

## Pre-Arrival Guide for New International Students



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## Welcome Letter from the Office of Global Programs

Dear New International Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance to Penn State Lehigh Valley! Global Programs welcomes you and wish you much success in your academic journey in the United States. Global Programs will assist you in achieving your personal and academic goals while you pursue your studies at Penn State Lehigh Valley. We will advise you on immigration regulations as well as cultural and academic adjustment. We are here to help you once you arrive at Penn State Lehigh Valley. Included in this guide you will find information on the following:

- New International Student Checklist
- 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
- Lehigh Valley and Surrounding Cities

We especially look forward to meeting you at the New Student Welcome, Orientation and Engagement week where your attendance is mandatory.

Sincerely,

*Ryan Geiger*

Ryan Geiger, M.Ed.

Northeast Region International Student Adviser

& Global Education Coordinator

## New International Student Checklist

Below checklist has been created to assist you in completing both important mandatory and recommended action items you must take during your first 30 days at Penn State Lehigh Valley. Any questions about the checklist can be directed to Director of Student Affairs Tom Dubreuil ([trd1@psu.edu](mailto:trd1@psu.edu)).

Item	Action Item	Information	Mandatory/ Optional
1	Obtain I-20 and F-1 Visa	On or Before August 1st	Mandatory
2	I-94 record	On or Before September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
3	Immunizations	On or Before August 10 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
4	Find Off-Campus Housing	On or Before August 10 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
5	Register for New Student Welcome	August 10 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
6	Sign up for Airport Pick Up on Sunday August 15 <sup>th</sup>	On or Before August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recommended
7	PSULV New International Student Orientation	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
8	New International Student Form	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
9	SEVIS Registration	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
10	Open a Bank Account	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Recommended
11	Sign Up for a Cell Phone Account	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Recommended
12	New Student Welcome	August 18 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory
13	First day of Classes	August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	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. if you provide proof of sufficient financial resources to support them. 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, 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. While you wait for your email and for more information on how to obtain your I-20 as well as transfer your I-20 record, please visit: (<https://global.psu.edu/category/you-arrive>).

### 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 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 please visit: (<https://global.psu.edu/category/you-arrive>). **Please note that due to Covid-19, all U.S. Embassies and consulates are currently closed.** Please monitor the closest U.S. Embassy or consulate to your country and schedule your visa appointment as soon as possible.

### 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 by visiting this 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: (<http://www.bursar.psu.edu/>).

## Financial Aid Information for New International Students

There are limited number of aid and scholarship that is available for international students, however you can visit the following website for more information: (<https://global.psu.edu/taxonomy/term/171>).

## 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: (<https://global.psu.edu/category/health-insurance>).

## 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: ([https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/immunizations/imm\\_submission.shtml](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/immunizations/imm_submission.shtml)).

## Off-Campus Housing

Committing to studying in a foreign country is exciting however there are key items that must get 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 dormitory on campus. However, we have many safe and convenient off-campus housing options nearby campus. You will find many great off-campus housing options on this website listed below. If you are interested in looking for a roommate, you must first create an account and a roommate profile by going to the website: (<http://lehighvalley.psu.edu/campus-housing-commuting-campus>).

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 two listed below are close to campus and offer a Penn State affiliated rate. When contacting them to reserve a room, mention you are a Penn State international student and ask about the Penn State rate.

[https://homewoodsuites3.hilton.com/en/hotels/pennsylvania/homewood-suites-by-hilton-allentown-bethlehem-center-valley-ABECVHW/index.html?SEO\\_id=GMB-HW-ABECVHW](https://homewoodsuites3.hilton.com/en/hotels/pennsylvania/homewood-suites-by-hilton-allentown-bethlehem-center-valley-ABECVHW/index.html?SEO_id=GMB-HW-ABECVHW)

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/abecv-springhill-suites-allentown-bethlehem-center-valley/?scid=bb1a189a-fec3-4d19-a255-54ba596febe2>

## Travel and Transportation from Philadelphia International Airport

New international students have the option to fly into many surrounding airports such as Philadelphia International Airport, Newark International Airport etc. **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 15<sup>th</sup> for flights landing anytime between 8am-10am.** Our Penn State Lehigh Valley faculty and staff will be available to greet you at the arriving terminal at the Philadelphia International Airport and the shuttle will depart the airport no later than 10am to arrive to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus before 12pm. If you decide not to arrange your flight for arrival to Philadelphia International Airport on August 15<sup>th</sup> between 8am-10am, 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:trd14@psu.edu) before August 3<sup>rd</sup> with your arrival time and arrival terminal letter information.

It is your responsibility to arrive on campus for our first event on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, it is recommended that you plan your arrival to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus prior to your departure. Unfortunately, there are not that many options to arrive on campus via train or bus and therefore it is recommended you look into the following options.

### *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: (<https://www.uber.com/cities/philadelphia/>).

Additionally, when booking flights keep in mind the following dates.

August 17, 2021	- All new international students required to attend a meeting at Penn State Lehigh Valley
August 23, 2021	- First day of classes
November 21 – 27, 2021	- Thanksgiving Break, no classes
December 10, 2021	- Last Day of Classes
December 13 – 17, 2021	- Final Exams

**No student will be excused from or allowed to take a final exam after a different time due to a booked flight. To be safe, do not book flights home or elsewhere until after the last day of final exams, which is December 17<sup>h</sup>, 2021.**

## New International Student Welcome and New International Student Orientation

### New International Student Welcome

On Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, you are required to attend the Penn State Lehigh Valley New International Student Welcome, where you will hear about campus resources and have the option to 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 this event and therefore be sure to regularly check your PSU email account.

Lunch will be provided after which students who wish to will be brought furniture and supply shopping. All students must attend the New International Student Regional Orientation on August 20<sup>th</sup>. You will have the opportunity to complete your SEVIS (I-20) Registration during this orientation.

### 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 applying for a social security number, please visit: (<https://www.ssa.gov/>). The closest social security office to Penn State Lehigh Valley campus is listed below:

Social Security Administration  
Address: 41 N 4<sup>th</sup> St. Allentown, PA 18102  
Phone: 1-877-405-6746

### Driver License and State ID

Information on obtaining a Pennsylvania Driver's License can be found here: [global.psu.edu/info/internationals-psu/students/drivers-license-state-id](http://global.psu.edu/info/internationals-psu/students/drivers-license-state-id). The closest Drive License and State ID center is list below:

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation- Photo License Center, Allentown  
Address: 5 American Parkway, Allentown PA 18101  
Phone: 1-800-932-4600

**New International Student Orientation** Your attendance for New International Student Orientation is mandatory on August 17<sup>th</sup>. 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 information as well as introductory to immigration regulation on maintaining your I-20 status as well as any other benefits as an international student. You will be receiving an email about this event and therefore be sure to regularly check your PSU email account.

## Penn State Lehigh Valley Student Organizations and Activities



On our campus, we have many fun and exciting events and organizations you can join to make sure that you take full advantage to get to know the campus while you are studying at Penn State Lehigh Valley. For more information on joining a student organization or events that are happening on campus please visit: (<https://lehighvalley.psu.edu/student-life/get-involved>).

### Penn State Learning Center and Disability Services

Student interested in learning center as well as disability services, please visit this website: (<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 following website: (<http://lehighvalley.psu.edu/campus-directory/results>).

### Lehigh Valley and Surrounding Cities

Penn State Lehigh Valley campus is only one-hour drive away from major cities such as Philadelphia and New York. Lehigh Valley city and surrounding cities such as Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton are only 15-minute drive away. Please visit the following websites 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/>