International Student Welcome Guide – F-1 & J-1 Visas

Congratulations on your admission to UConn! Please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at international@uconn.edu if you have questions about being an international student at UConn prior to arrival. Additional information to prepare for your arrival can be found at isss.uconn.edu > New Students.

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Visas and Immigration

Form I-20 Instructions
If you received a Form I-20, this means you will apply for an F-1 Student visa. If you received a Form DS-2019, please see instructions in the next paragraph. Please review your Form I-20 upon receipt. Carefully read Pages 1, 2 and 3, sign and complete the STUDENT CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1. Important! Notify ISSS immediately if there are any errors on your Form I-20 BEFORE you apply for your visa, so we may send you a corrected form I-20 to use to apply for your visa. Often the academic major listed on your I-20 does not exactly match the name of your academic program at UConn—this is normal.

You must also sign the STUDENT CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1 for all Forms I-20 issued to your F-2 dependents (if any). The F-2 does not sign the Form I-20.

Form DS-2019 Instructions
If you received a Form DS-2019, this means you will apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. Please review your Form DS-2019 upon receipt. Carefully read Pages 1 and 2, sign and complete the EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1. Important! Notify ISSS immediately if there are any errors on your Form DS-2019 BEFORE you apply for your visa, so we may send you a corrected DS-2019 to use to apply for your visa. Often the academic major listed on your I-20 does not exactly match the name of your academic program at UConn—this is normal.

If you have J-2 dependents: Your J-2 dependents who are older than 14 years may sign their own Forms DS-2019 at the bottom of the form. Otherwise, you, as the J-1 principal, must sign on behalf of your young dependents.

SEVIS I-901 Fee
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges a $200 SEVIS I-901 fee to new F-1 students, and a $180 SEVIS I-901 Fee to new J-1 Exchange Visitors. This fee is IN ADDITION TO the visa application fees charged by the U.S. consulate or embassy, and is subject to change. If you are outside the U.S., you must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and print your payment confirmation before you go to your visa interview. You can schedule your visa interview before you have paid the fee. If you are in the U.S. and applying for a change of status, the SEVIS fee must be paid before you file your application to USCIS. If you are transferring from another U.S. institution, you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again UNLESS your new I-20 lists a SEVIS ID number that is different from your prior Form I-20. Your F-2/J-2 dependents do not need to pay a SEVIS fee. Complete the Form I-901 and pay the fee online by credit card at http://www.fmjfee.com; print payment confirmation after completing Form I-901 and submitting payment. The fee can also be paid by check or money order after completing Form-I-901 online, or by Western Union. See the ICE website at for more information: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm.

Applying For Your Visa
If you live outside the U.S. and you are not a citizen of Canada, you must apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa to enter the U.S. as a student or exchange visitor. The visa is a stamp/sticker affixed to your passport that you will present upon entry to the United States. You should only apply for the visa for the school that you intend to attend. Consult the website of the closest U.S. embassy or U.S. consulate for complete instructions on applying for an F-1/J-1 visa stamp. For links to all U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide, see: http://usembassy.state.gov/. From the website, navigate to the Nonimmigrant Visas section for step-by-step instructions.
All visa applicants must complete an online Form DS-160 and schedule an in-person visa interview. If you received a Form I-20 you should indicate on the DS-160 the purpose of your trip as “Academic or Language Student”. If you received the Form DS-2019, indicate the purpose of your trip as “Exchange Visitor”. You will need to list a contact person in the United States. You may list the name of the Designated School Official (DSO) who issued your Form I-20 or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who issued your Form DS-2019, and the ISSS address (listed at top of this form). Choose “School Official” as the relationship to you.

Follow the consular instructions to schedule an appointment for your visa interview, and pay any visa fees. If you cannot secure an appointment early enough to arrive for your program start date, keep checking back to see if any earlier appointments were cancelled. You may also book an appointment far into the future, and then check with the U.S. embassy/consulate to see if there is a process to request an expedited appointment (usually this requires first booking an appointment).

You will need to bring your passport that is valid at least 6 months into the future, your Form I-20/DS-2019, your SEVIS fee payment confirmation, your proof of funding, proof of your academic preparation (e.g. transcripts, test scores, etc.) and any other required support documentation specified on the embassy/consulate website, to your visa interview. If consular officials wish to collect more information from you to make their visa decision, they may ask you to complete Form DS-5535, Supplemental Questions for Visa Applicants.

Citizens of Canada do not have to apply in advance for an F-1 visa stamp in their passport, but still must be granted F-1/J-1 status by U.S. immigration authorities upon arrival to the U.S. in order to study. Citizens of Canada do need to pay the SEVIS fee and present the Form I-20/DS-2019, passport, SEVIS fee payment confirmation and proof of funding when entering the U.S. to begin their academic program.

Plan ahead, as the visa application process can take several weeks, and sometimes longer. Because most visa applicants are required to appear for an interview it can take a long time to schedule an appointment, and security checks can delay visa issuance by several weeks or months. Visit https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html for current estimated appointment wait times, and an overview of the visa application process.

When you receive your visa, IMMEDIATELY verify if the information on your visa is accurate before leaving the embassy/consulate (if picking up your passport), such as your name spelling/order, date of birth, expiration date, visa type, etc. If you find errors, contact the consular office that granted your visa as soon as possible to request correction.

Visa approval is not guaranteed, and we suggest that you wait until your visa is granted before purchasing flight tickets.

Visa Delays and Administrative Processing
Some visa applications may be selected for administrative processing, which means your application is subject to extra security checks. Administrative process can add significant delays to your visa processing time. Average processing time for visas selected for administrative processing is 60 days, but it can also take much longer. Graduate students in STEM fields may be especially vulnerable to administrative processing. Therefore, graduate students in STEM research programs should apply for their visas as early as possible. If you are a graduate student in a STEM research program, we recommend that you bring your CV/Resume (in English), your Graduate Assistant offer letter (if applicable) and any information you have about your proposed research at UConn, or the research of your assigned academic advisor (for example, print their biographical information from the UConn website).

Administrative processing takes on average 60 days to complete, though it can often take longer. Students can check the status of their visa processing at this website. If your visa application is selected for administrative processing, and you are unable to arrive at UConn by your program start date, you may be required to defer your start in the program to a later term.

You must arrive by the program start date listed on your Form I-20/DS-2019. If you are unable to arrive by the program start date, some programs may allow you to defer your admission to a later semester. Please contact ISSS 157 F and J New Student Welcome Guide
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ISSS, your UConn admission office and your academic program if you will be unable to arrive by your program start date.

**Arrival to the U.S.**

If your visa is approved you may travel to the U.S. **up to 30 days** before the program start date listed on your Form I-20/DS-2019.

Please notify ISSS if you have received a Form I-20/DS-2019 from UConn, but decide not to attend. You must destroy or mail the unused form back to ISSS.

During your flight, you will be given a customs declaration form as you near the U.S. On the customs declaration form, provide your U.S. address and other requested information. **Again, if you do not have a U.S. address, you may use the ISSS office. Be sure to print clearly. You must also declare on the form the amount of money you are bringing with you if it is $10,000 or more, per family. There is no penalty for bringing more than $10,000, but it MUST be declared. You must also include on the form the total value of any goods you are bringing into the U.S. You can use general terms (i.e. clothing, books, gifts). You can estimate the value of the items. You do not have to pay a duty fee on totals less than $1,000.**

When traveling, carry your Form I-20/DS-2019, passport, visa, I-901 SEVIS fee payment confirmation, admission letter and/or Graduate Assistant offer letter, and proof of finances for your stay. **Do not pack these documents into your checked luggage. Present your passport and Form I-20/DS-2019 to the U.S. immigration officer, who will stamp your passport and write “F-1 (or F-2)” or “J-1 (or J-2)” and “D/S” (Duration of Status). Be sure that the officer admits in the proper visa status by double-checking this entry stamp in your passport – if the officer stamps your passport with any other entry than F-1 or J-1, or lists a specific expiration date (not D/S) please go back to have this corrected BEFORE you leave the immigration area.**

**Self Service Kiosks or Global Entry Program:** If your immigration is processed through a self-service kiosk, you may need to select the type of visa that you enter on. Pay special attention that you process your self-service admission using the correct visa/visa type. Check the kiosk for any receipts issued to you upon processing your entry. Do not misplace this receipt!

**I-94 Admission Record**

Upon admission, ALL STUDENTS must confirm the admission record online at: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/). **Please print out your online I-94 admission record and keep it for your records. If you are at Storrs campus, you may print this in the ISSS office.**

If you travel through a land border by car you will receive a paper Form I-94 attached to your passport. This form must be annotated the same as your entry stamp: “F-1 (or F-2)” and “D/S”.

**Arrival to UConn**

**Transportation to UConn**

**To Storrs**

**From Bradley International Airport (BDL):**

*Free UConn Shuttle:* ISSS will provide a free shuttle service between Bradley International Airport and the UConn Campus on January 20th, 2019. Please contact [international@uconn.edu](mailto:international@uconn.edu) if you would like to receive more information about the shuttle schedule.

*Taxis and Rideshare:* The closest airport to UConn Storrs and Hartford campuses is Bradley International Airport, located in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Taxis are available outside of the airport. If there are no taxis at the airport please go to the Ground Transportation desk and they can arrange a taxi for you. The current taxi rate to Storrs is
$79. Tipping is customary for taxi services, at a rate of 15-20% of the fare. See http://www.bradleyairport.com/directions/rental-taxi-limo/ for more information. If you prefer to use a rideshare services, both Uber and Lyft are used in Connecticut.

Public Transportation: Take the 30-Bradley Flyer bus from Bradley Airport to Union Station in Downtown Hartford (fare $1.75). Pick up is from Terminal A, and the International Arrivals terminal. Have exact change ready.

https://www.cttransit.com/services/bradley-flyer

From Downtown Hartford:

CT Transit Bus 913 travels from Union Station to Storrs via Manchester. Purchase your ticket as you board the bus by selecting “Get 2 Hour Pass” on the fare box, and inserting cash into the box. From Union Station to Storrs you will travel 4 Zones, $5.00. Change is not given. Drop off is near Whitney Hall (East Campus) and at the Storrs Center Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center, in downtown Storrs.

From New York City – JFK:

- **Option 1** From Kennedy International (JFK) in New York take the Air Train to Jamaica Station (the last stop). At Jamaica Station transfer to the “E” Line (Blue Line). Take the “E” Line all the way to Manhattan and exit at “42 Street – Port Authority Bus Terminal”. http://www.panynj.gov/airtrain/index.html
- Take the Peter Pan bus from New York Port Authority Bus Terminal to Storrs, University of Connecticut. The ticket is $29.00. Be sure to be familiar with a NYC Subway Map: http://web.mta.info/maps/submap.html
- **Option 2** Take a Taxi from JFK Airport to New York Port Authority Bus Terminal on 42nd St.
- Take the Peter Pan Bus from New York Port Authority Bus Terminal to Storrs, University of Connecticut. The ticket is around $22.00. https://peterpanbus.com/

From Boston (Logan Airport):

From Logan Airport (BOS) in Boston take the Peter Pan bus to Storrs, University of Connecticut. Pick up the bus outside of Terminals A, B, C, E. The ticket costs around $34- purchase your ticket online and print for travel. You will change buses in Providence, RI. https://peterpanbus.com/

To Hartford

From BDL: Take the 30-Bradley Flyer bus from Bradley Airport to Union Station in Downtown Hartford (fare $1.75). Pick up is from Terminal A, and the International Arrivals terminal. Have exact change ready. Drop off is at Union Station and the Connecticut Convention Center (both downtown). https://www.cttransit.com/services/bradley-flyer

From JFK:

- **Option 1**: From Kennedy International (JFK) in New York take the Air Train to Jamaica Station (the last stop). http://www.panynj.gov/airtrain/index.html At Jamaica Station transfer to the “E” Line (Blue Line). Take the “E” Line all the way to Manhattan and exit at “42 Street – Port Authority Bus Terminal”. Take the Peter Pan (https://peterpanbus.com/) or the Greyhound bus (http://www.greyhound.com) from New York Port Authority Bus Terminal, to Hartford. Depending on the time, the ticket will cost between $22.00 -$35.00. NYC Subway Map: http://web.mta.info/maps/submap.html
- **Option 2**: From Kennedy International (JFK) in New York take the Air Train to Jamaica Station (the last stop). At Jamaica Station transfer to the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). Take the LIRR all the way to Penn Station, W. 34th Manhattan. From Penn Station take the Amtrak train to Hartford, CT. www.amtrak.com

From BOS:

- Option 1: From Logan Airport (BOS) in Boston take the Peter Pan bus to Hartford. Pick up the bus outside of Terminals A, B, C, E. The ticket costs around $40-$50- purchase your ticket online and print for travel. You will witch buses in Providence, RI.
• Option 2: From Logan Airport take the “T” (Boston subway) silver line to South Station. At South Station, take the Peter Pan or the Greyhound bus from Boston South St Station to Hartford. Depending on the time, the ticket will cost between $30-$40.

To Stamford
From JFK:
• Option 1: Take the Airtrain to Jamaica Station, and from there, take the Long Island Railroad to Penn Station (Manhattan). http://www.panynj.gov/airtrain/index.html From Penn Station, Amtrak travels to Stamford. www.amtrak.com
• Option 2: Take a taxi from the airport to Grand Central Station, and from there, take the Metro North Railroad to Stamford. http://www.mta.info/schedules
• From Stamford Transportation Center, take the Harbor Point Trolley around Stamford to get to UConn. http://stamford-downtown.com/getting-around/harbor-point-trolley/

From Newark, NJ: Take the Airtrain to Newark Liberty Airport Station, and from there take Amtrak to Stamford.

Visit the ISSS website for further transportation resources.

ISSS Check In
IMPORTANT! All new international students are required to complete online check-in on the ISSS website after you arrive at UConn. You must complete online check in with ISSS by the program start date listed on your Form I-20/DS-2019. ISSS must register your arrival in SEVIS, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database.

To check in, do the following AFTER arriving in the U.S.:

1) Update your “Current Local” address field in Student Admin: https://studentadmin.uconn.edu/

2) Complete the online check-in form on the ISSS website: http://isss.uconn.edu/check-in/

To complete online check-in, you will need to have electronic/scanned copies of your passport ID page, visa stamp, signed Form I-20/DS-2019, I-94, and the entry stamp in your passport. You will upload these documents into your check-in form. If you take photos of your documents to upload, the copies must be clear and you must save and rename the files prior to uploading. Computers are available in the UConn Library scanning documents. If you are located at the Storrs campus, we also have computers at ISSS where you can scan documents and complete online check-in. ISSS in Storrs is located in room 183 of McMahon Hall. Failure to check in within 30 days (or 15 days if you are an F-1 student with a SEVIS record transferred from another U.S. school) after your program start date on the Form I-20 may result in losing your legal F-1 visa status.

Orientation
All F-1 students are required to attend an orientation to the F/J visa regulations provided by ISSS. ISSS provides a mandatory full-day orientation program to all new graduate (Master’s and PhD) students who attend the Storrs campus. All other international students will attend an ISSS information session as part of the orientation provided by your academic program. Please visit https://isss.uconn.edu/orientation/ for an overview of the different orientations offered, and more information on sign-up, if required.

Health and Medical Insurance Requirements
Medical Insurance Requirements
All full time UConn students are required by the University to have health insurance coverage. Medical care in the United States is VERY expensive. We strongly recommend that all international students keep a University-sponsored insurance plan for this reason. In addition, you may be required under the U.S. government’s Affordable Care Act to maintain health insurance coverage.

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University Sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)
Most full-time registered students who attend the Storrs campus are automatically enrolled in, and billed for, the University-sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). After you have registered for classes, check your UConn fee bill to see if the University also enrolled you in the SHIP – there will be a charge on your fee bill, if yes. Many full time students at the other UConn campuses are not automatically enrolled for the UConn SHIP and you must contact UConn Student Health Services to enroll, or find a comparable insurance plan for yourself. Additionally, graduate students who have Graduate Assistantship awards are not automatically enrolled in the SHIP.

If you were automatically enrolled in the UConn SHIP, but prefer to use your own personal health insurance plan, you may “opt out” of the University sponsored plan by completing a waiver through Student Admin. However, if you choose to use your own health insurance, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you understand how your plan works (for example, whether you must pay for expenses up front and seek reimbursement from your insurance provider, or if you can send your bill to the insurance provider for direct payment to the doctor, etc.). Please see https://shs.uconn.edu/insurance-information/ for further information about the SHIP and waiver procedures. ISSS strongly recommends that students take the UConn SHIP, as it is commonly accepted by local healthcare providers, and provides coverage for travel related benefits such as medical evacuation back to the home country.

Graduate students with assistantship awards usually enroll in a University sponsored employee health plan, the Connecticut Partnership Plan for Graduate Assistants, instead of the SHIP. This is a subsidized insurance plan, so it costs less than the UConn SHIP. Unlike the SHIP, Graduate Assistants MUST self-enroll for the Connecticut Partnership Plan. Sign up information and further benefit information can be found online: https://hr.uconn.edu/ct-partnership-health-benefits/. This plan will not become effective until the first day of the month after you begin your Graduate Assistantship (GA) – if your GA begins in August, your insurance will be effective September 1. If your GA begins in January, your insurance will be effective February 1. Therefore, you should try to get all required immunizations BEFORE you travel to UConn and you should purchase a travel insurance plan to cover you in the event of an emergency during your first month at UConn.

Students on J-1 Visas are required by U.S. federal law to maintain insurance for themselves and accompanying dependent family members that meets certain coverage requirements. The SHIP meets J-1 visa requirements, but the Connecticut Partnership Plan for Graduate Assistants does not. Please visit the ISSS website for more details.

Immunizations and Health History Form
Connecticut state law requires all students to show that they have obtained certain vaccinations prior to starting classes at UConn, by submitting a Student Health History Form. Students at the School of Social Work and School of Law are exempt from the SHS Health History Form, but may have their own form requirements: http://shs.uconn.edu/forms. Contact your admission representative at the School of Law or School of Social Work directly for more information.

International students should try to get all required immunizations before submitting the Health History Form. Students who do not submit a Health History Form or have not met all immunization/testing requirements will have a hold placed on your academic record that will prevent you from registering for classes and using University services. If you attend the Storrs campus, Student Health Services will contact you if you are missing required immunizations or if you must attend an additional health screening during Orientation. At the health screening, SHS will provide you, at cost, with required immunizations missing from your record. Please contact SHS directly with any questions about the Student Health History Form or the immunizations requirement at shs.uconn.edu. Students at other UConn campuses who are missing required immunizations will be responsible to obtain missing immunizations at a community medical facility.

Husky One Card (UConn ID Card)
The Husky One Card is your student ID card, and it can be used to take books from the library, access University facilities (dormitory, gym) and pay for food if you have a meal plan or add cash to the card balance, among other
benefits. International students should upload their photo in advance to the One Card office before coming to UConn by following the Online Photo Submission instructions on the UConn One Card website:
https://onecard.uconn.edu/the-one-card/online-photo-submission/

**Housing**

**Temporary Housing Options**
When you arrive, you may need to stay somewhere temporarily until your residence move-in date. Hotels are pricy and generally cost more than $100 per night. Youth hostels and other lower cost options are not common in Connecticut.

**Storrs:**
- **On Campus Hotel:** Nathan Hale Inn: [http://www.nathanhaleinn.com/](http://www.nathanhaleinn.com/)
- **Along bus line to campus (you may need to walk to a bus stop):**
  - Spring Hill Inn: [https://www.springhillinnct.com/](https://www.springhillinnct.com/)
  - Best Western Storrs: [www.bestwestern.com](http://www.bestwestern.com) (search for Mansfield – this is a hotel chain)

**Hartford:**
Downtown Hartford hotels [https://hartford.com/hotels/](https://hartford.com/hotels/) are in walking distance to the Graduate Business Learning Center and UConn Hartford. Law School students can use CT Transit Bus System routes 60, 62, 64, 66 and 72 from downtown, or may find West Hartford hotels more accessible.

**Stamford:** There are a number of hotels in downtown Stamford. [http://stamford-downtown.com/downtown-living/hotels/](http://stamford-downtown.com/downtown-living/hotels/) Check an online map to see walking time to UConn Stamford.

**Long Term Housing**

**Living On-Campus:** On-campus housing is available at the UConn Storrs and UConn Stamford campuses. The UConn Residential Life office manages applications for on-campus housing. Students apply for on-campus housing directly through the Residential Life website, [https://reslife.uconn.edu/](https://reslife.uconn.edu/). Please read through all sections of the Residential Life website to learn more about housing options, costs, deadlines to apply, and what to expect when living on campus.

**Living Off-Campus:** We recommend that students who seek off-campus housing utilize the resources offered through UConn’s Office of Off Campus Student Services. [https://offcampus.uconn.edu/](https://offcampus.uconn.edu/) The Off Campus Student Services website has a searchable off-campus housing database, information about the rental process, and resources for international students. If you live Off-Campus, please make sure that you have reliable transportation or are walking distance to your campus, as it can take a long time to obtain a driver’s license after arrival to the United States. You should also be very careful about any contracts that you sign related to your off-campus rental – please contact the Office of Off Campus Student Services with any questions about your contract BEFORE you sign any rental agreements.

**Driving and Local Transportation**

**Driving a Car**
International students may drive in the U.S. for up to one year with a foreign driver’s license. If your license is in a language other than English or Spanish, the license must be accompanied by an official International Driver’s Permit (IDP) obtained in your home country. After one year, you must have a Connecticut driver’s license to drive a car. If your country does not issue an International Driver’s Permit, or if you do not obtain an IDP before you go, and your license is not in English or Spanish, you must apply for a Connecticut driver’s license in order to drive in the United States.
In the United States, each state issues a driver’s license for residents of that state. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is the office that issues driver’s licenses for Connecticut residents. The process to obtain a Connecticut driver’s license is long, and requires students to first apply for a learner’s permit. During the first 90 days with your learner’s permit, you may only drive if you are with someone who is 20 years or older, who had had a license for at least four consecutive years with no license suspensions. After a 90-day waiting period, you may take a road test to get the full driver’s license. If you have a license issued in another country, you can waive the 90-day waiting period, but you still must take the permit test. Visit the ISSS website for further details. 
https://isss.uconn.edu/drivers-license/

If you will purchase a car, you should already have a Connecticut driver’s license or Connecticut Non-Driver ID Card issued by the Connecticut DMV. These license or non-driver ID card are required to register your vehicle, and your vehicle must be registered with the DMV before you can drive it. You will also be required to have auto insurance to register your car in Connecticut. If you plan to purchase a car and drive in the U.S., please budget your time and money accordingly.

Public Transportation

**U-Pass:** The U-Pass is a state-wide benefit for students who attend participating campuses (Avery Point, Storrs, Hartford, Stamford, Waterbury and the School of Law). The GBLC campus does not participate in the U-Pass program. If you order a U-Pass you will be eligible to ride many Connecticut public transportation systems for free, with your UConn ID and valid U-Pass. You must apply for and obtain your U-Pass to use this benefit. Visit upass.uconn.edu.

**Storrs:**
Storrs is located in a rural part of the state. You may find public transportation very limited compared to what you are accustomed to at home. If you will live in University housing at Storrs campus, academic buildings and services are accessible either by walking or by the University bus system. If you live off campus, we strongly recommend that you find housing that is walking distance to campus, or directly serviced by the WRTD bus line (see below).

Campus bus shuttle: https://transpo.uconn.edu/
Windham Region Transit District: http://www.wrtd.net/ Bus routes between Storrs, Campus, and neighboring towns Willimantic/Windham
CT Transit 913 Bus: https://www.cttransit.com/services/express-services Bus between campus, Manchester (shopping mall) and downtown Hartford (Union Station)
Peter Pan Bus: www.peterpanbus.com (Connections from campus to Hartford, NYC, Boston and beyond)

**Stamford, Hartford, Waterbury, Avery Point:**
Students attending programs at UConn’s Hartford or Stamford campuses may find that public transportation is more accessible in these urban areas. See http://www.cttransit.com/ for city bus schedules. Hartford is served by rail via the national rail carrier Amtrak, (www.amtrak.com) and CT Rail (http://www.hartfordline.com/). Stamford is also served by Amtrak, as well as Metro North http://www.mta.info/schedules .

Packing and Weather

Connecticut is a four-season state; we experience very cold weather and a lot of snow in winter, very hot weather in summer, and mild weather in spring and winter. You should plan to bring or purchase winter gear by October of each year. For winter, you will need a warm jacket, hat, scarf, mittens/gloves, wool socks, and boots. For extremely cold weather, you may want to purchase long underwear to wear under your clothes. Contact ISSS if you are unsure what to bring. On the coast of Connecticut (Stamford and Avery Point campuses) winter can be a bit more mild than inland (Storrs, Hartford).

UConn’s Residential Life office provides a packing list for students who live on campus https://reslife.uconn.edu/items-to-bring/; however, international students will likely need to purchase most of these items upon arrival due to packing limitations. Electrical sockets in the U.S. are 120/240 volts/60 hz. During
orientation, many programs offer a new-student shopping trip to a large department store. Many items can also be purchased on campus at the UConn Bookstore. Visit https://uconn.bncollege.com, which links to the UConn Book Store inventory, and where items can be purchased in advance, and picked up at the store.

Money and Finances
The University provided you with an estimate of your billed and unbilled expenses at UConn, which you referenced to apply for an I-20 or DS-2019 document. Your actual expenses may be higher or lower than the estimated cost of attendance listed on the ISSS website. https://isss.uconn.edu/students/financial-declaration-form/ Also remember that your initial expenses upon arrival to the United States will be significant— if you are living off campus, you will often be required to pay the equivalent of three months of rent, up front (first month, last month and a security deposit). You must plan accordingly, and bring enough savings to help you with initial expenses.

We recommend that you have $100 in cash with you when you arrive to the United States to help with initial small expenses. Traveler’s checks are still a safe way to bring larger amounts of currency, but be sure they are denominated in U.S. funds. You may also be able to access your foreign accounts through your own debit or credit cards—check with your bank in your home country before you leave to find out if you will be able to access cash. Cash withdrawals at ATMs in the U.S. will carry a sizable processing fee. Students may also receive an international wire transfer once you set up an account with a local bank here.

Working and SSN
International students may work in on-campus positions up to 20 hours per week. “On Campus positions” mean you are working for UConn, and the job is located on-campus. Graduate Assistantships are on campus positions and count toward the 20 hours per week that you may work. F-1 students do not have to apply for special work permission from ISSS to work on campus, and the work may begin in the 30-day period before the “Session Start Date” listed on the Form I-20. J-1 students may only work from the program start date on the DS-2019, and they must apply for written work authorization letter from ISSS before they may begin working on campus.

Students who have employment must apply for a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN). The SSN is a number issued by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for tax purposes. Only students who have employment are eligible to get an SSN. New international students must complete Online Check In with ISSS before applying for the Social Security Number, and must obtain a letter from ISSS before you apply. At the beginning of each semester, Social Security Administration staff visit the Storrs campus to take your SSN applications. Students at other campuses may apply at their local Social Security Administration office. See the ISSS website for further details. Students who apply directly at the local SSA office should wait about two weeks after completing ISSS Check-In, before applying for the SSN.

Study Requirements
International students are required to study on a full time basis each semester. Full time means at least 12 credits for Bachelor’s students, 9 credits for Master’s and Doctoral students or 6 credits for Master’s and Doctoral Students who have Graduate Assistantships. Exchange students who enroll in Bachelor’s level courses must carry at least 12 credits, and exchange students who enroll in Masters/Doctoral level courses must carry 9 credits. JD students must carry 12 credits, and UCAELI students must attend all IEP classes.

U.S. Culture 101
U.S. culture may be very similar to or very different from your own culture. Many people learn about U.S. culture through movies, television or other media, but you will find that in reality it is very different from how it is portrayed in the news or popular culture. Here are some important aspects of U.S. culture:

Individualism: The United States is very individual-oriented, instead of group oriented. Individual freedoms and rights are valued, and “standing out” can be seen as a good thing. People may put their own needs before the needs of the group. Individual privacy and space is valued.
Following Rules/Objectivity: In the United States, people are expected to follow the standard rules and procedures for getting things done, and exceptions are not typically made for individual circumstances.

Timeliness: It is important to be on time to meetings, appointments, interviews, class. This means arriving at or just before the start time. For social engagements, there is a little more flexibility to be a few minutes late, but if you will be significantly late, you should let the person know.

Friendliness: Americans can be very friendly to strangers, but this friendliness may come off as superficial, or not genuine, if you are not accustomed to this. For Americans, this friendliness is a polite gesture, but it may take longer for friendships to develop.

Hygiene/Personal Care: Americans shower and use deodorant daily to avoid body odor.

Diversity: The United States is a multicultural country and you must treat all with tolerance and respect, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, culture or ethnicity.

Students with Families
International students may request dependent visas (F-2 or J-2) for their spouses, or unmarried children under the age of 21. If you requested a dependent I-20/DS-2019 for family members from ISSS, you should have received these with your Form I-20/DS-2019. You do not have to pay a separate SEVIS fee for your F-2/J-2 dependents. If they will not accompany you to the United States at this time, you may also request their visa documents later. F-2 dependent spouses may study on a part-time basis in the United States, but may not work. J-2 dependent spouses may study part-time or full-time, and they may apply to the U.S. government for a U.S. work permit that will allow for employment. F-2 and J-2 children may enroll in elementary and secondary school.

If your family will accompany you to the U.S. you must purchase health insurance for them. Public schooling in the United States is free, and based on your place of residence. All children who enroll in public school must have a medical examination and Connecticut State Health Form filled out by their doctor to be able to enroll in school. You will also need to provide proof of residency in your town to enroll children in school. Find more information about school enrollment on the website of the town where you will live, and on the ISSS Website under “Resources”.

Resources
ISSS Advisor
As you prepare for your program in the United States, you may have many questions. International Student and Scholar Services is the office at UConn that can advise you on matters related to the visa application process and life at UConn as an international student. Students are assigned an ISSS advisor based on campus location, and your program of study. ISSS has offices at the Storrs, Stamford, the Law School and Hartford (Graduate Business Learning Center) campuses. Please see isss.uconn.edu > About > Staff Directory to find your assigned international advisor, and contact your ISSS advisor with any questions you have.

Campus Cultural Organizations
UConn has many student organizations dedicated to a specific country or cultural theme. These organizations can provide incoming students with a point of contact at UConn of a current student who either comes from the same region, or shares an interest in the same culture. Visit https://ucontact.uconn.edu/organizations to search UConn organizations by keyword or campus, or you can select the “Cultural” organization category to view student orgs organized by country or culture.

Other student organizations based on specific interests are also a great way to get involved and meet others once you arrive.
**EducationUSA**

EducationUSA is a U.S. Department of State network of advising centers around the world to help students prepare for study in the United States. Their website provides information about studying in the United States, and they sponsor in-country pre-departure orientation events at their advising centers. Visit: [https://educationusa.state.gov/](https://educationusa.state.gov/)

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### Helpful Contact Information

#### UConn Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Student and Scholar Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:international@uconn.edu">international@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-3855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSS Stamford</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lulu.dong@uconn.edu">lulu.dong@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-203-251-9545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSS Hartford</td>
<td><a href="mailto:neena.kapoor@uconn.edu">neena.kapoor@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSS Law School</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leslie.lawrence@uconn.edu">leslie.lawrence@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Undergraduate Admissions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:beahusky@uconn.edu">beahusky@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-3137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Graduate Admissions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gradschool@uconn.edu">gradschool@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-3617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursar (Student bills)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bursar@uconn.edu">bursar@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-4830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar (Course Enrollment)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:registrar@uconn.edu">registrar@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-3331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Students With Disabilities</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csd@uconn.edu">csd@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shs@uconn.edu">shs@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-4700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling &amp; Mental Health Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>+1-860-486-4705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Undergraduates)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:orientation@uconn.edu">orientation@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-4866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Life</td>
<td>Use contact form on website</td>
<td>+1-860-486-2926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus Student Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:offcampus@uconn.edu">offcampus@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-8006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety – Storrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>+1-860-486-4800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Abroad (Storrs exchange students)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:abroad@uconn.edu">abroad@uconn.edu</a></td>
<td>+1-860-486-5022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the UConn School of Law, UConn School of Social Work and UConn regional campuses may have separate offices for similar administrative functions. Check their websites for further details.