# Pre-Arrival Guide for New International Students 2019



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**Welcome Letter from the Office of Student Affairs**

Dear New International Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance to Penn State Lehigh Valley! The Office of Students Affairs at Penn State Lehigh Valley welcomes you and wishes you success in your academic journey in the United States. Our office and all of the faculty and staff are here to help you achieve your personal and academic goals while you pursue your studies at Penn State Lehigh Valley. Included in this guide you will find information on the following:

* New International Student Checklist/Important Dates
* Understanding Your Visa Status
* Preparation for Arrival to Penn State Lehigh Valley
* New International Student Welcome and New International Student Orientation
* Penn State Lehigh Valley Student Life and Student Organizations
* Penn State Learning Center and Disability Services
* Penn State Lehigh Valley Campus Directory
* Life in the Lehigh Valley and Surrounding Cities

We look forward to meeting you at the Mandatory New Student Orientation and Welcome meetings.

Sincerely,

Tom Dubreuil

Director of Student Affairs

[trd14@psu.edu](mailto:trd14@psu.edu)

610-751-5021

## **New International Student Checklist**

The below checklist has been created to assist you in completing both important mandatory and recommended action items you must to take during your first 30 days at Penn State Lehigh Valley. Any questions about the checklist can be directed to Tom Dubreuil ([trd14@psu.edu](mailto:trd14@psu.edu)).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Page** | **Action Item** | **Dates** | **Mandatory/Recommended** |
| 1 | 8 | Register for New Student Welcome | On or Before August 5th | Mandatory |
| 2 | 7 | Sign up for Airport Pick Up | On or Before August 5th  Pick Up Date: Sunday, August 18 | Recommended |
| 3 | 6 | Find Off-Campus Housing | On or Before August 18th | Mandatory |
| 4 | 8 | Go Furniture Shopping | August 18th | Recommended |
| 5 | 5 | Obtain I-20 and F-1 Visa | On or Before August 19th | Mandatory |
| 6 | 5 | I-94 Card | On or Before August 19th | Mandatory |
| 7 | 6 | Immunization | On or Before August 19th | Mandatory |
| 8 | 5 | SEVIS Registration | August 19th | Mandatory |
| 9 | 8 | Regional Orientation | August 19th | Mandatory |
| 10 | 7 | PSULV New International Student Orientation | August 20th | Mandatory |
| 11 | 8 | Open Up a Bank Account, sign up for a cell phone account | August 20th | Recommended |
| 12 | 8 | Fall Registration | On or Before August 20th | Mandatory |
| 13 | 8 | New Student Welcome | August 21th | Mandatory |

## **Understanding Your Visa Status**

### **F-1 International Student Visa**

The F-1 Visa allows you to enter the United States (U.S.) as a full-time student at a United States accredited university. In order to maintain your status, you must adhere to what is listed on your form I-

20. As an F-1 Visa holder and on an I-20 status, you must be enrolled in a program or course of study that culminates in a degree, diploma or certificate. This status allows you to remain in the U.S. until the completion of studies date listed on your I-20. You can bring your spouse and children to live with you in the U.S. as long as you provide proof of sufficient financial resources. Spouses and children cannot work while in the U.S. To maintain full-time status, undergraduates must register for at least 12 credits each semester. If you are already in the United States on an active I-20 status, you must follow steps to transfer your SEVIS records to Penn State University. More information on this will be provided in the next section of the guide.

### **Request Certificate of Eligibility to Obtain Student Visa (I-20)**

Once you have been admitted to Penn State Lehigh Valley and you have confirmed your admission offer by paying your acceptance fee, you must then get ready to apply for your I-20. You will receive an email from [international@psu.edu.](mailto:international@psu.edu) This email will be sent to you once a month until you complete your request for form I-20.

### **Mandatory SEVIS (I-20) Fee and Visa Interview**

Now that you have successfully requested for and received your form I-20, you are now required to pay your SEVIS (I-20) fee in order to schedule an interview appointment with the United States Embassy in your home country in order to receive your F-1 visa for admission to the United States. For more information on this, visit the [Penn State Global website](https://global.psu.edu/international).

### **I-94 Entry Admission Requirement**

When you arrive at a port of entry in the U.S., you will be required to present your form I-20 along with your passport and financial documents. You can retrieve your I-94 on the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection website](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home).

## **Preparation for Arrival to Penn State Lehigh Valley**

### **Tuition and Billing**

As an international student, it is important to familiarize yourself with tuition cost and how to pay your tuition and fees before your arrival to the United States. For more information on how to pay your tuition please visit the [Penn State Bursar website](http://www.bursar.psu.edu/).

### **Scholarship Opportunities for New International Students**

There is a limited number of scholarship opportunities that are available for international students, however, you can visit the [Penn State Global website](https://global.psu.edu/international) for more information.

### **Health Insurance**

Health care in the United States can get very expensive and it is required that all international students studying at Penn State have active health insurance. For more information on how to sign up for health insurance prior to arriving to the United States, please visit the [Penn State Global website](https://global.psu.edu/international).

### **Immunization**

Penn State Lehigh Valley requires you to complete immunizations before arriving to the United States. This is very important and must be completed before arriving to Penn State Lehigh Valley. You can find important information on how to complete this requirement by visiting the [Penn State Student Affairs Medical Services web page.](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-wellness/medical-services/immunizations/submit-immunization-information)

### **Off-Campus Housing**

Committing to studying in a foreign country is exciting, however, there are key items that must be completed before or soon after you arrive in the United States. Finding a place to stay is one of those important items that must get done. Penn State Lehigh Valley **does not have on-campus dormitory**. However, there are have many safe and convenient off-campus housing options near campus. You will find many great off-campus housing options on the website listed below. If you are interested in looking for a roommate, visit the [Penn State Lehigh Valley housing web page](http://lehighvalley.psu.edu/campus-housing-commuting-campus) for more information.

If for some reason, you are not able to find off-campus housing prior to your arrival, you can arrange to stay at a local hotel. Although you are free to use any hotel, the [Homewood Suites by Hilton](https://homewoodsuites3.hilton.com/en/hotels/pennsylvania/homewood-suites-by-hilton-allentown-bethlehem-center-valley-ABECVHW/index.html?SEO_id=GMB-HW-ABECVHW) and the [Springhill Suites by Marriot](https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/abecv-springhill-suites-allentown-bethlehem-center-valley/?scid=bb1a189a-fec3-4d19-a255-54ba596febe2) are close to campus and offer a Penn State affiliated rate. **If you are planning to stay in another hotel than the ones listed below, please make sure before booking that they do not require you to be 21 or older to reserve a room**. When contacting them to reserve a room, mention you are a Penn State international student and ask about the Penn State rate.

### **Travel and Transportation from Philadelphia International Airport**

New international students have the option to fly into many surrounding airports. **However, Penn State Lehigh Valley will only offer free shuttle service from Philadelphia International Airport to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus only on Sunday, August 18 for flights landing anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**

Our Penn State Lehigh Valley faculty and staff will be available to greet you at the arriving terminal at the Philadelphia International Airport. The shuttle will depart the airport no later than 10:00 a.m. to arrive to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus before 12:00 p.m. If you decide not to arrange your flight for arrival to Philadelphia International Airport on August 18 between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., be sure to take advantage of safe and convenient transportation systems listed below.

**In order to reserve your free shuttle service, please email** [**trd14@psu.edu**](mailto:akj113@psu.edu) **before August 5 with your arrival time and arrival terminal letter information.**

#### **It is your responsibility to arrive on campus on August 18. It is recommended that you plan your arrival to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus prior to your departure. Unfortunately, there are not many options to arrive on campus via train or bus.**

#### **Taxis**

Taxis can be picked up in Zone 5 of the International Philadelphia Airport at the Commercial Transportation Roadway by the baggage claim area.

#### **Uber Philadelphia**

For information on Uber please visit the [Uber website.](https://www.uber.com/cities/philadelphia/)

**Additionally, when booking flights keep in mind the following dates:**

**August 18, 2019** All new international students required to attend a meeting at Penn State Lehigh Valley

**August 19, 2019** Penn State Regional International Orientation

**August 20, 2019** Penn State Lehigh Valley New International Student Orientation

**August 21, 2019** Penn State Lehigh Valley New Student Welcome

**August 26, 2019** First day of classes

**November 24 – 30, 2019** Thanksgiving Break, no classes

**December 13, 2019** Last Day of Classes

**December 16 – 20, 2019** Final Exams

**No students will be excused from or allowed to take a final exam at a different time due to a booked flight. To be safe, do not book any flights until after the last day of final exams which is December 20, 2019.**

## **New International Student Welcome and New International Student Orientation**

### **New International Student Welcome**

On Sunday, August 18, all new Penn State Lehigh Valley International Students are required to attend an information session outlining your first week as a Penn State student. Lunch will be provided. After lunch, students who wish to purchase furniture and/or supplies will have the opportunity to go shopping. All students must attend the New International Student Regional Orientation on August 19. You will have the opportunity to complete your SEVIS (I-20) Registration during this orientation. On August 20, you are required to attend the Penn State Lehigh Valley International Student Welcome. During this program, you will hear about campus resources, open a bank account and sign up for a cell phone account. Penn State Lehigh Valley will provide lunch and refreshments. You will be receiving an email about the New International Student Welcome. Please be sure to regularly check your PSU email account.

### **Social Security Number**

You cannot apply for a social security number until you have been in the U.S. for at least 10 days and until you have an on-campus or off-campus job. It takes approximately 2-3 weeks to receive a social security number after you submit the application. For more information about applying for a social security number, please visit the [Social Security Administration website](https://www.ssa.gov/). The closest social security office to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus is listed below:

Social Security Administration

Address: 41 N 4th St. Allentown, PA 18102 Phone: 1-877-405-6746

### **Driver’s License and State ID**

Information on obtaining a Pennsylvania Driver’s License can be found here on the [Global Penn State website](https://global.psu.edu/article/how-internationals-can-get-pennsylvania-drivers-license). The closest Driver’s License and State ID center is listed below:

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation- Photo License Center, Allentown Address: 5 American Pkway, Allentown PA 18101

Phone: 1-800-932-4600

**New International Student Orientation**

Your attendance for New International Student Orientation is mandatory on August 21. On this day, you will get to learn more about Penn State Lehigh Valley. You will learn about academic standards, how to register for classes, Student Life, as well as immigration regulation on maintaining your I-20 status and any other benefits as an international student. You will be receiving an email about this event, so be sure to check your PSU email account regularly.

## 

## **Penn State Lehigh Valley Student Organizations and Activities**

At Penn State Lehigh Valley, we have many fun and exciting events and organizations that you can be involved in. For more information on joining a student organization or events that are happening on campus please visit the [Penn State Lehigh Valley Student Life web page.](https://lehighvalley.psu.edu/student-life)

## **Penn State Learning Center and Academic Support Services**

Students interested in the learning center as well as Academic Support Services

please visit the [Penn State Lehigh Valley Learning Center web page.](http://lehighvalley.psu.edu/learning-center)

## **Penn State Lehigh Valley Campus Directory**

You can find important contact information to your faculty and staff at Penn State Lehigh Valley by visiting the [campus directory](http://lehighvalley.psu.edu/campus-directory/results).

## **Lehigh Valley and Surrounding Cities**

Penn State Lehigh Valley is only one hour drive away from major cities such as Philadelphia and New York. Local cities such as Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton are only a 15-minute drive away from the campus. Use the following resources for more information:

* + - [Discover Lehigh Valley](http://www.discoverlehighvalley.com/travel-tip/)
    - [Visit Philadelphia](http://www.visitphilly.com/)
    - [I LOVE NY](http://www.iloveny.com/)