





## Welcome!

Congratulations on your enrollment at Westfield State University. This is the beginning of a very exciting journey for you, and we are pleased you chose us for your higher education studies! We hope you are eager to learn about Westfield State University, American culture, and your field of study. You will bring a unique perspective to the Westfield State community, and we look forward to you sharing your experience and culture with us.

This handbook has been designed to help you prepare for your arrival and first semester at Westfield State University. Let this serve as a map for your road to success as a university student. While we have done our best to provide you with all the information you need, prior to your arrival in Westfield, please feel free to contact us with any additional questions you may have in the weeks leading up to and following your arrival at Westfield State University.

Our office is located in Parenzo Hall, Room 130, and our contact information is provided below.

We look forward to working with you!

Vera Vlasenko

*International Student & Scholar Advisor International Programs*

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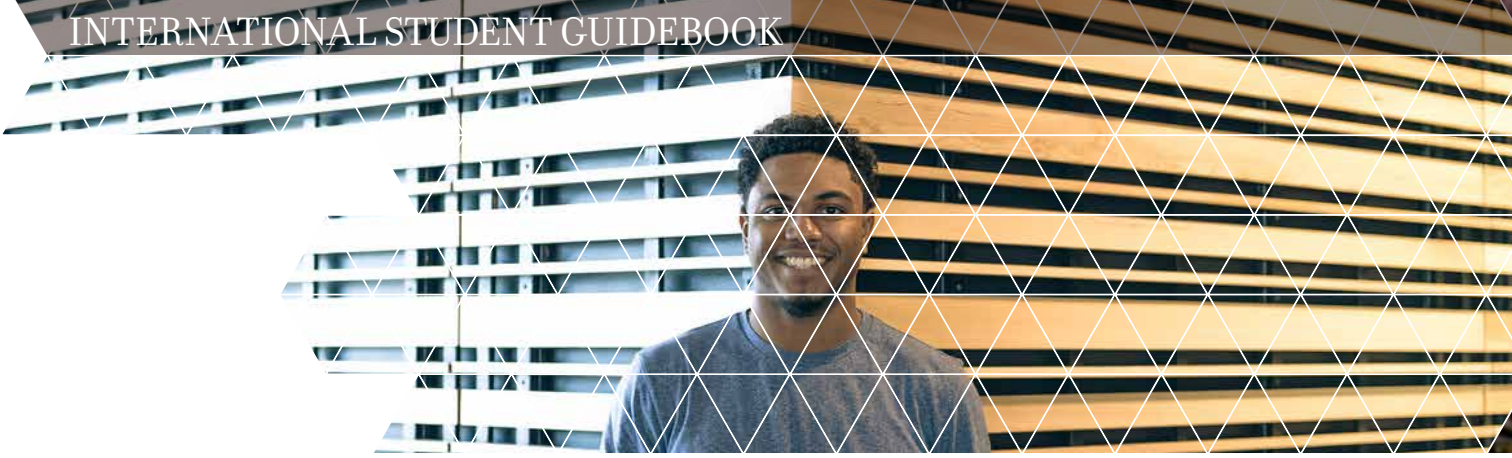
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### **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE (IPO)**

Throughout this guide you will find references to the International Program Office (IPO), and International Student Advisor (ISA).

Your ISA is the best source of information, advice and assistance related to your F-1/J-1 student status. The IPO will be able to help you with questions you may have concerning study in the United States.



## About Westfield State University

Westfield State University (also known as “Westfield State,” or simply, “Westfield”) is a comprehensive, coeducational, four-year public university. As the most residential of the Massachusetts state universities, Westfield takes pride in its warm, comfortable atmosphere and small class sizes. Our priorities are dynamic effective teaching, and student involvement in the life of the University and the community. You will benefit from Westfield State’s emphasis on service and experiential learning. It’s the perfect environment for getting a well-rounded education while achieving specialized goals. The University is most recognized for its criminal justice and education programs. More state troopers have graduated from Westfield State University than from any other school in the state. It is also the second largest producer of new teachers among the Massachusetts state universities. The school’s mascot is an owl named “Nestor” and its university colors are blue and white.

Westfield State University is located in a rural neighborhood along Western Avenue, in Westfield, Massachusetts. It is about a five-minute drive from downtown Westfield and accessible via the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (P.V.T.A.) bus system, which is free for on-campus residents. The campus is divided into four sections: north campus, east campus, main campus and south campus. Across from the east campus is the 275-acre Stanley Park, which is often used by students for sports, studying, or just relaxing.

### CAMPUS MAP

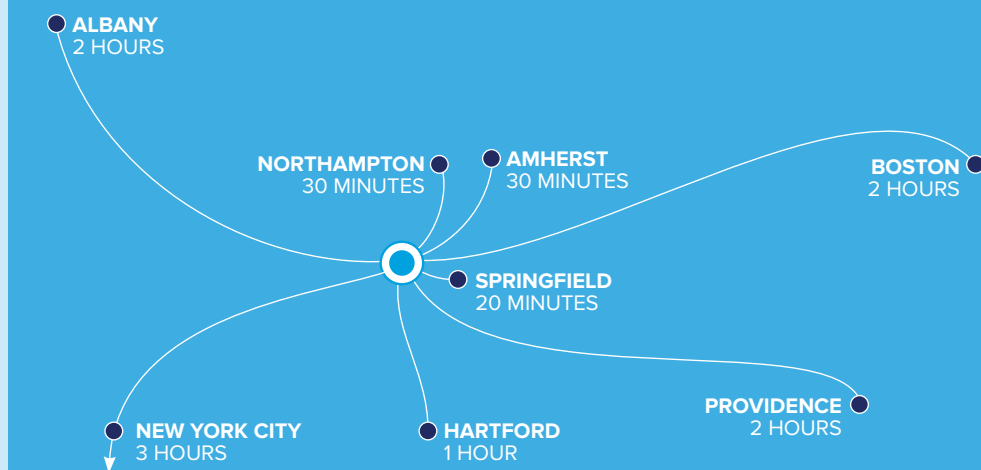
[www.westfield.ma.edu/map](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/map)

### DRIVING DISTANCES

- 30 minutes from Six Flags New England
- 30 minutes from Northampton, Massachusetts
- 40 minutes from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- 2 hours from Boston, Massachusetts
- 3 hours from New York City, New York

[westfield.ma.edu/about/maps-directions](http://westfield.ma.edu/about/maps-directions)

[westfield.ma.edu/about/campus-facilities](http://westfield.ma.edu/about/campus-facilities)





## Immigration Regulations

As you work toward your degree, you will be asked to comply with various U.S. government regulations.

This section presents a brief introduction to the following issues, primarily as they apply to students in F-1/ J-1, but it cannot replace the advice and assistance of the advisor. If you transfer to another institution, travel outside the United States or accept employment, you should seek advice from the IPO's International Student Advisor. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to know and abide by the regulations.

### RULES FOR MAINTAINING VALID F-1 STATUS AT WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY

It is your responsibility to know and follow the legal requirements that keep you "in status."

Students in F-1 status are responsible for learning, understanding, and complying with U.S. federal laws and regulations governing the F-1 visa. Failure to do so will violate your legal status in the United States and will have serious consequences. Your F-1 status is valid for "duration of status" only. If you become "out of status" your F-1 status immediately becomes invalid.

Your responsibilities include the following: Keep your passport valid at all times. You must have a valid passport in your possession. For information on renewing your passport, visit the web site of your country's embassy or consulate in the United States.

See [www.embassy.org/embassies](http://www.embassy.org/embassies) for more information.

#### REPORT ADDRESS CHANGES WITHIN 10 DAYS TO THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR

U.S. federal regulations require all F-1 students to report a change of address directly to the International Student Advisor (ISA) within 10 days of the address change. The advisor is required to provide this and other student data to the federal government electronically. The IPO office will report this information for you. You must notify the Registrar's Office of a change of address.

#### MAINTAIN A FULL COURSE OF STUDY EACH SEMESTER

U.S. federal regulations [8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)] require you to pursue a full course of study each fall and spring semester until graduation or transfer to a new school.

#### OBTAIN PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR (ISA) BEFORE DROPPING BELOW A FULL COURSE OF STUDY

There are very limited exceptions to the full course of study rule and the criteria are very strict. Please contact advisor if you have questions about dropping below full-time status. You must obtain PRIOR written authorization from the International student advisor.

#### ABIDE BY U.S. FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

F-1 students may work no more than 20 hours per week on campus when classes are in session [8 CFR 214.2(f) (9)]. F-1 students cannot work off-campus (including credit-bearing internships off-campus) without PRIOR authorization from the ISA and the U.S. federal government. Opportunities for off-campus work are limited.

#### MAINTAIN REQUIRED HEALTH INSURANCE

F-1/J1 students must have approved health and accident insurance for themselves and any F-2/J-2 dependents throughout their stay in the United States.

Students must notify advisor whenever there is a change in academic program, program dates, or level of study.

F-1/J-1 Students should bring I-20/DS-2019 forms to the International Student Advisor prior to traveling outside the United States to see if an updated signature is required. A new form may need to be issued to you. If you will be traveling AND applying for a new visa, you will also want to request a letter of certification from your ISA, to verify that you are a full-time student.



### **NOTIFY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR (ISA) OF ANY ACCOMPANYING DEPENDENTS OR DEPENDENTS WHO WILL JOIN YOU LATER**

The ISA prepares visa documents for any dependents of F-1/J-1 students who will enter the United States on F-2 visas. The ISA is required to report biographical data on F-2/J-2 dependents to the U.S. federal government.

Periodically, a student will leave the University early or unexpectedly due to a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include early graduation, leave of absence, withdrawal, or termination. U.S. federal regulations require F-1 students to inform the ISA if they plan to leave the university before the expiration date of their I-20 form, as well as the reason for doing so.

### **APPLY FOR AN EXTENSION PRIOR TO THE I-20 EXPIRATION DATE**

Students must apply for an extension BEFORE I-20 form expires if he/she intends to stay at Westfield State University and cannot complete initial program by the date on the I-20 form. Requests for an extension may be submitted at any time up to thirty days prior to the completion date on the form.

### **OBTAIN TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION PRIOR TO LEAVING WESTFIELD STATE**

If you plan to transfer to another university in the United States you must inform the ISA of your final school choice by completing a “Transfer-out Form” so that your ISA can perform the “transfer out” in SEVIS and designate the school to which you will transfer.

### **DEPART THE U.S. WITHIN THE 60 DAY (F-1) GRACE PERIOD**

Students in F-1 status must depart the United States within 60 days of the completion of their program of study. The exceptions to this rule include those who have applied for Optional Practical Training before completing their program, are transferring to a new school, or have applied for a change of status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

*Important Note:* If you have any questions or concerns regarding your legal status in the United States, it is important to meet with the International Student Advisor .

## **DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR F-1/J-1 TRAVEL**

We want to ensure that in leaving and re-entering the U.S. you have all the necessary documents for re-entry. Please contact the IPO with any questions prior to leaving the country.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVEL**

F-1 and J-1 students and visiting scholars who leave the United States must have the following documents with them to be eligible to re-enter the U.S. in F or J status:

- Valid passport
- Valid (unexpired) U.S. visa stamp in your passport (except for Canadian citizens) (If you need a new visa stamp, plan to speak to someone at the IPO prior to traveling)
- Valid I-20 form for F-1 status, signed for travel on Page 3 by an advisor within the last year (six months for Canadian students and students on Post-completion Optional Practical Training—see note below)
- Valid DS-2019 form for J-1 status with current travel signature on the lower right hand side
- Evidence of financial funding (bring a copy of whatever funding is referenced on your I-20: TA/RA funding letter or bank statements for personal funds)
- Proof of enrollment (schedule or transcript). You can obtain a certificate of enrollment from the Registrar’s Office or, if you have your “A number” you can download it from the myWestfield website

### **SPOUSES AND CHILDREN**

F-2 or J-2 spouses and minor children who are not accompanied by the F-1 or J-1 student and visiting scholars must have:

- Valid passport
- Valid U.S. visa stamp (except for Canadian citizens)
- Valid separate Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Evidence of financial funding
- If the dependents have never been given an I-20 or DS-2019, then you need to see an advisor at the IPO



### TRAVELING WHILE ON F-1 POST-COMPLETION OPT

The following are the documents you will need to ensure entry to the U.S. while on Post-completion OPT:

- Valid passport
- Current unexpired F-1 visa stamp (except for Canadians)
- I-20 signed within the last 6 months
- EAD (OPT card) OR the receipt notice for your OPT application
- Job offer letter or letter confirming current employment Dependent Travel (F-2 and J-2)

### TRAVEL AND PORT OF ENTRY INFORMATION (CBP)

Every F and J student who comes to the United States, must first talk to a U.S. Customs and Protection (CBP) officer after arriving at the port of entry. A CBP officer determines if you can enter the United States by verifying your information and the purpose of your visit.

When you arrive, you will meet with a CBP officer for primary inspection. The officer will ask you questions, verify your documents, and decide whether to grant you entry. Some questions might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Why are you coming to the United States?
- How long do you plan to stay?
- Where you will stay?
- Can you financially support yourself while here?
- Do the documents you present match the purpose and intent of your visit?

These are important questions to answer accurately, so have this information prepared ahead of time. The best way to prepare is to have the information either from your school or from your visa appointment with the Department of State. You also should hand-carry your Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status,” proof of financial support, your F or J student visa, and contact information for your International Student Advisor (ISA)).

A CBP officer who cannot verify your information may refer you to secondary inspection—a more detailed process where the CBP officer can conduct additional research without delaying other travelers. A CBP officer who cannot verify information after secondary inspection may either deny admission into the United States or issue a Form I-515A, “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor.”

If CBP denies admission, person must immediately depart the United States. If CBP issues a Form I-515A, this form will allow temporary entry into the United States. You have 30 days to obtain and submit proper documentation to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. If you do not submit your documents within 30 days, you will no longer have permission to be in the U.S. and will be required to leave the U.S. immediately.

If you have questions, contact your International Student Advisor (ISA) or the SEVP Response Center at (703) 603-3400 or [sevp@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:sevp@ice.dhs.gov).

Here is what to do if CBP issues you a Form I-515A:

- Tell your International Student Advisor (ISA).
- You have 30 days from when you receive a Form I-515A to submit missing documents or information to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Collect all the required information and submit it.
- SEVP will process your documents and return the original copies to your ISA. If you have correctly submitted this information, SEVP also will send your school a letter of approval, and in the Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record” you receive will have an extended departure date. Get these documents from your advisor and keep them in a safe place.
- If you do not submit your documents within 30 days, you will no longer have permission to be in the U.S. and will be required to leave the United States immediately.

Here is what to do to avoid receiving a Form I-515A:

- Hand-carry all of your required documents: passport, valid Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status,” and proof of financial support.
- Bring evidence of acceptance to your school (e.g., an acceptance letter or recent tuition receipts), a receipt of payment for the I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee, and contact information for your ISA.
- Read through all of your paperwork to make sure it includes all the correct information.



### TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES DURING ACADEMIC VACATIONS

When you enter the U.S., an immigration inspector determines how long you may stay in the U.S. Your admission status is stamped on your passport when you are admitted. The stamp contains a valuable piece of information and must not be lost; the vital information is Duration of Status (D/S) below the entry date. Always keep a photocopy of both sides of the Departure section you receive on admittance.

Web references for further travel and status information:

[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) Department of Homeland Security  
[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) Citizenship and Immigration Service  
[www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) Customs and Border Protection  
[www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov) Immigration and Customs Enforcement

### HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS

As the holidays approach, you might be planning to travel outside of the United States and return to your home country. When you come back to start your next school term, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers will be at the port of entry to determine your reason for coming to the United States and inspect your documentation.

This process will be the same as when you first arrived in the United States. It is important that you hand-carry the following documents:

- Your valid passport
- Your signed Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status”
- Proof of financial support, which can be the same documents you provided at your original visa interview with the Department of State
- Evidence of acceptance to your school, for instance an acceptance letter or a recent tuition payment receipt
- Name and contact information (including a 24-hour emergency contact phone number) for your International Student Advisor (ISA)

If you are issued a Form I-515A, contact your ISA as soon as possible so he or she can help submit required paperwork to SEVP on time.

### TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

#### IMPORTANT ACRONYMS:

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
CBP	Customs and Border Patrol
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Database for F and J student visa holders
SEVP	Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. VISIT	U.S. Visitor and Immigration Status Indication Technology: New entry/exit system that uses biome-electronically authenticated documents in order to prevent entering the U.S. illegally.

### PASSPORT

Your passport identifies your country of nationality. Your passport should be valid for a minimum of six months into the future. A passport may be renewed from within the U.S.—contact your country’s embassy regarding the process.

### SEVIS FORM I-20

This form outlines your reason for being in the U.S.—to be a full-time student enrolled at Westfield State. It lists your major, your financial plan, and the length of your academic program. You are required to notify the IPO if information on this document changes.

The I-20 is an essential travel document in addition to your Passport, visa, and I-94 card and it must have a valid signature in order to allow your re-entry into the U.S. The only people who are allowed to sign it are called “s.” International Student Advisors (ISA) are allowed to sign and process F-1 paperwork and SEVIS data entry on behalf of a given institution.



**F-1 VISA**

The visa allows you to enter the country, and it indicates your non-immigrant status at the time of entry.

All Westfield State international students enter the U.S. on an F-1 visa.

F-1 visas cannot be renewed from within the U.S. With an F-1 visa, students may travel to Canada, Mexico and adjacent islands for less than 30 days with an expired visa. Please contact the International Student Advisor for additional information.

**I-94 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD**

Upon entry in the U.S., the officer will stamp your passport with a stamped “F-” and “D/S” notation. D/S means that you are allowed to remain in the U.S. as long as your I-20 dates are valid and you are enrolled full-time at the issuing institution.

To access your I-94 form,  
go to: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>

**GRACE PERIOD**

F-1 students have a 60-day grace period following completion of study or completion of Optional Practical Training to 1) depart the U.S., 2) transfer to another institution, or 3) change status. If you terminate your studies before completion of your academic program, you do NOT receive a 60-day grace period. You MUST notify the International Student Advisor BEFORE terminating your studies in order to receive a 15-day grace period in which to depart the U.S. F-1 students who do not notify their International Student Advisor before termination of their studies receive no grace period and must leave the U.S. immediately.

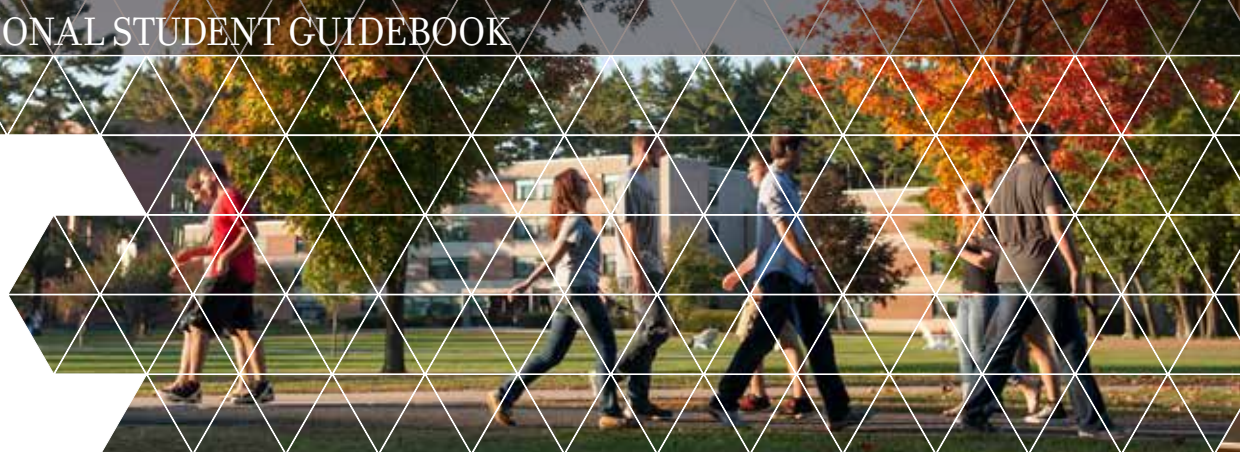
**TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION**

As an international student, you must notify the International Student Advisor prior to transferring from Westfield State University to another institution. You will not be able to receive an I-20 from the new school unless the following steps are completed:

- Notify the International Student Advisor of your intent to transfer and provide the name of the new school to which you intend to transfer.
- The advisor will update your record in SEVIS as a “transfer out” and indicate the name of the school to which you intend to transfer, along with a release date. The release date is usually the last day of a semester or the date of expected transfer. You may request that the IPO cancel the “transfer out” at any time prior to the release date. As of the release date, the new school will have full access to your SEVIS record and assumes responsibility for you, at which time the new school will issue you a SEVIS Form I-20.
- You must contact the international office at the new school within 15 days of the start date listed on the SEVIS I-20 to avoid violating your status.
- The new school will verify enrollment with SEVIS, thereby acknowledging that you have completed the transfer process; and the new school must note in the remarks section of your SEVIS Form I-20 that the transfer has been completed, indicating the date, and returning the I-20 to you.

**TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION**

If you are in F-1 status, attending another U.S. institution, and will not leave the country before beginning your program at Westfield State University, you will need to do a transfer through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Please be sure to inform the Westfield State Admissions Office of your current immigration status. Be advised that failure to transfer properly could jeopardize your student status in the U.S.



## Getting Here

### YOU'VE GOT YOUR F-1/J-1 STUDENT VISA, NOW WHAT?

#### PLAN YOUR TRAVEL

- Order flight ticket
- Inform the International Programs Office of your arrival information
- Make arrangements for temporary housing (if arriving prior to August 24th)
- Make transportation arrangements if flying into an airport other than Bradley International Airport (BDL) in Hartford, Connecticut.

Please let the International Programs Office know immediately when you obtain your visa and what your flight plans are. All international/exchange students should confirm orientation and arrival dates with the International Programs Office before making travel arrangements.

*Please note:* If you are booking your return flight, you should consult the Westfield State University Academic Calendar to determine the last day of final exams before purchasing tickets.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

You have obtained your F-/J-1 student visa, made your flight arrangements, contacted the International Student Advisor and are coming for international student orientation. Here is what to expect when arriving at a U.S. port of entry.

When arriving at a U.S. port of entry

- Be sure to remember your I-20 and your passport.
- Do not enter on another school's certificate of eligibility.
- Do not attempt to enter the country on a visitor/tourist visa (B2).
- Expect to go through immigrations and customs when you reach the U.S. port of entry.
- You may be required to go through pre-inspection procedures at certain airports abroad.
- Expect to have your fingerprints and a digital photograph taken.

- At the immigrations booth you will have to present your I-20, your passport, and F-1 visa. New electronic I-94 procedures have been put into place at all air and sea ports. There will no longer be a paper I-94 stapled into the passport. Here is a detailed information sheet on how to access it electronically. <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/consent.html> The International Student Advisor will assist you when you arrive on campus. View more detailed information

Further port of entry information can be found on the Department of Homeland Security website.

#### GETTING TO WESTFIELD

Westfield State University is located in Westfield, Massachusetts. The campus is approximately one hour and 45 minutes west of Boston. For detailed directions to Westfield State University please check this website: [westfield.ma.edu/map-directions](http://westfield.ma.edu/map-directions)

When traveling to Westfield State University you should plan to bring the following items in your carry-on luggage:

- Passport, F-1 visa, I-20, and Westfield State University acceptance letter
- Small amount of cash
- Contact information for International Programs Office staff in case of problems or an emergency
- A change of clothes (in case of lost luggage)

#### BY AIR:

The closest airport is Bradley International Airport (BDL), located near Hartford, Connecticut (50km/30 miles from Westfield), about 40 minutes south of the University. It is served by most major airlines. If possible, arrange for Bradley Airport to be your port of entry to the United States, or arrange a connecting flight from your port of entry direct to Bradley International Airport. Flying into Bradley, rather than to Boston's Logan International Airport, gives you a shorter drive to Westfield and spares you city traffic congestion. Please check this website for airport information: [www.bradleyairport.com](http://www.bradleyairport.com)



When you arrive at Bradley, proceed to the baggage area located on the lower level. Then, take a bus to Springfield, Massachusetts and then transfer to a Westfield-bound bus. The total cost from Bradley to Westfield is approximately \$25 and will take about one hour. During the day, buses run frequently; at night, service is less frequent. Taxicab service from Bradley to Westfield State University costs approximately \$65, at night it costs \$95. There is also a very reliable van service called Michael's Limousine and Transportation Services: [www.michaels-limo.com/pickup](http://www.michaels-limo.com/pickup), or toll free at 1 (800) 533-8470.

*Please Note:* If you are a student participating in the Pick-up Program, you should make connections from any U.S. airport to Bradley International Airport. We will come to Bradley and meet you with a Westfield van and bring you to campus. You must arrive at Bradley on August 24 or 25, 2015 for us to meet you. We cannot go to another airport to meet you, nor can we come to Bradley on another day.

*If you fly to Boston's Logan International Airport*  
BOS/Boston Logan, [www.massport.com/logan](http://www.massport.com/logan)

Taxis, buses, and the Silver Line subway train leave from the lower level of each terminal. Buses and the Silver Line subway go to South Station in Boston, where you can board a bus to Westfield, via Springfield. The trip will take about three and one-half hours and costs approximately \$45. Check this website: [www.peterpanbus.com](http://www.peterpanbus.com). Please note: The last bus from Boston to Westfield is at 5:15 p.m. Taxi service from Logan Airport to Westfield costs approximately \$130.

*If you arrive in New York at the John F. Kennedy Airport*  
JFK/New York, [www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk](http://www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk).

If you are unable to get a connecting flight to BDL/Hartford, you may inquire about Connecticut Limousine (tel. 1-800-472-5466 or [www.ctlimo.com](http://www.ctlimo.com)) located at the Ground Transportation level at the Baggage Claim area of the terminal. Tickets cost \$85; it will take you to the Union Station in Hartford, Connecticut. Then, you will take a bus to Springfield, Massachusetts and finally to Westfield for \$30. Total travel time from JFK/New York to Westfield State University will be approximately five hours.

#### **BY BUS:**

Most major bus companies travel to the main bus terminal in Springfield, Massachusetts and require a simple transfer to a bus for Westfield. Ask about the bus route when you buy your

ticket. Buses run hourly from Springfield to Westfield. The ride takes about 30 minutes and costs \$10.

If you cannot take the Westfield State University-provided pick up you can contact:

- Valley Transporter (413) 253-1350  
([www.valleytransporter.com](http://www.valleytransporter.com))  
Submit a reservation request at least three days before the date and time of arrival
- Seemo Shuttle (800) 908-2829  
([www.seemoshuttle.com](http://www.seemoshuttle.com))

#### **TAXIS/CABS**

- City Cab (413) 568-6177
- American Knight and Car Limousine (413) 586-5466

#### **ORIENTATION**

To help with transition to the U.S. and to Westfield State University, there is a mandatory orientation for all international students (all visa holders) that is offered before the rest of the student body arrives. The International Student Orientation is scheduled in mid-January and at the end of August every semester. Information regarding the International Student Orientation Schedule will be emailed to you.

During the orientation you will be provided with helpful information on such topics as cultural adjustment, employment and taxes, how to maintain your visa status, academic expectations, and campus resources. At this event, you will be introduced to returning international students. You will learn about programs and be able to participate in workshops with other new students.

We recommend that you arrive at least two days before each orientation, but no later than the day before orientation. At which time the International Programs Office will provide transportation from Bradley International Airport (BDL), in Hartford, CT. We highly recommend that you use this airport, as it is only about 30 minutes from the University.

Students that are living on campus will be allowed to move into their campus housing two days before orientation. If you are arriving in the U.S. before that date, you will be responsible for your own accommodations.



## While You're Here

### WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

#### WHAT TO WEAR

When you arrive the weather will probably be around 80° F or 27 °C. In general, the weather is fairly warm through September and will then begin to get cooler. Because of its location in the northeast region of the country, winter temperatures often go below freezing, 32°F or 0°C, and Westfield State University will get a lot of snow between November and February. You will be able to purchase winter clothing here, or you may want to have some mailed from home. It is a good idea to pack clothes that can be layered, as you will be walking to classes on campus.

American students usually dress informally wearing jeans, t-shirts, button-down shirts, and sweatshirts. However, there will be occasions where you will want to dress up. This means a dress for young women and dress pants, dress shirt, and a tie for young men.

Suggested Clothing Includes:

- Sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets
- Long and short sleeved shirts/blouses
- Underwear, socks, and tights
- Skirts/dresses
- Pants, jeans, sweatpants, and shorts
- Pajamas, bathrobe
- Swim suits
- Sneakers, sandals, dress shoes, and boots (for rain or snow)
- Mittens, hats, and scarves
- Jewelry/accessories
- National or traditional dress

#### FOR YOUR ROOM

Pillow, blankets, sheets are essential items. (These items will be provided for your first week here, but will need to be returned to the University. We will go shopping as part of our Orientation.)

- Towels
- Hangers, laundry basket/bag
- Hair dryer (110 volt)
- Hair brush/ comb
- Prescription and over the counter medicines
- Toiletries: shampoo, soap, body lotions, lip balm, etc.
- Personal items from family and friends to make you feel at home
- A good dictionary/thesaurus
- Storage boxes/trunks
- Bulletin or message board for your door
- Gym bag (for overnight trips)
- Key chain
- USB thumb drive

Many of these items can be purchased upon arrival in Westfield at nearby stores. We will go shopping as part of our International Student Orientation.

Items that you cannot fit into luggage can be mailed to arrive one week ahead of time to the following address:

YOUR NAME (NEW STUDENT)

International Programs

Westfield State University

577 Western Avenue

P.O. Box 1630

Westfield, MA 01086-1630

#### WHAT ABOUT A COMPUTER?

High speed Internet/Wi-Fi is available in residence halls; there are also computer labs available for student use.



## Getting Around

### MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Massachusetts law requires all full-time students to have health insurance that meets specified minimum standards. Students at Westfield State University are required to purchase the University Health Plans policy and the fee for its cost will be charged automatically when registering for classes. The cost of the health insurance, this academic year, is \$1,864.

**EXCEPTIONS:** Students who do not want to purchase the Westfield State University policy must show proof they have adequate medical insurance to cover the full length of the academic term. Westfield State University strongly recommends that students' health insurance provide coverage at the following amounts:

- Medical Benefit per cause of at least U.S. \$100,000.
- Repatriation of remains coverage of at least U.S. \$25,000.
- Medical evacuation coverage of at least U.S. \$50,000.
- Deductible U.S. \$500.
- All benefits payable in the United States.
- Life Insurance will not be accepted.

This website explains basic coverage information for the insurance policy offered by Westfield State University:

[www.universityhealthplans.com/brochures\\_pdf/MSU\\_SOB1213.pdf](http://www.universityhealthplans.com/brochures_pdf/MSU_SOB1213.pdf)

Repatriation is covered under the Westfield State University policy.

Students who have comparable health and hospital insurance may be able to waive the Westfield State insurance if the insurance meets two important requirements:

1. coverage must meet the Massachusetts minimum standards, and
2. the insurance must cover students while they are in the U.S. "Coverage by insurance carriers outside the .S. and coverage by foreign national health service programs are deemed not to be comparable to coverage under a qualifying health insurance program." 114.6 CMR 3.04(3)(c).

For more information about the student health insurance program, please go to [www.universityhealthplans.com](http://www.universityhealthplans.com) or call at 1-800-437-6448.

### J-1 EXCHANGE STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to the Massachusetts State Health Insurance requirements, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) mandates specific health coverage for all J-1 Exchange Students. This is a separate requirement. For more information please contact the International Programs Office.

### WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY INSURANCE POLICY

The insurance policy offered by Westfield State University offers basic coverage.

The University insurance policy usually pays for:

- Illness and sickness
- Emergency Room visit (\$100 deductible if not admitted)
- Injuries not related to school sporting activities
- Pregnancy care
- Laboratory and X-ray costs
- Prescription drugs at 50%
- Ambulance—up to \$300
- Casts, splints, or crutches
- Rental of wheelchair or hospital bed
- Medical evacuation
- Repatriation

The University insurance policy does not pay for:

- Routine physical or health examinations
- Pre-existing injury or illness
- Elective (not necessary) surgery
- Anything to do with the teeth, jaw, or gums (will cover natural teeth if lost or injured in a non-sporting accident to a maximum of \$100 per tooth)
- Hearing aids, eyeglasses, contact lenses
- Birth control
- Sport injuries from school team



- Hang gliding, skydiving, or parachuting injuries
- Alcohol or drug related injuries or illness
- Accident resulting from having driven a car without a valid license
- Injury from act of war, or participation in a riot

#### HOW LONG AM I COVERED?

If you buy the University's insurance, you are covered from the first day of the academic year until the day before the next semester begins. After you complete your program at Westfield State University, your health insurance is valid for 30 days (after completion) only. You are not covered if you leave the United States.

#### HOW DO I FIND A DOCTOR?

The best way is to call your insurance company and ask them to help you. The University's insurance, and many other insurance companies, will pay more of the bill if you go to see a "network" or "preferred" doctor. If you go to a network doctor they recommend, you will save money. You can find the insurance company's phone number on the back of your insurance card. Call them and tell them what kind of doctor you want to see and where you live. They will find a doctor who is close to you.

Always carry your insurance card in your wallet. If you buy insurance from the school, then you will have a card that has the Westfield State University symbol on the front. Your insurance card will have your name in English on it. When your doctor asks for your insurance information, you can produce this card.

#### IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be registered at Westfield State University as a full-time student, every student must present a certificate of immunization to Health Services (for Day Division students) or to the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (for DGCE students). Students may be registered on the condition that the required documentation is provided within 30 days of registration.

All full- and part-time students attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange programs, at post-secondary institutions, must comply with immunization regulations.

The State of Massachusetts mandates that all university students be immunized against certain preventable diseases before arriving to Westfield State University. Immunizations include measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis B, and meningitis. The requirement includes two doses of measles vaccine, three doses of hepatitis B vaccine, and a tetanus/diphtheria vaccine within the past ten years. The University must ensure that all students are in compliance with this state-mandated immunization law; therefore, your enrollment process cannot be considered complete until the immunization requirements are fulfilled. Please see the Health Services website for additional information.

[westfield.ma.edu/student-life/health-services](http://westfield.ma.edu/student-life/health-services)

## BANKING INFORMATION

Banks offer several kinds of accounts where you can safely keep your money. You may want to compare the services and costs of a few banks before choosing one and opening a personal account.

If you want to open a bank account or utilize the services of banks in the area, you have a few options:

**Bank of America** (413) 572-3070  
10 Main Street, Westfield, MA

No minimum balance requirement—only an initial \$25 opening deposit required—and you will receive a free check card. There is a Bank of America ATM located inside the Westfield State University Campus Center across from the Service Window.

**Westfield Bank** (413) 568-1911  
141 Elm Street, Westfield, MA

Free Checking: \$25 minimum starting deposit, free checks, free debit/ATM card, no monthly service charges if you make at least one online bill payment per cycle.

**Berkshire Bank** (413) 564-6230  
31 Court Street, Westfield, MA

Featuring Free Checking: no minimum balance, no monthly fee, free debit/ATM card, free unlimited Internet banking. There is a Berkshire Bank ATM located inside the Dining Commons.

### WHAT TO BRING WHEN OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

- Money to deposit
- Your passport and one other form of identification
- Form I-94
- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
- Local mailing address: Be sure you know all address details (street name and dwelling number, apartment number, city/town, and zip code). Bring proof that this is your address. For instance, a signed lease contract or an envelope that was mailed to you at this address proves you live there.
- Your mother's maiden name: The bank will ask you for your mother's maiden name (your mother's family name before she was married) or some other family name. This name is used as a security check when you need to contact the bank with questions.
- Taxpayer Identification Number: required by some, but not all banks. The following are acceptable to use:
  - Social Security number (SSN): if you have applied but not yet received your SSN, bring your receipt notice.
  - Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN): Issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to those not eligible for a Social Security number. If you require an ITIN, you need to open your bank account prior to applying for an ITIN.
- Form W-8 BEN: for those not eligible for a Social Security number or ITIN.

### DRIVING

To drive legally in the United States, person must have a valid driver license. If student hold an international driver's license, he/she may drive in the United States for up to one year. For information on obtaining a driver's license, visit the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) website at: [www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com)

It is not legal to drive any motor vehicle without insurance. For more information visit the Insurance Information Institute website at: [www.iii.org/fact-statistic/auto-insurance](http://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/auto-insurance)

### DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

To obtain a driver's license, student must present a valid passport with U.S. visa, social security card (if one has been issued), I-20, and arrival and departure record printout. That record can be found at [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). Proof of attendance is required, your International Student Advisor will write a letter to confirm your attendance).

### OBTAINING A MASSACHUSETTS DRIVER'S LICENSE

The following is a summary of what most international students must do to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license at the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV).

Provide necessary proof of identification:

- International driver's license (if applicable)
- Passport
- Photo ID, your signature and date of birth
- Form I-20/Form DS-2019
- Proof of signature and date of birth
- Document proving Massachusetts (MA) residency

Proof of MA residency could be a utility bill showing your name and current address. Also, you will need a letter from your International Student Advisor (ISA) verifying your status and eligibility. This letter can be prepared for you in two business days.

- Social Security number (SSN) or an official denial letter from the Social Security Office no more than 30 days old is necessary.

A denial letter will be issued immediately at the Social Security office; a Social Security number is usually issued in approximately two weeks. Obtaining a denial letter does not affect your eligibility for a SSN in the future.

- Pass a written exam and eye test

The written exam and eye test can be taken without an appointment at any RMV between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If you pass the exams, you will get a driving learner's permit. Driving license manuals are available at the RMV to help you prepare for the written and road tests.

- Pass a road test



After you have earned your learner's permit, road tests to earn a driver's license, are by appointment only and must be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. At the time of the road test, you need to bring your completed application (obtained from the RMV); your learner's permit; payment for each scheduled road test; a registered, insured, and inspected vehicle; and, a sponsor. The sponsor must be at least 18 years of age, have at least one year of driving experience, and possess a valid U.S. driver's license issued by his/her home state. Foreign driver's license holders are NOT eligible to be sponsors. The only exception to this rule is in the case of a foreign license holder. If you have a valid out-of-country license from certain countries and a Massachusetts learner's permit, you may take the road test without a sponsor (please see RMV website). Many driving schools in Massachusetts offer private lessons and will sponsor a student for a driving test.

#### **COSTS FOR TESTING AND LICENSES**

- Learner's Permit (written/eye screening test): \$30
- Road Driving Test: \$20
- Driver's License: \$40; \$90 for out-of-state conversions

*(Fees are payable by cash, check, Visa or MasterCard)*

\*\*\*Please note that if you move after you obtain a MA license, you must inform the Registry of Motor Vehicles within 30 days of your move.\*\*\*

Nearest Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) Office:

RMV of Springfield, Massachusetts  
165 Liberty St.  
Springfield, MA 01129  
(617) 351-4500

## **OBTAINING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

Social Security Numbers (SSN) are unique identification numbers assigned by the United States federal government. They are required for those who are employed in the United States.

**Social Security Card:** All students and scholars who are actively employed on campus need to apply for a Social Security Card in order to be paid, and also for the purposes of filing tax forms at the end of the year. The Social Security number is used by the U.S. government to identify wage earners for tax purposes. Therefore, you must be a wage earner or you will generally not be approved for a Social Security number

Procedures for F-1 Visa students who have an on-campus job offer:

1. Obtain an on-campus employment letter form from the International Student Advisor and have the sponsoring office fill it out. This letter verifies your job offer and your valid immigration status.
2. Complete a Social Security (SS) Application Form, Item #3, select "legal alien allowed to work."
3. Bring forms to the International Student Advisor for review and, if approved, bring to the Social Security Office.

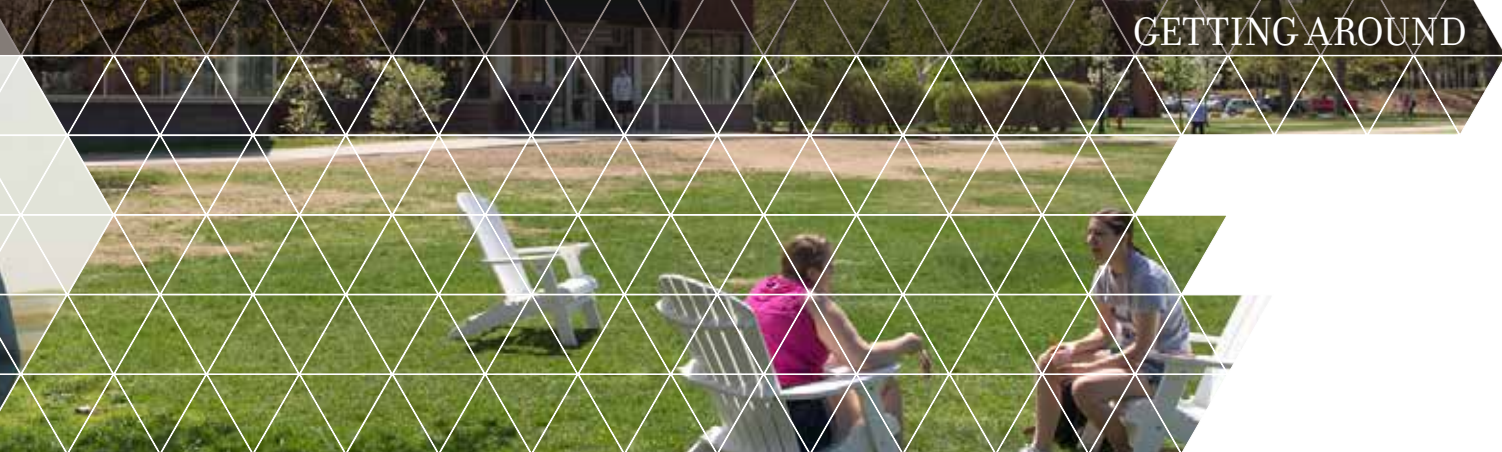
Note: Students who have on-campus employment cannot apply for a Social Security number more than 30 days in advance of the employment start date.

F-1 students, wishing to apply for a Driver's License who do not have an offer of employment or employment authorization may obtain a "Denial Letter" from the Social Security Office to use to apply for a Massachusetts Driver's License.

#### **NEAREST SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE:**

The Social Security office is located at 70 Bond Street, Springfield, MA 01104. Their phone is (413) 785-5725, or 1-800-772-1213; the office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please see advisor for more information or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)





## TAXES IN THE U.S.

### SALES TAXES

Most states in the United States charge a sales tax on tangible personal property and services, such as clothing, restaurant and fast food restaurant meals, services (haircutting), newspapers, books, toiletries, etc. Sales taxes vary from state to state, but average 5% or 6% in most places. Sales taxes are added at the cash register, so be prepared for your bill to be more than the price tag on an item.

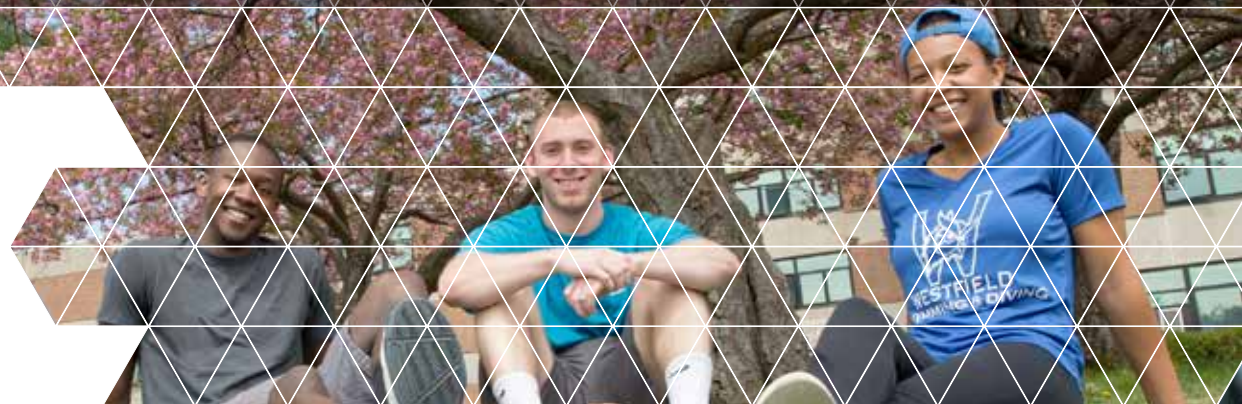
### IRS/TAXES

As an international student, you are responsible for filing a yearly tax return; even students who did not work or receive any taxable income must still file paperwork with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Below are very helpful information and explanations:

- [www.internationalstudent.com/tax](http://www.internationalstudent.com/tax)
- [www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Foreign-Students-and-Scholars](http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Foreign-Students-and-Scholars)
- [www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/Special-Instructions-for-Student-and-Exchange-Visitor-Program-\(SEVP\)-Institutions](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/Special-Instructions-for-Student-and-Exchange-Visitor-Program-(SEVP)-Institutions)





## Peer Mentor Program

Transitioning to life at Westfield State University can be confusing and challenging for many students. It is often hard to understand the departmental process and to access resources and support services. This can be particularly difficult for international students who may be coming from a very different cultural context than the one here at Westfield. The International Programs Office coordinates the Peer Mentor Program, which partners incoming International Students and National Students Exchange (NSE) students with returning U.S. students. You can participate in monthly on- and off-campus activities. New incoming International Students are partnered with a U.S. student, prior to your arrival, who will serve as your mentor. Your mentor will contact you via email before your arrival at Westfield State University.



### ABOUT THE IPO PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

#### IPO PEER MENTOR PROGRAM MISSION

The International Programs Peer Mentor Program is a bridge program that connects committed student mentors with you, an incoming international student, to improve your academic achievement, social competence, and to facilitate a smooth adjustment into your new environment. By sharing experiences and insights, mentors can ease the transition process for you by making deeper connections that enhance the quality of your experience.

#### IPO PEER MENTOR PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To help adjust and transition into Westfield State life smoothly and easily.
- To help to identify campus Resources in order to be academically successful.
- To provide a potential cultural informant to help navigate the nuances of American culture.
- To help students actively engage in and out of class and to facilitate involvement in extra-curricular clubs and student life activities.
- To allow mentor students an opportunity to offer guidance and serve as a member of a collaborative support system for students.
- To facilitate foundations for a long-term friendships.



*I think our mentors are well qualified and responsible. They are not only my mentors who can provide helpful information about our school, but also became my close friends who hung out together during our spare time. They helped me go through the period when I knew few people here and told me how to select classes for the next semester. Mentors are a great resource to have, especially for a new student, because their experience, guidance, and advice was very helpful.*

# Living In The United States

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

*(Adapted from NAFSA's International Student Handbook)*

Preparing yourself for a new and challenging intercultural experience takes a lot of strength and courage. Coming to the United States will provide you with opportunities to utilize many skills. There will be many things to learn about this new and unfamiliar culture at Westfield State University. With an open mind, sense of humor, patience, and curiosity, you will come to understand Americans, their country, and their culture, and you will gain new insights into your own culture and behavior as well. Your willingness to try new things will certainly make your time at Westfield and in the U.S. a rewarding and worthwhile experience.

Be curious and don't be afraid to ask questions and get genuine feedback about your interpretation of U.S. American customs, values, and behavior. Maintain your sense of humor. Be able to talk and laugh about your mistakes. Set realistic goals to avoid disappointment. It will take you longer to accomplish tasks in a new culture, academic environment, and in a new language. Be prepared to accept setbacks should they occur. When living in a new culture it is natural to experience difficulties and occasional setbacks. Remain flexible in your attitudes. Look for the logical explanations for host behavior and values. Explore your new physical environment—go on walks or take the bus to new areas. Read the local news. Watch people's behaviors and note what you observe. Go to events where you can meet and interact with new people. Participate in different activities both on- and off-campus. Join student groups. Realize that it is natural to miss your family, friends, and home. Talk about these feelings with someone with whom you feel comfortable. Find friends to talk with who are from your home country.

Understanding Americans: Some Key Values (Adapted from NAFSA's *International Student Handbook and American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States* by Gary Althen.)

### AMERICAN CULTURE

Americans do not usually see themselves, when they are in the United States, as representatives of their country. They see themselves as individuals who are different from

all other individuals, whether those others are Americans or foreigners. If you ask them to tell you something about "American culture," they may be unable to answer and they may even deny that there is an "American culture."

There are certain common values that are part of American culture:

- Individualism and privacy
- Equality
- Informality
- Orientation towards future achievement
- Change and progress
- Goodness of humanity
- Time as a resource to be used
- Action
- Work and materialism
- Directness and assertiveness

Being aware of these, as well as your own cultural values during your interactions with Americans, may help you to better understand many aspects of American behavior and thinking otherwise may not make sense. Some of these values are described in more detail below.

### INDIVIDUALISM AND PRIVACY

The most important thing to understand about Americans is probably their devotion to "individualism." They have been trained, since very early in their lives, to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies. They have not been trained to see themselves as members of a close-knit, tightly interdependent family, religious group, tribe, nation, or other collective unit.

Closely associated with the value they place on individualism is the importance Americans assign to privacy. Americans assume that people need some time for themselves or some time alone to think about things or recover the psychological energy they expend.

### INFORMALITY

Americans' notions of equality lead them to be quite informal in their general behavior and in their relationships with other people. People from societies where general behavior is more formal than it is in America are struck by the informality

of American speech, dress, and posture. Idiomatic speech (commonly called “slang”) is heavily used on most occasions, with formal speech reserved for public events and fairly formal situations. People of almost all socioeconomic classes can be seen in public wearing jeans, sandals, or other informal attire. People slouch down in chairs or lean on walls or furniture when they talk, rather than maintaining an erect posture.

### TIME AS A RESOURCE

For Americans, time is a “resource” that, like water or coal, can be used well or poorly. “Time is money,” they say. “You only get so much time in this life; you’d best use it wisely.” Americans see things, the future will not be better than the past or the present, unless people use their time for constructive, future-oriented activities. Thus, Americans admire a “well-organized” person who has a written list of things to do and a schedule for doing them. The ideal person is punctual (that is, arrives at the scheduled time for a meeting or event) and is considerate of other people’s time (that is, does not “waste people’s time” with conversation or other activities that have no visible beneficial outcome).

The American attitude toward time is not necessarily shared by others, especially non-Europeans. Non-Americans are more likely to conceive time as something that is simply around them, not something they can “use.” One of the more difficult things to which many foreign businessmen and students must adjust in the U.S. is the notion that time must be saved whenever possible and used wisely every day.

### DIRECTNESS AND ASSERTIVENESS

Americans generally consider themselves to be frank, open, and direct in their dealings with other people. Americans will often speak openly and directly to others about things they dislike. They will try to do so in a manner they call “constructive,” that is, in a manner that the other person will not find offensive or unacceptable. If they do not speak openly about what is on their minds, they will often convey their reactions in nonverbal ways (without words, but through facial expressions, body positions, and gestures). But, understand that Americans are often less direct and open than they realize. There are, in fact, many restrictions on Americans’ willingness to discuss things openly.

Americans are not taught to mask their emotional responses. They do not think it is improper to display these feelings, at least within limits.

Americans are much less concerned with “face” (that is, avoiding embarrassment to themselves or others) compared to other cultures. To them, being “honest” is usually more important than preserving harmony in interpersonal relationships.

### WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

At some point during your stay, you may be unable to find an answer you need. The International Programs Office (IPO) is always available to answer any type of question you may have; you should feel free to contact the IPO if you are unsure about where to go for help. The International Programs Office is willing to discuss any issues that you may have—even an extremely personal issue that other societies discuss only within their family. All discussions are kept confidential, and if we are unable to provide the assistance needed, you will be referred to the appropriate office or person on campus, who can help you. It is important that you contact the IPO when you first have concerns that a problem might be developing, rather than waiting until the problem becomes extremely serious. The IPO has a number of mentors who can help you with questions regarding student groups, as well as campus and community resources.

The International Programs Office also provides assistance with all F-1/J-1 immigration issues, visa, travel, and serves as a liaison between student and campus resources. One example: we work closely with the Counseling Center on campus. The Counseling Center generally operates on a solution-focused brief therapy model in which the counselor actively assists students in defining the problem, identifying specific goals, and producing change. The focus is on identifying individual’s strengths, resources, and competencies as a foundation for problem-solving. Counselors work with students to help find the most efficient solutions for problems or concerns.

Appointments are available during the academic year. For more information, please visit website at: [westfield.ma.edu/student-life/counseling-center](http://westfield.ma.edu/student-life/counseling-center)

## FITTING IN WITH YOUR AMERICAN PEERS

### TIMELINESS

If you hope to meet with someone (a faculty/ staff member, doctor, etc.) you will most likely need to make an appointment. Once your appointment has been made, the professional you are meeting with will set this time aside for you. It is extremely important that you arrive on time and are prepared for your meeting. Should you need to change the meeting, be sure to notify him/her by email or telephone.

### PERSONAL SPACE

The space between two people conversing will vary depending on their cultural background. In the United States, you will find that most people will stand about a foot away from each other when talking. Most often you will not physically contact each other during conversation. If you have a question about how a person should be addressed, it is best to be honest and ask the person.

### GREETINGS

While living in the United States, you will notice that most greetings will be a friendly “Hello” or “Hi,” and a handshake. The question, “How are you?” is mainly used as a greeting, and can be answered, “Hi, I’m fine, thank you.” As you get to know some of your peers, you may find that they will hug each other upon greeting.

### SMOKING AND DRINKING

Smoking is not allowed in public buildings in the state of Massachusetts and you must be 18 years old with proper identification to purchase any tobacco product. The legal drinking age is 21 years old. This means that you must have proper identification to purchase and consume alcohol in any public place in the United States. Some area restaurants and bars may only allow adults who are 21 years of age or older. This information will be posted on the door or entry of each restaurant/bar.

**Westfield State University is a smoke free campus.**

### COMMUNICATION

Most students at Westfield State University use email and cellular phones as their primary methods of communication.

### EMAIL

All students at Westfield State are given an email address for personal and academic use. Your username and temporary password will be assigned to you and found in your campus mailbox upon arrival at the University. Faculty and staff of the University will expect that you check your university email regularly; most will use that as their primary contact with you. There are also many options for free email addresses through domains such as Google, Yahoo, MSN, and Hotmail.

### CELLULAR PHONES

Cellular phones are available, with or without contracts, through many surrounding carriers/vendors. They include:

No Contract Carriers:

- CampusSIMs ([campussims.com](http://campussims.com))
- Target (Holyoke Mall), Best Buy (Holyoke Mall) \*Phone prices range from \$15-\$220; Airtime/Texting/Minutes prices are determined by service desired. RadioShack (Holyoke Mall)\* Phone prices range from \$10-\$180; Airtime/Texting/Minutes prices determined by service desired.
- AT&T ([www.attnocontract.com](http://www.attnocontract.com))
- Verizon Wireless (Holyoke Mall) \*Phone prices range from \$50-\$185; Airtime/Texting/Minutes prices range by service desired.

Contract Carriers:

- Verizon Sprint AT&T

*\*Most Contract Carriers will require a Social Security Number.*

### POSTAL SERVICE

All students will be assigned a campus mailbox used for on-campus and off-campus mail. Incoming packages will be stored in the Mailroom until you are ready to pick it up. Any mail that you need to send can be done through the Mailroom located in the basement floor of the Parenzo Hall.

### FAXES

If you need to send or receive messages, you can use the fax number of the International Programs Office: (413)572-8967. All incoming faxes should include “Attention: International Programs Office.”



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on cultural adjustment in America, please visit the websites below or ask at the International Programs Office

- [www.edupass.org](http://www.edupass.org)
- [educationusa.state.gov](http://educationusa.state.gov)
- [www.internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com/articles/c\\_american\\_culture.php](http://www.internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com/articles/c_american_culture.php)

## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

One way to make some money for expenses and get real life work experience is to find a job on campus. Students might find quite a few interesting opportunities available on campus that will look great on a resume!

### BENEFITS OF A CAMPUS JOB

Getting a job on your campus carries the following benefits:  
**No travel time:** means you can schedule work around your class schedule. It's the ultimate job convenience: a way to get involved in campus life and to be an active member of the academic community. **Pursue your interests and goals:** in some cases, you may be able to get a job in the department of your academic major, as a receptionist or assistant. Check with the department head or your advisor for even the smallest job opportunity.

### TUTORING

If you are skilled in a particular field, why not offer your services on-campus as a tutor? Opportunities are open in many departments and the library. Tutors have an edge; they get to apply their skills, meet and help peers, and earn money.

### CAMPUS RESIDENT ADVISOR

Another way to really connect with your campus and make some money is to serve as a Resident Advisor (RA). Student live in the residence halls alongside other students, answer their questions, show them around campus, and make sure they abide by the rules.

### FOOD SERVICES

Food service jobs may seem lackluster, but it has been rewarding to those that have done it. Food service is a great preparatory 'course' for life, and the pay on campus is usually very competitive.

### TRUST FUND POSITIONS

Any student is eligible for a trust-funded position, regardless of their financial aid status, provided they are authorized to work in the United States. Trust fund positions are posted in the Student Services/Employment section of the "myWestfield" student portal. Students are responsible for applying for positions and once hired, all required paperwork must be completed and verified prior to beginning employment.

F-1/J-1 visa students who are in status are permitted to work on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and up to 40 hours per week during the breaks.

### CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is employment, which is an "integral part of the established curriculum." Such training is defined as, "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." Student must have been lawfully enrolled full-time for at least nine consecutive months before applying for CPT. The employment must be directly related to the field of study.

Students who use less than 12 months of CPT will retain their full eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). When employed under CPT, you are not typically required to pay social security taxes or Medicare. For more information, contact the International Student Advisor .

### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) provides an opportunity for F-1 visa holders to gain up to one year of experience in their field of study while school is in session (if training does not exceed 20 hours per week), and/or after graduation. Most students choose to save OPT until after graduation. Contact advisor for more information.

If you are currently on OPT and you recently got a job or your employer information has changed, please report your employer information to the International Student Advisor.

## OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Employment Option	Eligibility	Time Limit	Hours allowed per week
<b>F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</b>	<p>At least one academic year in F-1 status.</p> <p>Must have employment offer related to field of study.</p> <p>Must be an established part of curriculum or an internship for credit.</p>	<p>Can be authorized in one-year increments up to the program end date, but a year or more of full-time CPT makes you ineligible for OPT.</p> <p>CPT cannot be authorized after graduation.</p>	<p>Part-time (20 hours or less per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week).</p>
<b>F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)</b>	<p>At least one academic year in F-1 immigration status.</p>	<p>One year per degree level.</p> <p>Extensions are possible (see OPT page for details).</p> <p>Can work before program end date or after graduation.</p>	<p>20 hours per week while you are enrolled in classes.</p> <p>40 hours per week during holidays and summer vacation.</p>
<b>F-1 Economic Hardship</b>	<p>At least one year in F-1 status.</p> <p>Must prove economic hardship due to unforeseen events.</p> <p>Must have tried other employment.</p>	<p>Granted in one-year increments, which can be applied for until program end date.</p>	<p>20 hours per week while you are enrolled in classes.</p> <p>40 hours per week during holidays and summer vacation.</p>
<b>F-1 International Organization</b>	<p>F-1 immigration status (no waiting period).</p>	<p>Granted in one-year increments, which can be applied for until program end date.</p>	<p>Part-time (20 hours or less per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week).</p>
<b>J-1 Academic Training</b>	<p>Must have offer of employment related to your field of study.</p>	<p>Depends on the length of study. Can be approved for the same amount of time as the length of study (before or after completion) up to 18 months.</p>	<p>Part-time (20 hours or less per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week). Part-time academic training counted as full-time.</p>

## MAJOR HOLIDAYS

If there is a religious holiday that is celebrated in your country and you do not feel that you should go to class on that day, you may ask your professors if they will allow you to miss class that day. Although most professors will be understanding, it is up to the professor whether or not the absence will affect your grade. Major American holidays are listed below. Government offices and businesses will be closed on those dates that are noted as official holidays.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY: JANUARY 1**

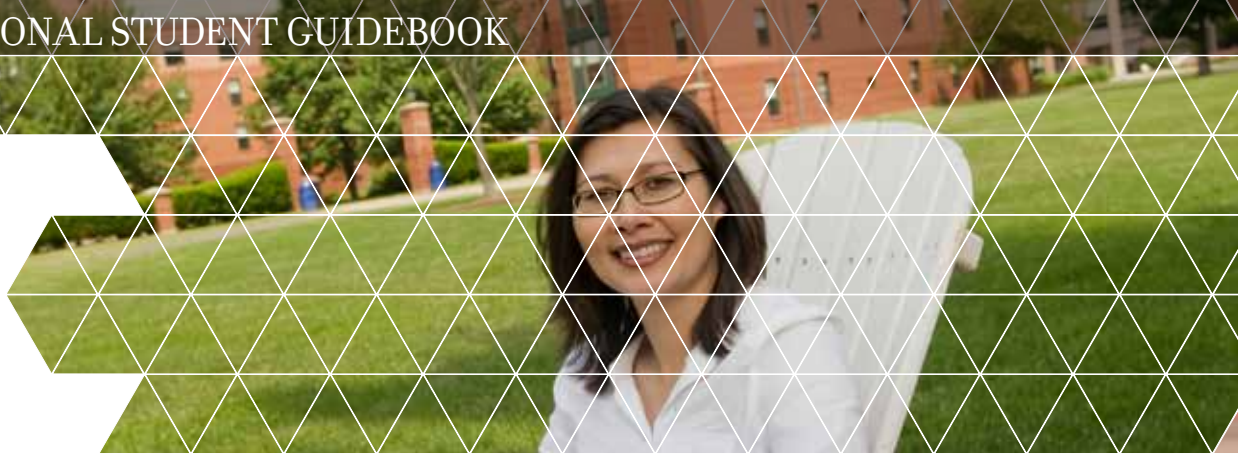
This is an official holiday for schools, offices, and stores. New Year's Eve, December 31, is more important to Americans than New Year's Day itself. Everyone gathers with family and friends to ring out the old and ring in the new—an expression that reflects the old custom of ringing church bells to greet the new year.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY: THIRD MONDAY IN JANUARY**

This official holiday began in 1986. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized and led the civil-rights movement in America during the 1960s.

**GROUNDHOG DAY: FIRST TUESDAY IN FEBRUARY**

This day is not an official holiday. The groundhog is a small burrowing animal that hibernates during the winter months. Legend has it that he emerges on February 2nd each year. If he sees his shadow (on a sunny day) he will be frightened and return to this burrow. This is supposed to indicate six more weeks of wintry weather. If he doesn't see his shadow, then spring should arrive soon!



#### **PRESIDENT'S DAY: THIRD MONDAY IN FEBRUARY**

This is an official holiday in many states, and celebrates both George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Abraham George Washington, commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Army that freed America from the colonial rule of England. Washington was also the first president of the United States. Lincoln was president during the Civil War (1861–1865), a period that had a profound effect on the history of the nation. Believing that a house divided against itself cannot stand, Lincoln acted to free the slaves and bring the seceded states back into the Union. He was the sixteenth president of the United States.

#### **VALENTINE'S DAY: FEBRUARY 14**

This is not an official holiday. It is a romantic holiday celebrated by sending cards and giving candy or flowers to special close friends and partners.

#### **SAINT PATRICK'S DAY: MARCH 17**

This is not an official holiday. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, and this holiday was brought to America by Irish immigrants. People celebrate this holiday by wearing something green and getting together with friends to celebrate and sing Irish folk songs.

#### **APRIL FOOL'S DAY: APRIL 1**

This is not an official holiday. As in many other countries, this day is marked by the custom of playing harmless jokes on friends or colleagues.

#### **EASTER: A SUNDAY IN MARCH OR APRIL**

This is not an official holiday. It is a religious holiday for Christians who believe that on this day Christ rose from the dead. Many old traditions are now connected with Easter, including the decoration of brightly colored eggs and giving gifts and candy to children.

#### **PATRIOT'S DAY: THIRD MONDAY IN APRIL**

This holiday commemorates the day in 1776 when the Revolutionary War started. There are few celebrations, but both Maine and Boston run marathons on this day. It is an official holiday only in Massachusetts and Maine.

#### **MOTHER'S DAY: SECOND SUNDAY IN MAY**

This is not an official holiday. On this day, Americans honor their mothers by sending flowers, buying small gifts, and taking their mothers out to eat so that they don't have to cook or work around the house.

#### **FATHER'S DAY: THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE**

This is not an official holiday. Fathers are honored on this day. Children give them cards and gifts.

#### **MEMORIAL DAY: LAST MONDAY IN MAY**

This is an official holiday. Memorial Day is the day when Americans remember those who died in military service to their country. Many families visit graves and decorate them with flowers. The day is also marked with patriotic parades. This day is considered the beginning of the summer season.

#### **INDEPENDENCE DAY: JULY 4**

This is an official holiday. Independence Day commemorates the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The holiday is celebrated all over the country with picnics, political speeches, and community get-togethers that culminate in fireworks displays.

#### **LABOR DAY: FIRST MONDAY IN SEPTEMBER**

This is an official holiday. This holiday was established in recognition of the labor movement's contribution to the productivity of the country. This day is the last holiday of the summer season and is celebrated with picnics and other outings.

#### **PATRIOT DAY: SEPTEMBER 11TH**

In the United States, Patriot Day occurs on September 11th of each year, in memory of the nearly three thousand people who died in terror attacks at the World Trade Center in New York City on that date in 2001. The United States flag is flown at half-staff and on all U.S. government buildings and establishments, home and abroad. Americans observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 A.M. (Eastern Daylight Time) marking the first plane crash on Sept. 11, 2001.

*Note:* Patriot Day is different than Patriot's Day, a holiday celebrated in Massachusetts and Maine only to commemorate the Battle of Lexington and Concord during the Revolutionary War.





### **ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR: LATE SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER**

Rosh Hashanah, commemorating the creation of the world, is the first of the Ten Days of Penitence, which end with Yom Kippur, the most solemn of Jewish holidays. For Rosh Hashanah, families gather for a feast in which an apple is dipped in honey to express hope for a sweet year ahead. In Judaism, Yom Kippur is a day of judgment. On the eve of Yom Kippur, Jews ask forgiveness from those they may have wronged. The keynotes of the holiday are fasting and a collective confession, repeated several times throughout the day.

### **COLUMBUS DAY: SECOND MONDAY IN OCTOBER**

This is an official holiday that honors Christopher Columbus, the explorer credited with discovering America.

### **HALLOWEEN: OCTOBER 31**

This is not an official holiday. This was originally a religious holiday, but its religious character has been lost in the United States, and it is now celebrated mostly as a children's holiday. Traditions include carving out pumpkins with funny or scary faces, as well as dressing up in costumes and going around the neighborhood to receive candy treats. When people come to the door, children say, "trick or treat," meaning "if you don't give me a treat, I will trick you." Neighbors are ready with treats to distribute to these visiting children.

### **VETERANS DAY: NOVEMBER 11**

This is an official holiday. On this day, Americans honor the veterans of all wars. This is also the day when the Armistice was signed after World War I.

### **THANKSGIVING DAY: FOURTH THURSDAY IN NOVEMBER**

This is an official holiday. The first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1621 to give thanks for the bountiful harvest and their triumph of survival over the wilderness. Now, it is a time when Americans give thanks for the good life they enjoy. They celebrate by getting together with family to eat traditional food such as turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie. Since this is the busiest travel time in the U.S., the day following is sometimes a holiday as well so that people can join their families in other cities.

### **HANUKKAH: EIGHT DAYS, USUALLY IN DECEMBER**

This is one of the less solemn of the Jewish holidays, but one widely observed even by nonreligious Jews. The only Jewish holiday connected with war, Hanukkah celebrates the victory of Jewish Maccabees over their Syrian ruler in 1678 B.C. Hanukkah is marked with parties, games, gifts for children, and the lighting of the nine candles of the menorah.

### **CHRISTMAS: DECEMBER 25**

This is an official holiday. Many people regard Christmas as the most important holiday of the year, with the holiday season extending from a few days before Christmas to New Year's Day. Although its origins are religious in nature, it is a holiday celebrated by almost everyone in the country. Family members travel great distances to be together on this day on which gifts are exchanged, and a traditional dinner is shared. Even families who do not have strong religious convictions decorate a Christmas tree and join in the festivities of the Christmas season.

## **WHERE TO EAT IN WESTFIELD**

The Dining Commons at Westfield State University offers a wide variety of meals, whether you're looking for a hot home-style entrée, a burger, a salad, or dessert. If you want to travel into town for a meal, here are some great, local options:

- Clemenza's Brick Oven Pizza & Cafe: 91 Elm Street, Westfield • (413) 572-2536 • [www.clemenzasbrickoven.com](http://www.clemenzasbrickoven.com)
- Mama Cakes: 40 Elm Street, Westfield • (413) 642-3130 • [www.visitmamacakes.com](http://www.visitmamacakes.com)
- Pasquale's Italian Family Restaurant: 288 Elm Street, Westfield • (413) 562-5009 • [www.pasqualeswestfield.com](http://www.pasqualeswestfield.com)
- Santiago Family Restaurant: 34 Franklin Street, Westfield • (413) 562-0210
- Two Rivers Burritos: 36 Elm Street, Westfield • (413) 579-5469 • [www.facebook.com/TwoRiversBurritoCo](http://www.facebook.com/TwoRiversBurritoCo)
- Tavern: 2 Broad Street, Westfield • (413) 562-0335 • [www.tavernrestaurantwestfield.com](http://www.tavernrestaurantwestfield.com)
- Wings Over Westfield: 29 School Street, Westfield • (413) 562-9464 • [www.wingsoverwestfield.com](http://www.wingsoverwestfield.com)

## OWL BUCKS

Your student I.D. card serves as your official University identification card, meal card, and optionally, as a declining balance card for making purchases using “Owl Bucks”. Learn more at [westfield.ma.edu/offices/campus-card-program](http://westfield.ma.edu/offices/campus-card-program).

### SPENDING OWL BUCKS

You can spend Owl Bucks:

- Food service venues: Dining Commons, Pandini’s, 333 Garden Café, Quixote’s, Dunkin’ Donuts and Subway
- The Bookstore, and many campus vending machines and laundry rooms
- Owl Bucks purchases made at on-campus food service venues receive a 10% discount.
- At many off campus partners. Go to [www.owlbucks.com](http://www.owlbucks.com) for a current listing of off campus partners.

## Helpful Phone Numbers

**PUBLIC SAFETY (ON-CAMPUS EMERGENCIES):**  
**(413) 572-5262**

**OFF-CAMPUS EMERGENCIES: 911**

### USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS ON CAMPUS

Admissions	(413) 572-5218
Alumni Relations	(413) 485-7355
Bookstore	(413) 572-3100
Campus/I.D. Card	(413) 572-8184
Campus Center	(413) 572-5648
Career Center	(413) 572-5206
Counseling Center	(413) 572-5790
Graduate and Continued Education	(413) 572-8020
Health Services	(413) 572-5415
Help Desk	(413) 572-5528
International Programs	(413) 572-8819
Library	(413) 572-5231
Parking	(413) 572-5400
Reading and Writing Center	(413) 572-5569
Registrar	(413) 572-5218
Residential Life	(413) 572-5402
Student Government Association	(413) 572-5548
Student Support Services	(413) 572-5462
Wellness Center	(413) 572-8415

**FOR ADDITIONAL CAMPUS TELEPHONE NUMBERS,  
CALL (413) 572-5300**



## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE

Parenzo Hall Lobby, Room 130  
Email: [ipo@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:ipo@westfield.ma.edu)  
Phone: (413) 572-8819  
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