitute. These are granted by a U.S. Department of Motor Vehicles. Although it may resemble a driver's license, the identification card does not grant you permission to operate a motor vehicle in the United States.

If you do not have enough proof of identification during your first semester at NYIT to receive an official state identification card, the academic transcript generated after your first semester may help you apply for one.

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**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

Like all other countries of the world, the United States has laws and regulations governing foreigners who are temporarily within its borders. As a student living within the United States, you should know about the USCIS. This is responsible for enforcing immigration regulations with offices across the country. You can determine which USCIS office has jurisdiction over your area below:

Most district information offices are open Monday through Friday but are closed on Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays. To speak with an immigration officer, you must make an INFOPASS appointment online at www.infopass.uscis.gov.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Where You Reside</th>
<th>Your USCIS District Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The New York counties of Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), New York (Manhattan), Queens, Richmond (Staten Island), Nassau, Suffolk, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester.</td>
<td>USCIS New York City District Office 26 Federal Plaza New York, NY 10278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Jersey counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, and Salem.</td>
<td>USCIS Cherry Hill Sub-Office 1886 Greentree Road Cherry Hill, NJ 08003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SEVIS Responsibilities of a J-1 Student**

- **Keep your passport valid at all times.** You must have a valid passport in your possession (valid at least six months into the future). For information on renewing your passport, visit the Web site of your country's embassy or consulate in the United States. More information can be found at www.embassy.org/embassies.

- **Form DS-2019 expires on the date noted in part three of that form.** Exchange visitors who complete the program are allowed a 30-day grace period to depart the United States. If you intend to request an extension of your J-1 status, the request should be submitted to the OIE weeks in advance of the expiration date on your current Form DS-2019. In the event the program ends prior to the date indicated on
Hygiene

Americans take matters of hygiene very seriously. They bathe or shower daily—sometimes more often if they engage in vigorous work or exercise, or during hot weather. Americans also use an underarm deodorant to counteract the odor of perspiration and brush their teeth at least once a day. In addition, they use mouthwash or mints to ensure that their breath is free of food odors. Garlic, for example, is a popular food in certain countries but may leave a strong scent on your breath that, in the United States, is considered offensive. Most Americans will retreat from a person who has body odor or bad breath. However, this is a sensitive matter, and many people may not mention that you have these problems. Their reaction or body language, however, may show their discomfort.

Mail

U.S. postal deliveries are normally made once a day, except on Sunday or legal holidays. All first-class mail is shipped within the country by air without extra cost. Therefore, airmail notification is not needed on such mailings. If you want to ensure that an important letter has been received, send it “registered” or “certified,” and ask for a receipt. Note that there is a small charge for this service.

In the United States, ZIP codes follow the name of the city and state; they do not precede it as in other countries. You must write your mailing address in the correct format since it is likely that an incorrectly addressed letter will not be delivered. The general format is as follows:

<Your name>
<Street number> <Street name>, <Apartment number (if any)>
<City>, <State> <ZIP code>

If your address contains additional lines (like a building name or suite number), make sure you list the information on the correct line. Although it is rare that more than one street name (such as a cross street) is used in an official address, be careful whenever you add additional instructions to your mailing address.

Program activity. You must be engaged in the program noted in part four of the DS-2019. An evaluation form should be completed by the exchange visitor and certified by the department sponsor every six months. When it is submitted to the OIE, the RO or ARO must validate the program activity in the SEVIS system.

Maintain a full course of study every semester. As students, you are required to be registered full-time for coursework relevant to the timely completion of your academic program. For most students, this means you must be registered for no fewer than 12 credits. Graduate students are required to carry nine credits. Graduate students should also take care that they are registered for graduate-level courses. The RO/ARO may authorize a student to carry fewer credits in a few special circumstances.

In your final semester of study, you may be granted written permission to carry an academic underload, but you must complete the program that semester or you will be “out of status.”

If you are suffering from a serious illness or mental health problems, this must be documented by a health professional. You must meet with the RO or ARO immediately.

It is important to address such problems early and document the need to temporarily carry an underload before attempting to drop or stop attending classes. Underload authorizations are documented in SEVIS.

Change of Address

Exchange visitors and dependents are required to maintain a permanent address outside the United States and must report changes to their local and permanent addresses to the OIE within 10 days of the change. If you are subject to the provisions for Special Registration, you must not only report the change of address to the OIE but you must file form AR-11SR to the USCIS. This is an “event” that must be reported in SEVIS. Your program may be terminated for failure to comply with the reporting requirement.
**Change of Status**
J-1 exchange visitors may be ineligible for a change of status within the United States if they are subject to provisions of 212(e). However, if 212(e) does not apply, they may apply for a change of immigration status that will allow them to remain in the United States and participate in another immigration status, under regulations for that category. To discuss whether a change of status is appropriate for you or to receive further instructions, contact the OIE.

**Departure**
All exchange visitors should report their imminent departure to the RO/ARO by completing a “Departure Record” available in the OIE. This departure date must be recorded in SEVIS. Remember, if you are finishing your program early, you may need to apply to the RO/ARO for the 15-day grace period to remain in the United States.

**Dependents**
Dependents must be issued separate DS-2019 forms for entry into the United States. They will enter in J-2 status and are subject to all provisions of law governing the J-1 exchange visitor program, including insurance requirements, 212(e), and the need to report changes of address, etc. They may be subject to provisions for Special Registration independently of the J-1 principal. Dependents can be authorized for employment by applying for the Employment Authorization Card (EAC) from USCIS and will need to also apply for a Social Security card once they have the EAC in hand.

**Duration of Status**
Duration of status (D/S) is defined as the amount of time required to complete a specific program, plus 30 days to depart the United States. The amount of time is initially defined on form DS-2019 in part three, plus any approved extensions of stay. Exchange Visitors who end their participation in a program prior to the expiration date on DS-2019 have 15 days to depart the country from the date of completion of the program, not from the end date on the DS-2019. You must apply to the RO or ARO to be eligible for this 15-day grace period.

**Employment**
Exchange visitors may not work without specific written authorization from the RO or ARO in advance, unless specifically authorized on the DS-2019. To work, J-1 visitors will need a letter of authorization from the RO/ARO and a Social Security card. J-2 family dependents will need to apply for an EAC and then a Social Security card.

Students may be given permission to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and up to 40 hours per week during breaks and vacation.
accustomed to the value of the dollar and know what your essential living expenses will be. This may take time and experimentation. Be extra cautious about overextending yourself through excessive use of credit cards. Finance charges on such cards accumulate rapidly.

**Food and Dining**

There are three types of stores where you can purchase food: supermarkets, neighborhood stores, and convenience stores. A supermarket sells food as well as a large variety of other products. Examples include Waldbaum’s, or Pathmark. Neighborhood stores and convenience stores are smaller, have fewer items, and, in the case of the latter, often stay open all night. They may also have slightly higher prices.

Many restaurants in the New York City area specialize in food from one particular country or region of the world with prices that range from cheap to very expensive. Coffee shops often feature less pricey meals and a more informal setting. Fast food establishments offer inexpensive prepared food such as hamburgers, chicken, hot dogs, fish, etc.

Generally speaking, American food is considered bland by those accustomed to hot or spicy cuisines. Salads are very popular and are served nearly everywhere. Many people in the United States are trying to watch their weight.

In the United States, tips and gratuities are not usually added to restaurant bills, as is customary in many other countries, and therefore should be left on the table. Fifteen percent of the total cost of the meal is considered the normal amount for a tip, but you can leave more as a token of appreciation for exceptionally good service.

**Housing**

Where you live will play a large factor in how comfortable you are during your studies at NYIT. Unless you are renting a room or living with family or close friends, you have probably signed a contract with either NYIT residential services or a private landlord. Housing contracts are usually for one year but can be adjusted for greater or lesser durations. You should read anything you sign carefully. Do not go by what someone tells you about the contract. Be aware that these contracts are legally binding. If you are not happy with your living situation, you should contact the landlord or NYIT resident assistant to rectify the situation. If the problem is not solved, there are public or private agencies that can help you find a solution. Moving out before the proper termination of a housing contract may result in a substantial penalty.

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**Academic Training**

J-1 students in matriculated programs are eligible for academic training relating to their field of study. This permission may be granted for off-campus employment. Students are limited to an aggregate total of 18 months in academic training.

**Economic Hardship**

Students facing unforeseen economic hardship may be eligible for work authorization under special USCIS rules. Meet with the RO/ARO if you are having serious problems because of unexpected medical costs or other extenuating circumstances. This employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and up to 40 hours per week during winter and summer breaks.

**Extend Program**

An exchange visitor’s program participation can end in a non-adverse termination for the following reasons:

- Cancellation of a request for change of status
- Change of status
- Denied a requested change of status
- Death of the exchange visitor
- Inability to continue the program
- Program completed 30 days or more before program end date
- Withdrawal from the program

**Extension of Stay**

Students requiring additional time to complete their original academic program objective should apply for an extension of stay approximately 10 weeks before the end of the date on their DS-2019. If you are completing an academic degree program and matriculating in the next level at NYIT, you will also need an extension of stay.

An extension of stay is effective when a new DS-2019 with an extended end date is created in SEVIS and issued to the exchange visitor and his J-2 dependent family members.

**Finances**

All changes in financial support for your program must be noted on the DS-2019. The ability to extend your J-1 status is, in part, contingent upon your ability to demonstrate that you have enough funding to complete your program, as well as support your dependents and yourself. Because you need proof of funding to be eligible for extensions of status, it is important to begin requests for extension of stay early.

**Income Tax Obligation**

All J-1 and J-2 exchange visitors are required to submit U.S. income tax returns for the prior calendar year to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by April 15. Income tax forms are available at www.irs.gov. When you depart the United States, after completing your J-1 program, you should file a “sailing permit” with the IRS, and complete your
You will probably receive an "F" for the entire course; and
You may be expelled from the university and consequently lose your
F-1 or J-1 status.

If you have any questions at all about what to do regarding any of these issues, talk
to your instructor, academic advisor, or the OIE.

Money and Valuables

The OIE works with several financial institutions to help students obtain a check-
ning or savings account. In addition to a recommendation letter verifying your NYIT
student status, which the OIE can provide, you will need the following documents to
open an account:

1. Unexpired passport
2. Form I-94
3. Form I-20 or DS-2019
4. NYIT student ID

Some banks may require additional identification from international students. Check
beforehand with the specific bank branch where you wish to open an account. The
OIE can advise you of banks that have offered special accounts to NYIT's interna-
tional students.

Always show caution when it comes to money and valuable possessions. Keep purses
and wallets out of sight. Do not carry too much cash when you go out. Do not
ostentatiously display jewelry.

Student Attire

Dress codes at U.S. academic institutions are often casual—slacks, jeans, skirts,
T-shirts, and sweaters are acceptable. Generally speaking, garments can be purchased
in the United States at fairly reasonable prices, especially after you become familiar
with the best sources for shopping.

When purchasing any item other than food, it is advisable to keep the sales receipt. If
none is given to you, ask the cashier. You will need that receipt if the item you
purchased is defective or unsatisfactory and you wish to return it to the store for a
refund or exchange.

Dollars and Sense

Most students live on limited budgets. It is best to manage your money wisely to
ensure it lasts as long as possible. Be cautious about spending until you have become
thinking if you plan to succeed. Regardless of whether you accept the values of the U.S. educational system, you must act in accordance with them when you are here.

- **Become familiar with lectures and seminars.** The most common method of instruction in the United States is the classroom lecture, which is supplemented by classroom discussion (especially when classes are small), reading assignments, and periodic written assignments. Seminars are small classes, typically at the graduate level. They are likely to be devoted entirely to discussion. You may be required to prepare presentations for a seminar, based on your independent reading or research.

- **Obey the “honor code.”** Most colleges and universities in the United States have established honor codes—rules that you are expected to follow as you complete your academic work. These rules relate primarily to academic honesty and originality.

- **Cheating** is a failure of honesty. In the United States, academic cheating may be defined as receiving unauthorized help on an assignment or exam, or representing another person’s work as your own. It also includes downloading and using pre-written papers or portions of pre-written papers available on the Internet. In addition, you may not receive from any student or give to another student any information, answers, or help during an examination or any other kind of test; you may not use unauthorized sources for answers during an examination; you may not refer to notes or books during an examination if it is forbidden; and you may not obtain test questions illegally beforehand.

- **Plagiarism** is a failure to do your own original work for a written assignment and using another writer’s words or ideas as though they were your own. It is literary “theft” and is not tolerated in academic work. Students found guilty of plagiarism are severely penalized. If you quote directly—that is, copy an exact phrase, sentence, paragraph or other portion from a book or other written material—you must enclose the borrowed words in quotation marks. You must also cite the source by providing the author’s name and title of the work. Usually, this can be done using footnotes or creating a list of works cited at the end of a written assignment.

Following the honor code is the responsibility of each student. Generally, there are no elaborate systems to prevent cheating (i.e., monitoring devices during examinations). However, professors and other students are sensitive to indications that a person may be cheating. Students found guilty of violating the honor code are subject to penalties. If you commit an act of dishonesty as defined in this handbook, even for the first time:

- You will almost certainly receive an “F” (failing grade) for the assignment;

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### Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisa, United Arab Emirates, Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.

This list can and has changed periodically. USCIS may subject other non-immigrant nationals if they make unexplained trips to any of the aforementioned countries or for a variety of reasons at the discretion of the inspecting officer. In addition to the initial interview, those subject to this provision may enter and depart the United States only through designated ports of entry, must report annually for re-inspection, and must report any changes of local or mailing address to USCIS within 10 days, using form AR-11SR.

### Sponsors

The Department of State designates sponsors to administer individual exchange visitor programs. NYIT sponsors Exchange Visitor Program P-1-10475. Students sponsored by other programs must obtain extensions of stay, employment authorization, and travel signatures from the RO/ARO of those programs.

### Termination

An exchange visitor’s program participation can end in adverse termination for anyone the following reasons:

- Conviction of a crime
- Disciplinary action
- Engaging in unauthorized employment
- Failure to pursue program activities
- Failure to submit a change of current address within 10 days
- Failure to maintain a full course of study
- Failure to maintain health insurance for self or J-2 dependents
- Involuntary suspension
- Other
- Violation of exchange visitor program regulation
- Violation of sponsor rules governing the program

Terminated exchange visitors have no extension benefits and cannot apply for reinstatement. This has the potential to affect future travel to the United States and other statuses.

### Transfer

J-1 exchange visitors may transfer to another sponsor’s program, if the new program is in keeping with the original program objective.
Travel
If you travel outside of the United States, in order to return you must have a valid DS-2019 endorsed by the RO or ARO, a valid passport, and valid visa stamp in your passport. To apply for travel signatures, students must be in good standing and maintain full-time status. (See International Travel section of this handbook)

Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement 22CFR 212(e)
Certain exchange visitors and their accompanying J-2 dependent family members are required to return to and reside in their home countries for at least two years after completing their U.S. stay before they can adjust status or return to the United States in other statuses that include certain work authorizations (L, H, and permanent resident status). This requirement applies to those whose:

Skills are needed in their home country, as indicated in the Exchange Visitor Skills List.

J-1 program has been financed to some extent by the United States government or their home country.

Purpose in coming to the United States is to receive graduate medical education or training.

Immigration and Nationality Act, section 212(3)
If you believe that you are subject to 212(e) in error, bring it to the attention of the RO/ARO as soon as possible. If it is truly an error, it may be possible to have the requirement removed.

Waiver of 212(e)
If you are considered subject to 212(e), you may be eligible for a waiver of the two-year home residency requirement. Make an appointment with the RO/ARO BEFORE beginning a waiver application.

Passport
A passport is an official document issued by your government that identifies you as a natural citizen of your country. It grants you permission to travel abroad. It may be renewed through your local embassy or through the nearest consulate or consulate general. We suggest that you keep a photocopy of the pages that contain your key information, just in case your passport gets lost or stolen. Your embassy will be able to issue a replacement passport more promptly if you can provide a copy of these pages.

It is your obligation to keep your passport valid and up-to-date for at least the next six months. Otherwise, your I-94 permit that allows you to stay in the United States will not be valid, and you will lose your status with the USCIS. If your embassy requires you to apply for travel signatures, students must be in good standing and maintain full-time status. (See International Travel section of this handbook)

International Student Handbook

Examine your expectations. Keep in mind that a period of adjustment to a new educational system is necessary before you will be able to perform to the best of your ability.

Select your courses wisely, especially during your first semester. Do not take more courses than necessary. Make sure you have a combination of classes that have both light and heavy coursework. When arranging your course schedule, consult with your academic advisor as well as experienced students who are familiar with different courses and professors. If you are taking ELI language courses in addition to regular coursework, keep in mind that ELI courses can be very time-consuming; taking too many regular courses when your knowledge of English is limited may make it difficult to understand the instructor or the required coursework.

Work hard from the beginning! If you do not begin studying on the first day of classes, you are almost certain to fall behind and experience serious difficulty.

Talk to your professors! In colleges and universities in the United States, professors expect students to ask questions during or immediately following the class. Generally, they will also wait for students to come to them for help rather than offer assistance. Accordingly, they expect you to see them in their offices. If you are not doing well in a class and you do not consult the professor to discuss the situation, the faculty member is likely to assume you are not interested.

Ask questions! It is extremely important for you to contribute to discussions in the classroom. In the United States, questioning or challenging the teacher is the norm; it is viewed as a sign of interest, attention, and independent thinking. In many classes, your grades will be determined by your contributions to class discussions. If you sit in respectful silence, it is likely assumed you are not interested in what is being said or that you are unable to contribute. International students from non-English-speaking countries often have language problems, so they are reluctant to talk in class. Do not let this be a deterrent for you. The more you speak, the more practice you will get and the sooner you will overcome these barriers.

Open your mind to the values of the U.S. educational system. From your past experience, you may have developed certain assumptions about the purposes and methods of education, as well as the manner in which your field of interest is studied. It is important to realize that differences exist between the U.S. educational system and those in other countries. You will need to adjust your...
requires proof of full-time student status, you may request the OIE or the Office of the Registrar to provide a letter of verification.

Visa Information

A visa is an official document issued by the U.S. government to enter the United States and is issued through U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. It may be issued for single or multiple entries and is valid until its expiration date. A visa does not indicate how long you can stay within the United States.

As a non-immigrant student, you are granted an F-1 or J-1 visa, which permits you to enter the United States for full-time study at an authorized educational institution.

If your visa has expired and you plan to travel outside the United States, or if you have changed your visa status while still within the United States, you will need to obtain a new visa stamp at one of the U.S. embassies or consulates in your home country or another country you are visiting before re-entering the United States.

You may neither apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa nor revalidate your visa from within the United States. There is no guarantee that you will be granted a new visa. Also, obtaining a U.S. visa in a country other than your own may prove to be even more difficult than applying for one in your home country.

If you changed your status to F-1 or J-1 while in the United States but do not have an F-1 or J-1 visa stamp in your passport, you will need to obtain one from within your home country. You will also need to present financial documents to the U.S. Consulate or Embassy. Note that a change to F-1 or J-1 status in the United States is no guarantee that you will be granted an F-1 or J-1 visa stamp.

F-2 or J-2 visas are issued to spouses and dependents of F-1 or J-1 visa holders. These may be obtained by presenting an I-20 or DS-2019 form in the name of the F-1 or J-1 student to a U.S. consulate or embassy abroad, along with evidence of financial support. Individuals with F-2 status are not allowed to work for monetary compensation while residing within the United States. Those with J-2 status are permitted to work with authorization.

Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94)

The Arrival-Departure Record white card, stapled in your passport by the DHS at the port of entry, confirms that you have been lawfully admitted into the United States and indicates, in the upper right-hand corner, the length of time you will be permitted to remain here. If there is no date, but rather the inscription “D/S” (Duration of Status), you will be allowed to stay for as long as you legally maintain your F-1 or J-1 status.
When leaving the United States for one of these locations, be sure to ask the DHS officer not to remove form I-94 from your passport. Let the officer know that you plan to return within 30 days.

For DHS purposes, neighboring countries include:

- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Bermuda
- Dominican Republic
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Martinique
- Miquelon
- St. Pierre
- Trinidad
- Windward and Leeward Islands
- Other British, French, or Netherlands territories or possessions in or bordering the Caribbean Sea
- Cuba is not included

Note: Some students require a visa to enter Canada or Mexico.

- Information about Canadian tourist visas can be found at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.html
- Information about Mexican tourist visas can be found at http://www.consulmexny.org/eng/english.htm

If you are traveling to Canada, Mexico, or contiguous U.S. territories, you may under specific circumstances be allowed to reenter the United States with an expired visa stamp.

**Academic Matters**

In many ways, you will find U.S. higher education quite different from that of your own country. Differences exist, for instance, in educational philosophies as well as academic requirements, traditions, and standards. You may find some methods of teaching stimulating, while others may seem confusing. It is important that you pay...