



# Widener University

**OFFICE OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT SERVICES**

**1 University Place  
University Center, Upper  
Level  
Chester, PA 19013  
Phone: 610-499-4498  
Alt. Phone: 610-499-4472  
E-mail: [iss@widener.edu](mailto:iss@widener.edu)**

## J-1 Student Pre-arrival Guide



# WELCOME

## Welcome to Widener University!

On behalf of International Student Services (ISS), we are pleased to welcome you to Widener University and the greater Philadelphia area. This packet will provide critical pre-arrival information as well as immigration regulations, services at ISS, and an overview of Widener. Our contact information is below, and most of our forms are available online at <http://sites.widener.edu/iss/>. Welcome to Widener!

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## Location & Campus Safety

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### Main Campus

1 University Place, Chester, PA 19013

### Delaware Law School

4601 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803

### Commonwealth Law School

3800 Vartan Way, Harrisburg, PA 17110

**Campus Safety** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even holidays. They can be reached at:

**Main Campus:** 610-499-4200

**Delaware:** 302-477-2200

**Harrisburg:** 717-541-1911

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## Contact Information

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### International Student Services

1 University Place  
University Center, Upper Level  
Chester, PA 19013  
Ph. +1-620-499-4498  
E. [iss@widener.edu](mailto:iss@widener.edu)

### Dr. Kandy Turner, PDSO/RO

Director, International Student Services & Programs  
Ph. +1-610-499-4498  
E. [kkturner@widener.edu](mailto:kkturner@widener.edu)

All of our forms, handouts and applications can be found at:

<https://sites.widener.edu/iss/>

### Exchange Visitor Program Welcome Brochure:

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Brochure-The-Exchange-Visitor-Program.pdf>

### Exchange Visitor Program Services

Office of Private Sector Exchange (ECA/EC)  
SA-4E, 2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
Email: [ageexchanges@state.gov](mailto:ageexchanges@state.gov)  
Phone: 202-203-7131

**Scholars and Interns, Know your rights as Temporary Workers in the US:** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html>

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## J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

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The purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is to foster the mutual exchange of ideas between Americans and foreign nationals and to stimulate international collaborative teaching and research efforts. The exchange of students, student interns, short-term scholars, research scholars, and professors promotes international interchange, mutual enrichment and linkages between research and educational institutions in the United States and those of other countries.

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### Tuition & Fees

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University Students may be granted a merit-based or transfer scholarship. If no scholarship is offered, they or their sponsor are responsible for the tuition and fees as indicated on the Office of the Bursar site:

<http://sites.widener.edu/bursar/tuition-and-fees/>

An estimated cost of attendance guide can be found on the Accepted International Students site:

<https://www.widener.edu/accepted-students/international>

This document is used to determine the amount of funds required for a DS-2019 to be issued. Students must demonstrate sufficient funds for the duration of their program.

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### DS-2019 and Visa Information

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Students should request a DS-2019 at: <https://www.widener.edu/accepted-students/international> and complete the applicable steps of the checklist.

Scholars and Interns will receive an application to complete from the ISS office to request a DS-2019.

Students, Interns and Scholars must apply for the J-1 visa outside of the United States.

- Verify that all the information on the DS-2019 is correct.
  - Sign page 1 of the DS-2019.
  - Pay the SEVIS Fee and print the I-901 fee receipt.
  - Schedule a visa appointment.
  - Complete the DS-160 Form.
  - Pay the visa application fee.
  - Bring a passport size photograph, passport, DS-2019, I-901 fee receipt, financial support documents, proof of ties to home country and other documents as required to the visa interview.
- (Note: Canadian citizens do not need a U.S. visa, but still must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee.)

#### **Important Note on DS-2019 Edits**

Changes to a DS-2019 can be made up until your visa is issued, including adding/removing dependents. No changes may be made to the DS-2019 between the visa issuance and your arrival to Widener University. Changes may be made after you arrive.

## PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- Make travel plans to allow sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the university. Attendance at new International Student/Scholar orientation is mandatory and the date can be found on your DS-2019 or on the ISS website. Keep this in mind when booking your flight. J-1 exchange visitors may arrive no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the DS-2019.
- Pack a variety of clothing for all seasons, including a warm over coat and summer attire.
- Bring national costume for cultural events (if desired)
- Obtain your visa (Note: Canadian citizens do not need a US Visa, but must pay the SEVIS fee).
- Make financial arrangements to pay for tuition (if applicable) and other bills
- Exchange currency to US Dollars. \$5, \$10, & \$20 bills preferred
- Secure housing
- Collect and organize immigration documents and put in your carry-on (hand) luggage
  - Valid Passport with Visa
  - DS-2019
  - I-901 SEVIS Fee Receipt
  - Financial Support Document
  - DS-7002 (Student Interns only)
- Determine transportation from airport to the university
- Complete required health forms: <https://sites.widener.edu/studenthealth/required-health-forms/>
- Ensure you have all required immunizations or arrange to get them (see webpage listed above for required immunizations)
- Bring all prescription medicines and copies of prescriptions
- Bring copies of medical chart
- Determine cell phone needs:
  - Will you get a SIM card at home?
  - A new phone in the US?

For more information see our checklist at: <https://www.widener.edu/accepted-students/international>

### Arriving to Widener early?

Best Western Plus Philadelphia Airport South  
1450 Providence Ave  
Chester, PA 19013  
(610) 872-8100

*Mention you are a Widener student to receive the discounted student rate. Free shuttle service available.*

# ARRIVAL INFORMATION

- REMEMBER: *Attendance at new International Student/Scholar orientation is required* so make travel plans to allow sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the University. Keep this in mind when booking your flight. J-1 exchange visitors may arrive no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the DS-2019.
- Arriving at the Port of Entry
  - Keep your passport, DS-2019, I-901 fee receipt, financial support documents , and DS-7002 (Student Interns only) with you, NOT in your checked baggage.
  - Present the Customs Officer with your passport and DS-2019. If asked, present your financial documents or other requested documentation.
  - Ensure that the Officer returns all your documents and stamps your passport with the date and “J-1 D/S.”
- Transportation to Widener University (Main Campus): It is recommended that exchange visitors arrive at the Philadelphia Airport (PHL). Widener does provide airport pickups on specific dates and times to and from the Airport, which will be emailed to you before you arrive. If you are unable to make these shuttle times, the following options are available:
  - A taxi from the PHL airport is approximately \$30. Uber (<http://uber.com>) is approximately \$20.
  - Shuttles to Delaware County (Widener University) include:
    - AAA Airport One Direct (215) 677-3544
    - Atlantic Sedan Services (610) 659-8513
    - American Limo, (484) 368-7041
    - Delaware Express (800) 648-5466
    - Lady Liberty (215) 724-8888
- Transportation to Widener University: Delaware Law School : It is recommended that exchange visitors students arrive at the Philadelphia Airport (PHL). WU: Delaware Law School does not provide airport pickups. The following options are available:
  - A taxi or Uber from PHL airport ranges from \$58-\$80
  - Shuttles to Wilmington, DE include:
    - American Limo, (484) 368-7041
    - Atlantic Sedan Service, (610) 659-8513
    - Call-First Transit, (302) 427-3736
    - Delaware Express, (800) 648-5466
    - Tropiano, (800)-559-2040
- Other Regional Airports

	Distance to Main Campus	Distance to School of Law
<b>John F. Kennedy Int'l Airport (JFK)</b>	198Km / 122 Miles	217Km / 135 Miles
<b>Washington DC (Dulles) IAD</b>	233Km / 145 Miles	217Km / 135 Miles
<b>Newark Liberty (EWR)</b>	157Km / 98 Miles	175Km / 109 Miles
<b>Baltimore Washington (BWI)</b>	148Km / 92 Miles	135Km / 84 Miles

# MAINTAINING YOUR J-1 STATUS

*Please note that it is your responsibility to maintain your immigration status. ISS will advise you. The points below are a summary of the regulations. It is strongly advised to read this packet thoroughly.*

- **Attend full J-1 program, including J-1 Exchange Visitor Orientation or check in within 10 days of arrival in the US.**
- **Keep immigration documents current.**
  - Passport must remain valid throughout entire stay in US.
  - DS-2019 may not expire.
- **Report local address to program sponsor/International Student Services.**

You are required by immigration regulations to maintain your local address with Widener University at all times. A change of address form can be found on the International Student Services website. Immigration regulations require a physical address rather than a P.O. Box or an office address.
- **Maintain adequate medical, medical evacuation, and repatriation insurance.**

You must maintain adequate insurance for yourself and your J-2 dependents for the entire duration of your program.
- **Engage in authorized employment only.**
- **Engage only in activities that are appropriate for your J category.**
- **Report any early departure from your program to ISS.**

If you decide to depart the United States more than 30 days prior to the completion date of your program (as indicated on your DS-2019) you must notify ISS.
- **Apply for an extension at least 30 days before the completion date on your DS-2019.**

(An extension may not be possible; ISS can help you determine eligibility.)
- **Return home or take appropriate steps to extend your stay in the U.S. within 30 days after completing your program.** This is called the “grace period”.

## Driver’s License/State ID:

Students, Scholars and Interns who are in the US for 1 year or more are eligible for a driver’s license in the state in which they live. Refer to the DMV handout on the ISS website upon your arrival for more details. Students, Scholars and Interns who will **NOT** be in the US for a full year are not eligible for a driver’s license in the US and should obtain an international driving permit before leaving their home country. This permit cannot be obtained in the US.

More information on Driver’s Licenses can be found on the Driver’s License Handout.

## CHANGE OF STATUS

Situations may arise throughout your time at Widener University that require a change of status. Consult your ISS Advisor as soon as possible to understand all your options and to provide with enough processing time. An application for a change to another nonimmigrant status will require a minimum of three to six months for processing by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Individual circumstances may influence procedures and processing times, so it is important to discuss such plans with your ISS Advisor in detail as early as possible. Please note that if you are subject to the 212(e) two-year home residence requirement, you will not be eligible for a change of status from within the United States.

## 30-DAY GRACE PERIOD

Upon completion of your program, you and your J-2 dependents are allowed a 30-day grace period to depart the United States or take action to extend your stay. It is critical that you depart the United States on time, prior to the end of your grace period. **You are not authorized to work during the grace period, nor can you leave the United States and return during this time.**

## EARLY COMPLETION

If you will complete your program early, please inform ISS. Your I-20 date will be shorted to that semester's graduation date and you will need to follow the procedures during the 60-Day Grace Period. ***If you finish your program early, you cannot just "hang out" until your I-20 end date.***

## EXTENSION OF STAY

It is your responsibility to be aware of the expiration date of your DS-2019, which indicates the period of authorized stay in the United States. If you need additional time to complete your program objective, a J-1 Extension must be requested through ISS prior to the expiration date on your DS-2019.

Please note the following maximum program durations for specific J-1 categories:

Research Scholar & Professor	5 Years
Short-term Scholar	6 Months
Student Intern	12 Months

**No extensions can be granted beyond these maximum time periods.**

Students can request an extension by completing the Program Extension form. Scholars and Interns must make an advising appointment and present the following to ISS:

- A letter written by your hosting department that requests an extension, including:
  - Dates of the extension,
  - Salary (if any) and
  - Verification of insurance benefits (if applicable)
- Verification of funding
- Verification of insurance that meets the requirements of the U.S. Department of State for yourself and any dependents in J-2 status

Extending your DS-2019 extends your J-1 immigration status, but does not extend the visa stamp in your passport. If your current visa has expired and you travel outside of the United States during the extended period, you must apply for a new visa stamp to return to the United States.

**MAINTAINING YOUR J-1 STATUS, CTD.**

# MAINTAINING YOUR J-1 STATUS, CTD.

## FULL COURSE OF STUDY (STUDENTS ONLY)

Per immigration law, international students must be full-time each semester. Full time status is 12 credits for undergraduate students and generally 9 credits for graduate students. Thesis and dissertation for graduate students is considered full time. Online classes do not count towards full time for J-1 students.

A reduced course load may be approved in certain circumstances. To request an reduced course load, complete the Reduced Course Load Form with your academic advisor. *Student must maintain fulltime status until RCL is approved. Class may only be dropped after RCL is approved.*

## TRANSFERS

Transfers from one J-1 program to another must be initiated with the current program sponsor listed on your DS-2019. Students should complete the SEVIS Transfer Release Form. Scholars/Interns should contact ISS as early as possible to determine transfer eligibility and procedures.

## CHANGE OF PROGRAM CATEGORY

J-1 Exchange Visitors may rarely change from one J category to another. Please contact ISS as early as possible to determine eligibility and procedures. Note that Non-degree students cannot change to degree seeking students. They must obtain an F-1 visa to complete a degree program at Widener.

## THE “BARS” - Research Scholars and Professors

The “Bars” refer to the amount of time an Exchange Visitor must wait to start a new program after completing a prior J Exchange Visitor program as a **Research Scholar or Professor**. There are two types of bars:

### 12-Month Bar:

The 12 month bar applies to individuals who have been in the US *under another J category* (J-1 or J-2) in the 12 months preceding the new proposed start date. The 12-month bar does not apply to transfers or J status as a short term scholar. Physical presence in J status less than 6 months may not apply. Discuss with ISS for further details. If a person is subject to the 12-month bar, they are not eligible for a sponsored J-1 Research Scholar or Professor Category until the 12 month requirement is met. The 12 months begin from the date the J-1 Research Scholar or Professor is no longer physically present in the US.

### 24-Month Bar:

The 24-month bar applies to individuals who *recently completed a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor* program and wish to enter the US again as a Professor or Research Scholar. Individuals who are *seeking a new period of sponsorship in J-1 Research Scholar or Professor Category*. Research Scholar and Professor Exchange Visitors are barred from beginning a new program as a Research Scholar or Professor for 24 months. The 24-month bar goes into effect immediately after the SEVIS record for J-1 Research Scholar or Professor is completed, ended, or terminated. The bar begins regardless of if 5 year maximum has been utilized and applies to J-2 dependents of J-1 Research Scholar and Professor categories.

## Social Security Information:

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will issue a social security number for employment purposes only. Students who become employed should apply for a Social Security number promptly. More information on Social Security can be found on the Social Security handout on the ISS website.



## On-Campus Employment:

J-1 Exchange Visitors in the College and University Student program are eligible for any on-campus employment as long as the following conditions are met:

- Remain in good academic standing
- Continue to engage in a full course of study
- Limit employment to no more than 15 hours per week while classes are in session and 25 hours per week over summer break or when there are no classes.

To obtain authorization for on-campus employment, download the On-Campus Work Contract and J-1 On-Campus Employment from the ISS website. Complete the top portion and take to ISS. After ISS completes this form, take to Lipka Hall.

On-campus employment also requires obtaining a Social Security card. See the Social Security Handout for more information about Social Security cards.

## Academic Training:

J-1 Exchange Visitors in the College and University Student Program are eligible for Academic Training as long as the following requirements are met:

- Purpose in the U.S. is to study; not to work
- Work is directly related to field of study
- Maintain health insurance
- Written permission from A/RO

Other requirements for Academic Training include:

- Academic Training employment may not exceed the period of full course of study or 18 months, whichever is shorter. Students completing a doctoral degree are allowed a maximum of 36 months Academic Training.
- Part time Academic Training counts against the amount of full-time employment available. For example, if you are eligible for 12 months of Academic Training and use 6 months as part-time Academic Training during your program, you will only have 6 months full-time Academic Training after your program.

- Earning more than one degree does not increase your eligibility for Academic Training

To obtain authorization for Academic Training, download the Academic Training form from the International Student Services Committee Page and submit the complete form, along with a letter from employer (on letterhead) stating the following to ISS:

- Job title
- Brief description of goals and objectives of employment
- Dates and location of employment
- Number of hours per week
- Name and address of training supervisor

The Academic Training form requires a section to be completed by your advisor before submitting to ISS. Once received, ISS will issue a new DS-2019 with 3 business days. You may NOT work without this authorization, and it must be requested at least two weeks before graduation.

If you will be completing your program, you must receive Academic Training authorization before the end of your final semester. If the semester ends on December 15, you must be authorized by the 15th to begin on the 16th. Any time not worked during the authorized Academic Training period is time lost, i.e.: if you are authorized to begin work on December 15 but begin January 15, you lose one month of Academic Training.

Academic Training also requires obtaining a Social Security Card.

# EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

# 212(E) TWO YEAR HOME RESIDENCE REQ.

When you agree to participate in an Exchange Visitor Program *and* your program falls under the conditions explained below, you will be subject to the two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement. **This means you will be required to return to your home country for two years at the end of your exchange visitor program.** This requirement under immigration law is based on Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and Title 22 Part 40 and Part 41 in the Code of Federal Regulations.

J-1 Exchange Visitors subject to the two-year residence requirement must return to their "home" countries following completion of their J-1 programs and be physically present there for an aggregate of two years before being eligible to return to the United States in immigrant status (permanent resident/green card), H status (temporary workers and dependents), K (fiancé), or L status (intra-company transferees and dependents). Exchange Visitors subject to the two-year home country residence requirement are not eligible to change their nonimmigrant status in the U.S. from J to permanent residence or to any other nonimmigrant category except A (diplomatic) and G (international organization).

Former Exchange Visitors are eligible to return home and obtain a visa for all other nonimmigrant visa types, even if subject to the two-year residence requirement. Only lawful permanent residence, and H, K, and L visas, are prohibited. Exchange Visitors subject to the two-year residence requirement are eligible to leave the U.S. and apply for visas to return as tourists or F-1 students as long as they are otherwise eligible for those visas. The two-year home residence requirement should NOT be confused with the 24-month bar on repeat participation.

## 212 (E) Conditions

An exchange visitor is subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement if the following conditions exist:

- Government funded exchange program - The program in which the exchange visitor was participating was financed in whole or in part directly or indirectly by the U.S. government or the government of the exchange visitor's nationality or last residence;
- Specialized knowledge or skill: Skills List - The exchange visitor is a national or permanent resident of a country which has deemed the field of specialized knowledge or skill necessary to the development of the country, as shown on the Exchange Visitor Skills List. Review the Exchange Visitor Skills List 2009 found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>

An Exchange Visitor who falls into one of these groups will continue to be subject, even if funding or field of study changes.

## 212(E) Waivers

An Exchange Visitor may request that the two-year home residence requirement be waived only on the following grounds:

- Statement from the Exchange Visitor's home country that it has no objection to the waiver.
- Request for waiver made by an interested U.S. government agency.
- Interest of a state agency (only for alien physicians).
- Exceptional hardship to the U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse or child of the Exchange Visitor.
- Fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or political opinion.

For more information about waiving the 212(e) rule, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor.html>

# J-2 DEPENDENTS

Your immediate family members (spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21) are eligible to enter and remain in the United States as J-2 dependents during your J-1 Exchange Visitor program.

## Bringing Your Family

To request a DS-2019 for a family member who wishes to apply for a J-2 dependent visa, please indicate so on the Request for Immigration Document form for students or the Scholar and Intern Application, respectively. If you are requesting to add your family as dependents after arrival in the U.S., complete the Add a Dependent form. Send the following information to [iss@widener.edu](mailto:iss@widener.edu) or schedule an appointment with your advisor and bring the following documents:

- Copy of biographical page of passport for each dependent
- Evidence of additional funding (See required amount on page 3 of this guide)

## Maintaining Status

J-2 dependent status is dependent upon your J-1 Exchange Visitor status. Therefore, you cannot exit the United States and leave your J-2 dependents in the United States for long periods of time. Also, once your J-1 program is complete or if your program is terminated, you and your dependents must exit the United States. You must maintain approved health insurance for your dependent for the duration of their stay.

## Employment

J-2 dependents may apply for employment authorization through U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) after arriving in the United States. Applications require a fee and take approximately 90 days to be processed by USCIS. For application procedures, please set up an appointment with an ISS advisor. Learn more at <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/exchange-visitors>

## Study/Research

J-2 dependents may enroll in full-time or part-time study, engage in research, or volunteer for the duration of your J-1 program. In order to be paid for any activities, you dependent must have prior employment authorization from USCIS.

## Dependent Health Insurance

Widener University does not offer insurance coverage for dependents. J-2s must have insurance for the duration of the program and the insurance requirements are the same as for J-1 visa holders. Insurance must be purchased through International Student Insurance:

<https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/schools/widener-university.php>

## J-2s and the 212(e) Rule

J-2s are subject to the 2 year home residency requirement if the principal J-1 Exchange Visitor is subject to this rule.

# INSURANCE

## INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

U.S. Department of State regulations require all J-1 Exchange Visitors to have medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance for themselves and any accompanying J-2 dependents for the entire duration of the J-1 program (as indicated on the DS-2019). If your program is longer than one semester, insurance must be purchased at least until the end of the academic semester and renewed prior to the expiration date. *EV's paid by the university will receive employee insurance. EV's not paid by the university will automatically be enrolled in the student university plan. Do not purchase your own insurance.*

Your insurance must meet the following minimum requirements:

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

Fulfilling this requirement is essential, not only because medical treatment in the United States is very expensive, but also because you and your family members are considered to be in violation of J-1 and J-2 status if you do not have sufficient insurance. It is your responsibility to notify ISS of any dependents that are in the United States and present evidence of appropriate insurance coverage.

[http://www.widener.edu/campus\\_life/wellness/health](http://www.widener.edu/campus_life/wellness/health)

## UNIVERSITY INSURANCE: STUDENT, INTERNS AND UNPAID SCHOLARS:

J-1 students, unpaid interns, and unpaid scholars are required to purchase the Widener Student Health Insurance, which meets U.S. Department of State requirements. The insurance covers medical expenses as well as medical evacuation and repatriation. For additional information on the insurance plan, please visit the Student Health Services site:

<https://sites.widener.edu/studenthealth/student-health-insurance/>

## UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE INSURANCE

Exchange Visitors who will be employed and paid by the University, are required to enroll in the university medical insurance plan through Independence Blue Cross. Widener currently offers several plans that meet the insurance requirements for Exchange Visitors. Human Resources will go over these plans with you and help you select the best plan for you.

## MEDICAL EVACUATION AND REPATRIATION

Part of the insurance requirement for Exchange Visitors is Medical Evacuation and Repatriation insurance. These are not covered under the university employee insurance and must be purchased by the EV separately.

Medical Evacuation Insurance pays for reasonable transportation to the nearest medical facility and Repatriation Insurance covers the costs of returning home for treatment or in the unfortunate event of death.

Med Evacuation and Repatriation must be purchased from the company below:

- International Student Insurance:  
[www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/emergency-evacuation/benefits.php](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/emergency-evacuation/benefits.php)

## DEPENDENT INSURANCE

All dependents of exchange visitor's must be insured throughout the entire program of the EV. If the program is longer than one semester, insurance must be purchased at least until the end of the academic semester and renewed prior to the expiration date.

If the J-1 is a paid university employee, the EV may pay to have the J-2 added to their employee insurance. If the J-1 is not a paid university employee, insurance must be purchased through International Student Insurance:

<http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/travel-medical-insurance/>

## **Emergency Information**

In the event of a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 for help. Please note, you should only call for an ambulance if there is an emergency. Ambulances are very expensive and you may be liable for some or all of the cost. If you live on campus, Campus Safety will take you to the local hospital.

## **Doctor Visits**

When arriving to the United States, you should find a regular doctor who you can visit when necessary (this may also be called “Primary Care”). If you live on-campus and have the university health insurance, this doctor could be at the Student Health Center. You will need to schedule an appointment with the doctor and same-day or walk-in visits are discouraged or hard to get. Doctors are normally open from 9am-5pm but hours vary greatly, especially if you need to see a specialist.

In the event that you need to see a doctor on short notice, try calling your doctor or visit the local Urgent Care. Urgent Care is a part of the hospital with walk-in services or a separate clinic. Depending on the date and time, there may be a long wait (up to 3 hours or more) to see a doctor. If you are sick on the weekend and can’t wait to meet with your regular doctor on Monday, Urgent Care is your best option. Make sure to check your insurance to see if a co-pay is required for urgent care and what you may be responsible for financially.

Any time you visit the doctor, you should bring your insurance card and ID. Your insurance card will indicate if you need to pay a co-pay, or the amount you are immediately responsible for. Make sure to check with your doctor’s office to see if you must bring cash for the co-pay.

## **Preventative Care**

Avoid paying costly doctors bills by taking care of yourself! Most insurance plans offer “free preventative” care at least once a year. This can be a visit for a yearly physical or women’s health visit. Also, make sure to get plenty of sleep, eat healthy meals, and dress appropriately. Be conscience of others’ health around you and wash your hands often.

If possible, bring enough prescription medicine for your time in the United States. You should carry copies of your prescriptions when travelling to prove the prescription is yours. Depending on your insurance, you may be required to pay for some of all of your prescription costs. If your prescription is for a name brand medication, check with your doctor and pharmacy to see if you need the name brand or if you can use the generic version of the medicine. Generic versions are normally significantly cheaper. You should also note that most medicines in the US require a doctor’s prescription so you may want to look into bringing certain medicines with you, like antibiotics, for example.

## **Dental Insurance**

Dental insurance is different for everyone. You should look at your past history with the dentist to determine if dental insurance is necessary. For example, if you have very healthy teeth and only go to the dentist once per year, it may not make financial sense to have dental insurance at this point in your life. If you have a past history with many dentist visits, you may want to purchase this insurance.

## **Eye Care**

Eye Care costs can add up quickly. Try and bring supplies from home, especially if you wear contacts. If you need to get more contacts or glasses you must have an eye exam; once per year if you wear contacts. Shop around when looking for an eye doctor and look for “clubs” or specials that include free exams with purchase of glasses, etc. Remember: Costco and Walmart have eye centers! Many times health insurance comes with vision benefits. Determine if your insurance does and how to claim these benefits.

## **Prescriptions**

# HEALTH CARE

# TRAVEL

## TRAVEL WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

When traveling outside the greater Philadelphia area, you should carry copies of your passport biographical and expiration pages, DS-2019, and I-94 record. If you plan to travel near the U.S.-Mexico or U.S.-Canada border, you may be required to show proof of legal immigration status, so be certain to bring your original documents even if you do not plan to cross the border.

## TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

To enter the United States after a temporary trip abroad, you will need your:

- Passport (valid for 6 months or longer upon entry)
- Valid J-1 visa (Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement)
- DS-2019 signed for travel within the last **12 months**

If you are traveling to a country that is not your country of citizenship, please consult that country's consulate to determine if you require an entry visa.

## J-1 VISA RENEWAL

If your J-1 visa has expired and you wish to travel internationally, you must renew your expired visa at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy before you return to the United States. Processing times vary greatly among the different consulates, so please plan accordingly. To check current visa interview and processing times at a specific U.S. Consulate, consult the Department of State's website. Please note that the wait times listed do not include any delays that may occur as a result of background or security checks.

## AUTOMATIC VISA REVALIDATION (AVR)

Travel with an expired visa using Automatic Visa Revalidation (AVR) is permitted when you travel to a contiguous territory (Canada, Mexico, and certain Caribbean Islands) for 30 days or less and do not apply for a U.S. visa during your travel. You will need to present the following documents in order to re-enter the United States using AVR:

- Passport
- Expired J-1 visa stamp
- DS-2019 signed for travel within the last 12 months

## I-94 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD

The I-94 Arrival/Departure Record is an electronic record issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) when you enter the United States. Your I-94 record confirms that you have been lawfully admitted to the United States in a specific visa status and for what duration. It is important to review your I-94 record to make sure that you are admitted in J-1 status for D/S (or "Duration of Status") after each entry.



## Public Transit

Widener University is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York City. For students interested in going to Philadelphia, Southeast Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) is one option. Campus Safety and the Widener shuttle will take and pick up students to/from the Chester Regional Rail station during the day and Swarthmore Regional Rail Station in the evenings. Monthly passes and 10-ride tickets are available for purchase online or at the station. Tickets are also available for purchase on the train, but this is the most expensive option. If you buy a ticket on the train, present your receipt at the ticket window at Center City stations for a refund of the difference.

Please note that most stations outside of Center City have very limited hours so you should purchase your tickets and get refunds in the city. Refunds are only available on the day you purchase the ticket. More information, schedules, maps, and fares can be found at SEPTA.org.

Buses and trolley's are also options for getting around depending on where you live. These modes of transport require passes, cash, or tokens. Tokens can be purchased at the Widener Bookstore, stations, authorized vendors, and online.

### 30th Street Station

30th Street Station in Philadelphia is the transit hub where you will catch a train to New Jersey, New York, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere! Regional rail, Amtrak, and many discount bus services stop here.

### Amtrak

Amtrak is the train system throughout the United States. Depending on your time limits and cost restraints, this can be a viable alternative to flying. Students can apply for a special discount card and bags normally travel for free. Learn more about Amtrak and the schedule at Amtrak.com.

### Discount Bus Companies

The bus is definitely the cheapest way to travel throughout the United States. Megabus.com, PeterPan Bus and Greyhound (among others) pick up at or near 30th Street Station. Try to plan ahead when

purchasing bus tickets. Fares bought far enough in advance can be as low as \$1!

When travelling by bus, do not travel alone, especially when going long distances, or on overnight trips. Please contact ISS if you have questions about certain routes.

## Taxi/Car Services

Taxi's are a convenient way to get around, but can get expensive. Most taxi companies have set fares from the airport to Center City or campus. When getting in a taxi, make sure to inquire if they accept cards or if you'll have to pay cash. Also, make sure the taxi is a real taxi (i.e.: has "taxi" sign on top and licenses inside the car.) You may also choose to follow the route on your cell phone.

Uber and Lyft are available in most American cities.

## Car Rental/Zip Cars

Renting a car in the US can be a good deal over a weekend or with a group of friends. To rent a car, you should be at least 26 (for the cheapest rates) and have a valid US driver's license. You are always given an option to purchase different levels of insurance for the car upon rental and consider your options carefully. It's also important to note that the person who rents the car is the only licensed driver, unless specifically added to the rental agreement. The rental agreement serves as the car registration if a police officer pulls you over — the name of the driver must match the rental agreement. Failure to list all drivers on the rental agreement may result in fines.

Zip Car (and other similar companies) is a car rental service that functions more like a subscription. You can pay a certain amount per year or rental and check out/in a car when you need it. These rentals normally come with gas and insurance but have limited miles.

## Hitch-Hiking

Hitch-hiking is when people stand near the road to try to get rides from passing cars. This practice is illegal in the United States and not safe. Do not attempt to hitch-hike.

# GETTING AROUND

# FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

**CLIMATE:** Pennsylvania is a temperate zone, with very cold winters, hot summers, and pleasant days in between. Within each season, the weather can change daily. **Fall (mid-September through November):** Days are often warm and sunny, nights cool; temperatures range from 60°F (15°C) in the daytime to 32°F (0°C) at night. **Winter (December through March):** Continuously cold weather with an occasional mild day; temperatures of about 32°F (0°C) to below 0°F (-20°C). Snow, sometimes deep, is possible anytime. **Spring (April through May):** Increasingly warm, sunny days, cool nights; temperatures sometimes reach 60° (15°C) to 80°F (27°C). Frequent, brief thundershowers. **Summer (June to mid-September):** Temperatures average from 70° (25° C) to 100°F (37°C) or higher, with medium to occasionally high humidity.

**CLOTHING:** Because of the range in seasonal temperatures, you will need clothing suitable for both the hot, humid summers and the cold, snowy winters, as well as some transitional clothing for the spring and fall seasons. You will need some sort of rain protection and extra layers of clothing, a heavy overcoat, hat, gloves, and warm boots are essential for the winter.

**MONEY:** Before arrival you should exchange money into US dollars to have cash available upon arrival. Traveler's checks may be helpful, but not all stores and restaurants accept them. Make an attempt to bring cash for denominations of less than \$100.00. When opening a bank account, note that it may take extra time to process international checks or wires and prepare accordingly.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** Make financial arrangements to receive money for living expenses if not covered by your department and/or sponsor. Living expenses include: room and board, medical insurance, and other miscellaneous expenses.

**HOUSING:** Widener is not able to reserve off-campus housing on your behalf. It is recommended that you bring an extra copy of your evidence of financial support to Widener University as it may be required for certain housing options. *Note:* Before

signing a lease, it is extremely important to read and understand what you are signing. A lease cannot usually be broken without significant financial compensation.

**COST OF LIVING:** Cost of living varies greatly depending on where you choose to live and your preferences. On campus costs can be found in the Bursar's Tuition Guide. Generally, if you live near campus you will need (at minimum) \$12,000/year. If you choose to live closer to Philadelphia, rent can range from \$900-\$2,000/month depending on size and location preferences. Compared to New York and Washington, D.C., the greater Philadelphia area is much cheaper for daily living expenses.

**CAR INSURANCE:** Pennsylvania law requires proof of insurance to register and operate (drive) a vehicle. At minimum, your insurance must cover:

- \$15,000 for injury or death of one person in an accident
- \$30,000 for injury or death of more than one person in an accident
- \$5,000 for damage to property of another person

Pennsylvania car insurance also gives you two options for "tort." Tort means your option to sue for "pain and suffering" if you are involved in an accident. Full tort means you may sue for medical bills plus pain and suffering. Limited tort means you cannot sue above medical expenses. Insurance premiums for full tort are higher.

**RENTER'S INSURANCE:** Renter's insurance may be required by your landlord if you live off-campus. It is used in the case of a break-in, injury in your home, etc. The cost of renter's insurance is not high and should seriously be considered.



# LIFE AT WIDENER

Widener University's Main Campus is located in the city of Chester, Pennsylvania. This campus serves all daytime undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, adult learners and business professionals. Widener's Main Campus is situated just 29 km from Philadelphia, 170 km from New York City, 130 km from Baltimore, and 200 km from Washington DC. This proximity to major east-coast destinations makes weekend excursions quick and easy!

On campus we've got some first-rate collections and resources that you'll only find at the Wolfram Memorial Library that houses an extensive collection of print, periodical, audiovisual and multimedia materials and on-line services.

## ***Widener Fast Facts:***

- ***Total Enrollment is around 6,000 students***
- ***Students represent 48 states and 37 countries***
- ***27% are students of color***
- ***13:1 Student/Faculty Ratio***
- ***80+ Student Clubs and Organizations***

Dining options on campus include Pride café, the "all-you-can eat" cafeteria, as well as several restaurants and a convenience store. We also have a University Book Store, post office, and several ATMs on campus.

Widener's Art Gallery is home to the university's collection of 18th, 19th, and 20th century American and European paintings as well as African and Oceanic pottery.

The PMC Museum, in partnership with the Widener

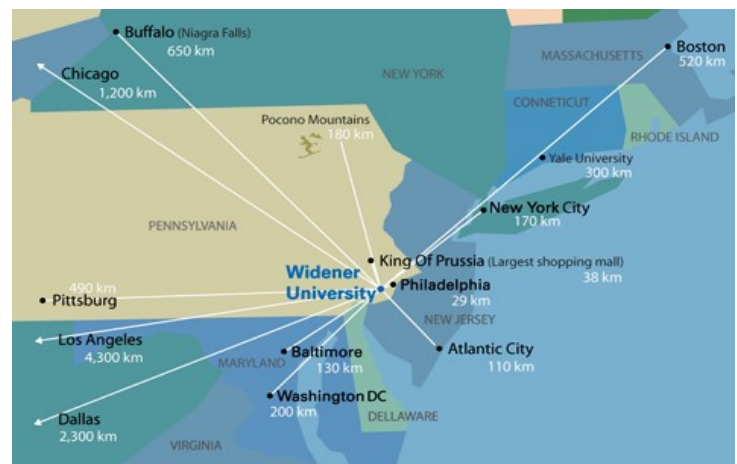
University Archives, brings to life the history of the Pennsylvania Military College and honors the military and civilian achievements of its distinguished alumni.

The Widener University Observatory has 12- and 16-inch computerized reflecting telescopes available for use by students and for public star-gazing programs.

Widener has plenty of support services to help you with your studies including a Math Center, Writing Center, Academic Coaching and Tutoring, Disabilities Support, and Counseling Services.

Widener's modern recreational facilities features the finest equipment with something for everyone -- treadmills, rowers, spin bikes, ellipticals, strength training stations for upper and lower body, free weights, two functional training areas, and a 24-foot rock wall.

Widener University also has two Schools of Law, one located in the northern suburbs of Wilmington, Delaware and the other located near Pennsylvania's capital, Harrisburg. Near the Delaware-Pennsylvania state line, the Delaware campus is about 13 miles south of the Main Campus in Chester (about a 20 minute drive from the Main Campus). The Commonwealth Law campus is about a 2 hour drive from the main campus.



# LIFE IN PHILADELPHIA

**GREATER PHILADELPHIA:** Only twenty minutes from Widener University, Philadelphia is the nation's sixth largest city, and home to world-class art, culture, sports, entertainment, and history. With accessible regional public transport, you can easily commute from our main campus in Chester to Center City, Philadelphia's thriving commercial and business district. Need to unwind? Spend the day exploring historic Old City, take in a Phillies baseball game, or hang out on South Street with friends. In Philadelphia, the possibilities are endless.

Widener students love all the opportunities to learn, play, work, and engage in Philadelphia. Here are some ideas to check out:

- Visit the Philadelphia Zoo, the oldest one in the nation.
- Sample history, art and international cuisine in one of Philadelphia's quirky neighborhood.
- Go an award-winning architectural walking tour.
- Take in an exhibit at the world-famous Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Franklin Institute, or one of the city's many art, history and science museums.
- Explore sea life and wildlife at the state-of-the-art Adventure Aquarium in nearby Camden, New Jersey.

- Play mini-golf or have a picnic in Fairmount Park, the largest urban park system in the country.
- Explore the stylish boutiques of Rittenhouse Square.

**GETTING AROUND:** Widener University sits comfortably within Southeast Pennsylvania's bustling transportation network, one of the nation's largest in terms of ridership and area. Easily accessible by two SEPTA rail lines and several bus routes, Chester is located just off interstates 95 and 476, two of the region's major arterial roads.

The region's extensive transportation network connects travelers to virtually any destination they may have. Interested in world-class beaches? Cross the Delaware River and be on Atlantic City's storied boardwalk in just over an hour. Prefer skis to surfboards? Award-winning Pocono Mountain resorts are a two-hour drive away.

If fast-paced urban environments are more your speed, you can easily take advantage of all that Philadelphia and Wilmington have to offer. Via SEPTA's Wilmington-Newark Line, you can be standing in the center of Philadelphia's iconic City Hall — the largest municipal building in the United States — in about 30 minutes.

Don't let this prevent you from setting your sights further afield, though! Interested in visiting Baltimore? Get on the train in the morning and you



can be at the Inner Harbor in time for a satisfying seafood lunch. If you'd rather spend the weekend in New York City, several express bus services can shuttle you to Manhattan from Center City Philadelphia in two hours.

**SHOPPING:** In Philly, you won't have a hard time finding the things you need — or want. From the funky boutiques on South Street to the glittering stores of the King of Prussia Mall, there are options to satisfy even the most discriminating fashionista.

For those on a budget — and these days, who isn't? — check out the Philadelphia Premium Outlets, located about an hour away near Pottstown. Stores there include Forever 21, Banana Republic, BCBG Max Azria, and J. Crew. Closer to campus is Franklin Mills Mall, found in Philadelphia's great Northeast and featuring several discount giants like Burlington Coat Factory, Old Navy, and many more!

For quick trips, head over to the Granite Run Mall in Media or drive along Baltimore Pike in Springfield, where you'll find stores like DSW and Target.

If you like to eat, the foodie in you won't be disappointed in Philly. The 9th Street Italian Market is a must-see destination for Italian fare, and the Reading Terminal Market has been tantalizing taste buds for more than 100 years.

**ARTS & CULTURE:** Philly is a town steeped in the arts. Hundreds of arts organizations across the region make Philadelphia one of America's hippest places to be. It has the most public art of any city in the U.S., from Robert Indiana's celebrated LOVE sculpture on the Ben Franklin Parkway to the iconic murals found on buildings across the city.

Looking for stand-up and improv? No problem. Art house cinema? We have several. Like theater? You can do big or small, whatever you prefer. Are story slams more your speed? We have those, too.

Have a hankering for painting and sculpture? The Philadelphia Museum of Art, one of the largest art museums in the nation, is home to a number of amazing collections. Or make a visit to the nearby Barnes Foundation, which has held one of the finest collections of Impressionist and modern paintings in the world.

If you're looking for more curious objects, check out the medical oddities at the Mütter Museum, which houses the tallest skeleton on display in North America.

When it comes to music, Philly just can't be beat. Within walking distance of City Hall, we've got both a symphony orchestra and the Curtis Institute, the most selective music school in the United States. For fans of more contemporary music, Philadelphia has thriving local scenes in hip-hop, electro and indie rock. Venues like Union Transfer, Johnny Brenda's, the Trocadero, Electric Factory, and The Mann Center consistently bring sought-after acts to the region, which means you don't have to go far at all to see the bands you want.

But perhaps the best part of the local arts scene is that it's so accessible. Of the almost 17 million visits to Philly's cultural organizations last year, more than half were free. And for those events charging admission, the median price was only 15 dollars.

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# PHILADELPHIA, PA

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# AMERICANS 101

The United States of America is a very large and diverse country with a vast array of cultural differences from coast to coast. If you travel from Philly to California, Texas, or Georgia you will see huge differences in how people talk, interact, and function. Philly may have a slower but friendlier appearance than New York, but California is even “slower”, and someone from California may annoy a New Yorker. It is also not unusual for someone to be extremely proud to be from their home state and still continue to have strong ties where they grew up, even if they haven’t lived there in years.

Americans are generally very proud of being American and like to display the American Flag. Conversely, most Americans are also extremely proud of their heritage. If you ask an American where they are from or where their parents came from, you may get an answer like “I’m a 1/4 German, 1/4 Polish, 1/4 English, 1/8 Cherokee and 1/8 French!”

Below are some cultural insights that can help you understand Americans better:

1. **Americans value being on time.** “Time is money” can be a mantra in most of the United States. Do your best to be at least 5 minutes early or on time. If you will be late, let the person you are meeting know and apologize.
2. **Americans like privacy and personal space.**
  - It is rare for Americans to show up unannounced anywhere. It’s a sign of respect and courtesy to make sure someone is available before dropping in at their home/room/apartment/office.
  - Americans need about an arm’s length of personal space. Any closer and they may interpret your actions as intimidating or challenging and back up.
  - Americans rarely hug or kiss someone when they first meet them. Discuss with your new friends what’s appropriate when greeting each other. It will likely be different with each friend.
3. **Americans are direct and honest.** If you ask an American a question, you will probably get an honest answer, and they won’t ask you for your input if they don’t want it.
  - *It’s important to many Americans to be upfront with problems and not put them off.* Americans believe that problems can be solved and will work tirelessly to fix them, if they know about them.
  - Americans rarely save face. It’s viewed negatively when someone passes blame from a problem to someone else or makes excuses.
  - Americans are not good at “hints”, body language, or metaphors. They will say what they believe and believe what they say.
4. **Americans can seem friendly and unfriendly at the same time.** It is common for an American to ask you how you are doing with no intention of really finding out how you are.
  - Americans can also seem “flaky,” i.e.: don’t follow through with social plans. If you make plans with an American, be ready for the possibility that the plans will change or be cancelled.
  - It’s not uncommon for Americans to smile at someone while crossing the road, joke with another person in line, or talk to someone at an event without knowing this person, getting to know them, or even intending to get to know them.
  - Americans love “small talk,” i.e.: conversations without real substance such as the weather, traffic, or uncontroversial topics in which everyone can find common ground.
5. **Americans value independence, equality, and freedom**
  - The US has a very individualistic culture. People are taught at a young age to do things on their own and a high value is placed on the “self-made” person, who rose from nothing to riches.
  - Equality is VERY important to Americans—even if in practice, it doesn’t always happen. There are many rules in the US (like waiting for a traffic light to turn green and waiting in line) that are very

important. Americans also tend to become upset when others break the rules. Don't ever cut in front of someone in a line, or you may get yelled at.

- Freedom is one of the building blocks of American culture. Americans believe that everyone has the right to say or think what they want, even if they don't agree with it.

#### **6. Americans value personal hygiene and cleanliness.**

- This is a very regional preference. In many areas, it's perfectly acceptable to go to class in your pajamas, whereas in other regions people may dress up to go to Walmart.
- Americans normally take grooming and hygiene seriously, and it's not uncommon for them to shower 2 or 3 times a day, especially in the summer months. They may avoid you or make comments if you do not pay attention to or have a lapse in your hygiene.

#### **7. Americans value etiquette.**

- Be polite when asking for something. Americans don't take well to demands. When sending an email or asking for a favor, show you are appreciative and don't just demand for something to be done—even if you are waiting for something urgently.

#### **8. Americans value education and curiosity.**

- If you aren't sure about something, ask. Most Americans have grown up asking questions and being asked questions. Americans won't make fun of you or be angry for trying. Americans love to talk, especially about themselves, and share their opinions. Just make sure to ask multiple people, or you will end up with only one perspective.

#### **9. Americans value control.**

- Americans believe they control their own life and destiny, and it's very important for them to feel like they are in control. Americans don't like it when they don't know what's happening or when things don't go according to plan. Most of the time, Americans believe that if you work hard, you will achieve your goals. They often can't understand when people work hard but don't advance in society.

#### **10. Americans LOVE their sports teams.**

- When I say love, I really mean love. Many fans are so devoted they will fight for and religiously support their team. Football, baseball, and basketball are the biggest three sports in the US and often fans will wear clothes that support their favorite teams. Sometimes there are strong rivalries between different groups, so be aware of teams playing nearby and who wins or loses.

#### ***A few other notes about life and customs in the US:***

- Americans really appreciate convenience and will look for most convenient options. Online ordering is very popular, and, depending on your location, you can order everything from hand soap to groceries to sushi! You will also find many large ("Big Box") stores that carry everything: groceries, cleaning supplies, a pharmacy, an optometrist, alcohol beverages and even weapons (yes, you read this correctly!).
- Learn to be self-aware, even if others aren't. Be mindful of others around you. Is someone trying to study? Is it quiet hours in the residence halls? Are you taking up the whole sidewalk? We could all benefit from being more mindful.
- Chew with your mouth closed and don't slurp. In the US, both of these habits are considered rude, and you should also avoid burping or making other bodily noises.
- The drinking age for alcohol in the United States is 21, and you cannot drive after drinking.
- Tobacco products and gambling is legal at age 18. Tobacco is not allowed on the Widener Campus.

***Most importantly, be brave! Introduce yourself to American students, try new things, and never be afraid to ask questions. ISS is available to help with questions and problems, but we can only help if you tell us.***