Pre-Arrival Information Guide for F-1 and J1 Students/Short-term Scholars

Office of International Programs

Washburn University
1700 S.W. College Ave.
Topeka, Kansas 66621
Welcome to Washburn!

Washburn University has a 150-year tradition of providing a private school education at a public school price.

Congratulations on your acceptance to Washburn University!

Ranked in the Top 25 most Dynamic Universities in the US by the Asian Correspondent and as the top ranked public master’s level university in Kansas according to the America’s Best Colleges released by the U.S. News and World Report.

The Office of International Programs (OIP) looks forward to welcoming you to the WU campus. We are very glad that you have chosen Washburn, a university of approximately 6,800 undergraduate and graduate students.

Our office provides support to 300 international students from 34 countries that participate in some of the over 200 student organizations, NCAA Division II Athletics, sports clubs, social activities, internships, part-time on-campus jobs, service learning projects and volunteer programs.

Fast Facts about Washburn University

Founded: 1865
Enrollment: 6,800
International Student Enrollment: 300
Campus: Urban, 160 acres (.647 km sq.)
Faculty: 550
Student to faculty ratio: 15/1
Average undergraduate class size: 20
Students: 41% male / 59% female
Obtaining Your Visa and Arrival in the U.S.

Visa Application and SEVIS Fee

After your acceptance to WU, you must obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate before entering the U.S. You must not enter the U.S. on a visitor’s visa (B-1 or B-2) or under any visa waiver program (VWP) that your country may have with the U.S. if you intend to be a student or short-term scholar, because someone who enters as a visitor is not allowed to enroll in university courses.

F-1 students and J-1 exchange participants are required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee ($200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1 exchange visitors) BEFORE the visa interview. You must present the receipt of the I-901 fee at your interview at the U.S. embassy/consulate. Details about the SEVIS fee and the required I-901 form, as well as information about paying this fee/completing the form on-line can be found HERE.

Arrival in the U.S. at the Port of Entry (POE)

When you enter the U.S., you must present your original I-20 or DS-2019 document and passport with the appropriate visa. Also be prepared to present proof of finances and SEVIS fee receipt if asked. You will then be fingerprinted and photographed. It is possible that you will be asked to go to another line where you will have your documents examined and asked some questions, but do not be alarmed: This is not unusual for students/scholars.

In general, you will need to submit the following when you go to the embassy/consulate:

✓ Your I-20 (for F-1) or DS-2019 (for J-1) form, along with your valid passport
✓ Proof of adequate finances
✓ SEVIS (I-901) fee receipt
✓ Photos, as required
✓ Visa application fee or proof of paying the fee (as required)
✓ Appropriate visa application forms: DS-160 for all student visa applications; DS-157 may be required for males between the ages of 16-45

Useful websites on the Internet:

Tips for F-1 students
Tips for J-1 exchange visitors
Washburn University
Office of International Programs at Washburn
Information about Topeka, Kansas
Reporting to Washburn

As an F-1 visa student or J-1 visa exchange participant, you are allowed to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days before the program start date (listed on your I-20 form or DS-2019 form). You must report to the Office of International Programs (OIP) within 15 days of the program start date. All students and scholars MUST check in with the OIP; otherwise, the office is required to report any students or scholars who do not check in within the time allowed to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

Each type of immigration status has its own unique set of rules and regulations. It is your responsibility to know and understand the legal obligations of your status. Although there may not be certain limits or restrictions for one visa category, there may be for another, so the rules and regulations are not the same for everyone. If you have any questions or are unclear about what your responsibilities are under your current nonimmigrant visa status, please contact an international student advisor in the Office of International Programs.

Orientation for New and Transfer F-1 students and J-1 Exchange Participants

There are two required orientations: a pre-arrival on-line orientation (through Desire2Learn/D2L) before arriving at WU and an on-campus orientation for new/transfer F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors before the semester begins. The Office of International Programs will provide more details to you through e-mail and social media.

The purpose of the orientation week is to familiarize new students and scholars with the Washburn campus and policies, the Topeka community, Immigration (U.S. CIS) rules and regulations, health insurance and health care issues, give insight into American culture/customs and provide you with an opportunity to meet other new international and domestic students.

PLEASE READ ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY AND COMPLETELY!
Topeka

Washburn is located in Topeka, the capital city of the U.S. state of Kansas. It is situated along the Kansas River in the central United States. Topeka has a population of 130,000 and has many convenient dining, shopping and recreation options and is the educational, industrial, trade and medical center of Kansas.

It is home to such major corporations as Collective Brands (Payless Shoe Source), Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Inc., and Westar Energy, as well as being the governmental center of the state.

With 20 first-class attractions, you’ll definitely need to spend some time exploring the capital city of Kansas.

Weather

Topeka weather varies by the four distinct seasons; therefore, clothing for warm, hot, cool and cold weather is needed.

Average daily temperatures throughout the year are:

- **January:** 26°F (-4°C)
- **April:** 58°F (14°C)
- **July:** 85°F (27°C)
- **October:** 57°F (15°C)

– **Note:** Temperatures can often be in the 90’s (32°C) or low 100’s (37°C) during the summer

– **Note:** Temperatures can often be in the 20’s (-6°C) or 30’s (-1°C) during the winter months and sometimes below 0°F (-17°C)

Getting Involved at WU

There are over 200 campus organizations and clubs at Washburn University. For a list of organizations, please visit the Student Activities webpage.

One of the campus organizations which appeals to international students is the International Club (I-Club).

Washburn international students and scholars also have the opportunity to be matched with a local family through the Topeka Friendship Network (TFN) to learn more about American culture and customs, such as attending a school play or sports event, going to the family’s home for dinner, and/or spending a holiday (such as Thanksgiving or Christmas) with the family.
On-Campus Housing

On-campus housing is available at Washburn. Many students find on-campus housing convenient because of the close location to classes and furnished rooms* and the student doesn’t need additional transportation or to pay added utility costs (such as electricity, gas, water, cable, etc.) The following housing options are only for single students (i.e. not for scholars or families):

- West Hall
- Living Learning Center (LLC)
- Washburn Village (apartment-style living complex)
- Lincoln Hall (opened in August 2016)

You can view more information on-line at the Residential Living website

* = No bed sheets or bath towels are provided, although students are able to borrow a blanket and pillow from Residential Living.

Applying for On-Campus Housing

To apply for on-campus housing, you’ll need your WIN (Washburn Identification Number) and AAC (Account Activation Code) from the Office of International Programs. You’ll then need to access MyWashburn, the secure information portal for WU students, faculty and staff, at https://my.washburn.edu

After completing the initial login to MyWashburn, please click on the Student Life tab and find the Residential Living section at the top right.

- Step 1 is to complete and submit a housing contract.
- Step 2 is to pay the $300 housing deposit ($200 pre-payment and $100 damage deposit) by credit card.
- Step 3 is to complete and sign the meningitis form and return it to resliving@washburn.edu

Students who want to live on campus are encouraged to apply for on-campus housing as early as possible. If you have any questions about on-campus housing, please contact the Office of Residential Living at resliving@washburn.edu
**Off-Campus Housing**

*Apartments and houses* are available for students who are looking for more permanent off-campus housing.

You can expect to pay approximately $350-$375 for a studio apartment, $375-$425 for a one-bedroom apartment, and $430-$650 for a two-bedroom apartment. The cost of renting a house will vary by location and size.

Most apartments will charge an initial deposit of $150-$300 to be paid upon signing a contract. In addition, the majority of apartments around campus are *not* furnished (i.e. do not include furniture). The monthly rent *does not* normally include utilities such as electricity, gas, phone service, Internet, cable, etc. This will be an additional cost.

**Local Apartment Options Near Campus:**

Some apartments within walking distance of campus are:

- **The Lofts at College Hill**
- **College Villas/University Heights Apartments** (001-785-233-7235)
- **Sargent Apartments** (001-785-235-1018)
- **Mount Vernon Apartments** (001-785-234-2556)
Transportation: Getting to Topeka and Getting Around

Airport Information

You will need to make arrangements to fly into Kansas City International Airport (airport code: MCI), approximately 135 km from Topeka. The Office of International Programs (OIP) will inform you regarding the recommended arrival date/s if you wish to utilize the OIP’s free airport pick-up service. If you are not able to arrive on the recommended arrival day/s, you are advised to make a reservation in advance with:

Quicksilver Airport Shuttle 1-800-826-8294 (U.S. toll-free)
http://www.kcroadrunner.com

(Cost is approx. $75 from the MCI airport to Topeka)

***Please note: The cost of a one-way taxi ride to Topeka is approximately $135 USD, so the office does not recommend taking a taxi from the MCI airport to Topeka.***

In Case of Late Arrival at MCI

If you arrive at the MCI airport late at night and no shuttle service is available, the office suggests for you to stay at the Econo Lodge hotel near the airport. The cost is $50-$60 per night. A courtesy (free) phone is available near the baggage claim area where the phone number is posted to call for free shuttle service to the hotel.

Transportation in Topeka

Topeka has a limited public transportation system. During the orientation week, you will be provided with more information about how to get around in Topeka using the public transportation available. WU students can ride the Topeka Metro buses for free by swiping their iCard (student ID card). Students can also rent bikes through the Topeka Metro Bikes (TMB) program. The cost is very reasonable.

Some students find it more convenient to purchase a used car while here. This is not essential, but a possibility for you to consider.
Health Care – What to do before arriving on campus

Health care in the United States can be **extremely expensive**, especially when compared to other countries. We advise you to have **at least your eyes and teeth checked** before coming to the U.S. and **have any necessary treatment done** since vision and dental work are not usually covered by student health insurance in the U.S. You may want to consider having a **complete medical check-up before leaving home**. If you take any type of medication, make sure to **bring an adequate supply** with you since the exact same type of medication may not be available in the U.S. Make sure to keep your medication in its original container and carry a copy of your prescription with you. If you wear corrective lenses, you may also want to consider bringing an **extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses** with you.

Student Health Center on Campus

The Washburn Student Health Center offers all enrolled students/scholars inexpensive access to basic medical care, although they do not provide medications. **You can learn more at their website.**

Required Tuberculosis (TB) Testing

As required by Kansas law, all first-time students to Washburn University must be screened for tuberculosis (TB). The university’s policy is that **all international students must complete their TB testing on-campus at Student Health Services after they arrive at WU.**

**Please do not complete the TB testing or chest x-ray in your home country**, because the test results cannot be accepted by Washburn. You must complete the TB testing at Washburn.

After you arrive at WU, you will schedule yourTB test through Student Health Services in Morgan Hall, Room 140. Depending on your home country, you may need a tuberculosis skin test or a tuberculosis blood test. The cost of the TB skin test is $5.00 and the cost of the TB blood test is $45.00. The fee for the TB test will be charged to your WU student account. If the TB test result is positive, additional follow-up steps must be taken, at the expense of the student/scholar.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is required for all F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors. The minimum requirements (in USD) are:

- Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per person per accident or illness;
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000;
- Expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of $50,000; and
- A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.

Washburn offers a health insurance policy which meets these minimum requirements. The current cost is approximately $1,500 USD for one calendar year and is split into two payments: one for the fall and spring semester.

More information can be viewed on-line HERE.

If a student has a health insurance policy which meets the above-mentioned requirements, he/she can apply for and be considered for a waiver of the WU health insurance through the Office of International Programs (OIP). Please contact the OIP for more information about applying for a waiver.
BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR HOME COUNTRY

It is important that you have all of your travel arrangements finalized before leaving. Make sure you know your flight itinerary, and have transportation arranged to and from the airport. Be sure to carry all important phone numbers and contact information for your contacts in Topeka (and in other U.S. cities). Keep this information separate from your travel documents (I-20 or DS-2019) and passport. Your passport and travel documents need to be easy to access for immigration officials.

It is often helpful to arrive in the U.S. earlier than your official start date so you will have time to find and set up housing, if you haven’t done already, and become acquainted with the Topeka area. You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 document.

A few suggested items to bring with you:

- Your original travel documents (passport, I-20/DS-2019, etc.) and multiple copies (clear, easy to read copies) to be kept separately in case of emergency
- Your driver’s license or international driver’s license
- A copy of your driving record if you plan on purchasing an automobile in the U.S.
- A supply of all prescription medications with a description of each written by your doctor
- If you have dependents who will be attending school in the U.S., be sure to bring birth certificates or proof of age and all medical, dental, and academic records for them
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses
- CLOTHING:
  - On-campus – jeans, shorts, T-shirts/shirts are pretty standard
  - Formal wear – suits & dresses are important to have for formal events/receptions and for interviews
  - Winter wear – sweaters, warm coat, hat, scarf, and gloves are essential in Kansas in the winter months
  - Footwear – sneakers, sandals/ casual shoes, at least one pair of formal shoes, and if you will be at Washburn University during the winter, months a pair of warm winter boots (which can be purchased after arriving)
- Photographs and maps of your home country (and other sentimental objects from home)
- An updated address book (including information for friends & family from home & in the U.S.)
- Your favorite music from your home-country
- A small first aid or emergency kit including items like thread, band aids, antibacterial ointments, non-prescription medicines
- Spending money – but please do NOT carry large amounts of cash (i.e. over $500). This is NOT safe.

PLEASE NOTE - Most household items can be purchased in the U.S. for reasonable prices; therefore it is best to leave these items in your home country (i.e. kitchen items, quilts, pillows, etc.)