Information for New International Students

Class of 2020

Office of International Student Services

www.colgate.edu/oiss
Welcome, Class of 2020!

Congratulations on your admission to Colgate University! We are eager to welcome you to Hamilton, New York and assist in your transition to university life in the United States. This is an exciting venture bound to have its challenges but we are confident you will find a home within the Colgate community where you will develop meaningful relationships, grow in knowledge, and thrive. The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is here to support you throughout your time at Colgate and beyond. We care deeply about our students and understand the unique challenges international students face when coming to a new country to pursue their educational and personal goals. Whether it is through immigration advising, fun activities and excursions, or seeing each other at an event on campus, we hope to get to know you and offer our support.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide important information that will help you prepare for your arrival to campus and first weeks at Colgate. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us!

Makiko Filler, Assistant Director of OISS

oiss@colgate.edu
+1 315 228 6016
www.colgate.edu/oiss

Office of International Student Services (OISS)

At the Office of International Student Services, we strive to provide exceptional immigration services and support to international students, as well as to enhance the Colgate student experience by promoting understanding and awareness of cultural issues with the goal of cultivating informed global citizenship. Studying at Colgate as an international student is exciting and rewarding, but there are also many governmental, cultural, and even personal obstacles to overcome. We provide the following services to help you with these challenges so you can have an excellent experience at Colgate: F-1 student immigration advising and support, SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) administration, activities and local excursions, International Student Orientation (ISO), cultural adjustment support, campus programs and events, advocacy for international students.

If you have questions about your immigration status, American culture, or adjusting to life in the U.S, or if you are homesick or just want to say hello, we welcome you to stop by OISS to chat. We are located in the Dean’s Office in Lathrop Hall 103.
Arrival Information

International Student Arrival Day: **August 16**

International Student Orientation: **August 17-20**

Getting to Campus

Colgate University is located in Hamilton, NY, which is an hour’s drive southeast of Syracuse. Due to its rural location, transportation from the airport to Hamilton can be very costly, with private taxi fares exceeding USD $200. As a service to international students, OISS will arrange for transportation for students arriving to Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR) on August 16, between the hours of 7:00 am - midnight. With the exception of flight delays, if you will arrive outside of the scheduled arrival time, you will be responsible for your own transportation to Colgate. Please note that Colgate is a 5 hour’s drive from New York City, so if you are considering flying into JFK airport, you should book a connecting flight to SYR as OISS will not offer transportation from JFK. Those driving to campus should plan to arrive to campus on August 16 before 4:00pm.

Arrival Survey

Once you have made your travel plans, please take the OISS Arrival Survey at [bit.ly/2020arrivalsurvey](bit.ly/2020arrivalsurvey) no later than August 1.

International Student Orientation (ISO)

International Student Orientation (ISO) is an exciting experience designed to prepare you for life at Colgate as an international student. At ISO, the OISS staff, as well as current student leaders and other Colgate faculty and staff, will help you get acquainted with campus and will cover important topics such as immigration regulations, taxes, services offered at Colgate, adjusting to life in the USA, American classroom expectations, and opportunities for campus involvement. There will be several social events and activities scheduled to give you an opportunity to form friendships with your fellow international students. We will also organize a trip to local stores so that you can purchase a cell phone and shop for essentials for your room. Meals will be provided for you during scheduled ISO activities. ISO will take place starting with your arrival on August 16 through August 20, then you will join the rest of the Class of 2020 for Orientation on Sunday, August 21.

Mandatory Check-In with OISS

As an international student in F-1 visa status, federal regulations require that you check in with OISS so that your SEVIS record can be “registered”/activated. This check-in process is called “SEVIS Registration.” We have scheduled designated check-in
times during ISO for you to finish your SEVIS Registration. During this time, we will review your immigration documents, answer any immediate questions you may have, and make a copy of your documents for your immigration file. You will need to do “SEVIS Registration” at the beginning of each semester you are at Colgate.

Health Services and Medical Insurance

Student Health Services operates a clinic on campus to provide routine medical care and promote wellness through education to Colgate students. You may visit Student Health Services regarding illness, injury, testing, immunizations, women’s and men’s health issues and testing, prescriptions, and many more, at little to no cost. They are a fabulous resource and you will have the opportunity to meet with the staff of Student Health Services during ISO.

Mandatory Health Insurance

All international students are required to have U.S. health insurance coverage. Unless you already have comparable coverage with a U.S. insurance company, you will need to purchase Colgate’s student health insurance policy. Policy information will be made available on the Student Health Services page at bit.ly/colgatehealth. You will need to cover the cost of insurance for the 2016/2017 academic year out of pocket, above and beyond any financial aid award and/or family contribution. Health insurance and health care in the U.S. can be confusing, so take a moment to explore the information and videos at bit.ly/internationalinsurance to learn more.

Required Medical History Report and Immunizations

Colgate University requires that all students submit a completed medical history report and receive the immunizations listed on the form. If the immunizations are unavailable or costly in your home country, you will have the opportunity to get your immunizations from Student Health Services during ISO. The cost will be covered by your student health insurance if you are enrolled in Colgate’s student health insurance policy. All students must have received all, or at least have started the series, of the required immunizations before the first day of classes.

Financial Concerns

You will have many immediate expenses upon arrival including supplies for your room, books, personal items, and health insurance. It is advisable to have at least USD $1,800 available to cover these immediate expenses. It is not advisable, however, to carry large amounts of cash. A combination of cash, traveler’s checks, and credit/debit cards is more secure. Two banks near campus, NBT Bank (www.nbtbank.com) and Community Bank (www.communitybankna.com) will allow you to open an account without a social security number. Most students prefer NBT Bank because they operate an ATM on campus. You will have the opportunity to open an account during ISO. Please note that if you have an on-campus job, you cannot receive a paycheck until you receive your social security number which may take up to a few months. It is important to plan ahead to cover your financial needs before arriving to campus.

Social Security Number

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a taxpayer identification number issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to accurately record your earnings in the U.S. SSNs are also needed to get paid by your on-campus job, apply for a credit card,
obtain a cell phone plan with a contract, and many other things. As a student in F-1 visa status, you become eligible to apply for a SSN once you have an on-campus job, so if you do not plan to work on-campus, you will not be eligible for a SSN. To apply for a SSN, you will need to first obtain a letter from OISS verifying your employment and then apply in person at a SSA office. Once you have applied for a SSN, you should receive it within a few weeks. While you can begin working in your on-campus job right away, you will not be able to receive a paycheck until you have received your SSN and reported it to the Student Employment Office. OISS organizes several trips to the SSA office in Utica, NY throughout the academic year.

Working On-Campus

International students in F-1 visa status are permitted to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session, though it is strongly recommended not to work more than 15 hours per week. Students with an on-campus job in their financial aid award will see on-campus job openings in the student portal (portal.colgate.edu) as early as late August. Everyone else will be able to see openings in the portal after the third week of the semester. For more information about on-campus jobs, be sure to visit the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment website at bit.ly/workcolgate.

Please note that students in F-1 visa status are not permitted to work off-campus unless employment authorization has been granted through Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Employment authorization will be briefly covered at ISO and detailed information is available on the OISS website at colgate.edu/oiss. OISS offers OPT & CPT workshops throughout the academic year for those who want to learn more.

Immigration

You will learn all about your F-1 visa status and what you need to do to maintain legal status during ISO. Refer to the guides provided with your I-20 for instructions on how to apply for your visa and what to expect at a port of entry. (Canadian citizens should refer to the guide on acquiring F-1 status at a U.S. port of entry.) The guides can also be downloaded on the OISS website at colgate.edu/oiss/2020. Refer to the OISS website for detailed information about F-1 visa status, employment authorization, and maintaining valid F-1 status.

Cell Phones

One of the first items students want to purchase is a cell phone, but this can be difficult if you do not yet have a credit card or Social Security number (SSN). There are three main types of cell phone plans in the U.S.: pay-as-you-go, no-contract/prepaid, and contract. Pay-as-you-go plans allow you to charge your phone with credit and you will pay only for what you use. No-contract/prepaid plans, such as Cricket Wireless and AT&T’s subsidiary, charge you a set amount each month, but offer more features (such as unlimited texting) and are usually cheaper than pay-as-you-go plans. These two plans can be obtained without a SSN, but you will need to purchase the phone yourself. Contract plans offer the most features and will often give you a free phone when you sign a two-year contract, however, you will need a SSN and if you do not have any credit history in the USA, will require that you pay a deposit (usually about $300). With contract plans, you will pay the contracted price each month for the duration of the contract. Many students get together and share a contract family plan with someone who already has a SSN as a way to get the features they want from their cell phone service and lower their monthly cost.
The two major carriers that have reception in the area are **Verizon Wireless** and **AT&T**, though Verizon has the best reception. You can read more about the no-contract/prepaid and contract plans on their website at [www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com) and [www.att.com](http://www.att.com). There will be plenty of time for you to purchase a cell phone during ISO during the shopping trip.

### Weather

Hamilton, NY has four distinct seasons. Since you will be arriving at the end of the gorgeous summer season, it is recommended that you plan ahead and bring some warm clothing (coat, sweater, etc.) with you as temperatures will quickly begin to get colder. Many students bring things such as winter coats, boots, hats, gloves, and scarves from home, while others choose to purchase them after they arrive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Average Temperature Range</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>June-September</td>
<td>12°C to 24°C</td>
<td>hot, sunny, some thunderstorms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>September-December</td>
<td>-8°C to 20°C</td>
<td>cool, leaves change colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>December-March</td>
<td>-12°C to 4°C*</td>
<td>very cold, snowy, ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>March-June</td>
<td>-6°C to 23°C</td>
<td>cool, rainy, wet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note about winter weather: Temptures can get much colder than the average range listed in the chart. Last year, temperatures reached as low as -32°C! Be sure to come prepared.*

### What should I pack?

Packing can always be a challenge. Not only do you need to anticipate the things you might need in your room, but you also need to navigate the baggage policy of your airline. We recommend that you pack only the things you will need immediately upon arrival and things that will be difficult or expensive to purchase in the USA. If you do not know if an item will be available in the U.S., you can always check online retailers such as Amazon, Walmart, and Target, to name a few, to check the price and availability. You will need to be able to carry your luggage up to your residence hall without assistance, so make sure that your bags are not too heavy for you to lift. Some students choose to mail boxes of personal items to their Colgate postal box in advance of their arrival. You are welcome to do this, but keep in mind that you will only be able to pick up your packages while Mail Services is open (Monday- Friday 10:00 am- 4:00 pm).

### Clothing

There are only a few clothing store options in Hamilton, so you should plan to bring clothing with you. Since the weather can change very quickly, we recommend that you bring a jacket, sweater, and heavy coat. Students typically dress casually (t-shirt, jeans, khaki pants, button down shirt, sweatshirt, etc.) while attending classes, but there will be occasions where you will need to dress more formally and/or wear business attire (dress pants, dress shirt, blazer, dress, suit, tie, etc.). Also, there are several events on campus for which many students choose to wear traditional clothing so if this interests you, it’s a good idea to bring some from home.
Bedding

Residence halls are not furnished with linens so it is your responsibility to make arrangements to have bed linens for your first night at Colgate. Many students choose to purchase their bedding from online stores and have them delivered to Colgate in advance of their arrival. Walmart, Target and other vendors carry “Dorm-in-a-box” sets that are very economical and can be purchased online if you have a credit card.

Many students also choose to purchase some bed sheets at home and bring them in their luggage. The dorm mattresses are size Twin XL which measures 99 cm by 203 cm and is longer than the standard twin size. There will be a trip to a shopping center during ISO during which you will have the opportunity to purchase bedding and other supplies for your room. A basic sheet set which includes a fitted sheet, flat sheet, and one pillowcase starts at USD $25. You should plan to spend roughly USD $100-200 on moderate-quality bedding and linens. Colgate Bookstore also carries bedding which you may purchase upon arrival.

Personal Items from Home

Many students recommend bringing things from home to make your residence hall feel more like home. Some great ideas: pictures of your family, friends, and favorite places in your home town; a few of your favorite recipes; etc. In addition to giving you comfort during times you are feeling homesick, these items from home can also be useful to help your friends get to know you.

Carry-On Bag

Since luggage can get lost or delayed, it is important that you pack the following items in your carry-on bag or personal bag: cash/credit cards, immigration documents, change of clothing, travel-size toiletries (shampoo, toothbrush, etc.), jacket, blanket, and medication (if necessary).

Taxes

As an international student in F-1 visa status, you are required to complete the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 8843 every year you are present in the U.S., even if you did not earn any money. If you have worked or have had taxable income, you will also need to file the Form 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ. Students who have an on-campus job and/or taxable scholarships will receive a tax packet from the Accounting and Payroll Office in early March which will contain all of the information you need to properly file your tax forms. The deadline to file all tax forms each year is April 15.

Driver’s License

For those interested in obtaining a Driver’s License, OISS offers several trips to the Department of Motor Vehicles in Utica, NY each semester during which you will have the opportunity to apply for your learner’s permit. Once you have your learner’s permit, you will need to take a mandatory 5-hour course about driving safety before you can take the road test. We can provide a list of driving schools you can contact to get driving lessons before your road test. Obtaining a NY State Driver's License is a time consuming and expensive process.

If you hold a driver’s license in your home country, you may be permitted to drive in NY State with that license as long as it is not expired. Learn more about the requirements at dmv.ny.gov. In many instances, it is less expensive and less time consuming to obtain a license in your home country. If you plan to drive using your driver’s license it is advised to bring your official driving
A Message on Culture Shock from the Counseling Center

Starting school in a different country can be exciting as well as frightening, confusing and, at times, frustrating. This combination of positive and negative feelings, commonly referred to as culture shock, is a natural and normal response to living in a new environment. For many international students, there are aspects of this “new” environment that require some adjustment on your part, including a less familiar language and communication style, different food, worldviews, weather patterns, social activities, and customs. Due to so many new and unfamiliar aspects of daily living, you may feel overwhelmed or anxious for a period of time after arriving at Colgate. Attempting to manage your academic obligations while navigating all of these new aspects of daily life can pose a challenge! It is important to remember that these feelings and challenges are a natural part of the adjustment process. You are not alone, as many of your peers may also be experiencing similar feelings.

There are strategies you can use and resources available to you to help address culture shock. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, recognize the feeling and then pause, slow down, and take a deep breath. Ask questions when you feel confused or need more information. Join a club or extra-curricular activity – this can be a good way to connect with peers sharing similar interests and to feel an increased sense of belonging and connection. You may find that reaching out to a friend to share how you are feeling, especially an experienced student who may have also encountered culture shock, can be beneficial as well.

There are several resources available to you here at Colgate to help deal with culture shock or other issues that may arise. Your Dean and the Office of International Student Services are both valuable resources in providing support for managing culture shock. The Counseling Center is another resource you might consider utilizing to find support and encouragement, especially if you feel confused and frustrated. Staffed by counselors, social workers, and psychologists, the Counseling Center is available for all Colgate students who might be looking for help to deal with a wide variety of challenges, problems, and issues, including culture shock. Sometimes students feel as though they are “the only one” who needs help, which might result in some hesitation...
to ask for assistance. In the average year, more than 25%, or more than 700 Colgate students, will use the services of the Counseling Center. These services are offered at no cost to the student. All contacts are kept confidential unless the student gives permission for the counselor to share information, or when a serious concern arises about the safety of the student and/or the community.

Our Counseling Center staff wants to help make your Colgate experience happy, productive, and meaningful. If you’d like to meet with one of our staff members, call 315-228-7385 to schedule an appointment, or stop by! We are located in Conant House on the upper part of campus just above the Bryan housing complex and behind the Drake and Curtis residence halls.

Welcome to Colgate! We look forward to meeting you during activities at International Student Orientation.

**Academic Support Resources**

At Colgate, academic support is a vital part of the learning process and all students are encouraged to make use of the resources available on campus. University-level work is quite different from the work you may have done during high school. Additionally, the academic system in the U.S., and particularly at Colgate, may be quite different than what you are used to. Professors look favorably upon students who proactively seek to improve their academic skills by utilizing the excellent support services available.

**Academic Adviser**

You should meet with your academic adviser regularly to develop a good relationship. Get to know them and make sure they know you. Meet with your adviser to discuss your academic plan and interests and to strategize on which courses you should take. Seek their advice on majors/minors, any academic difficulties you may be experiencing in your classes, and even your post-Colgate plans. Your academic adviser(s) can be an excellent resource for you throughout your time at Colgate.

**Administrative Dean**

In addition to an academic adviser who assists students in their academic choices, all Colgate students have an administrative dean who is available to assist with a wide range of concerns, from questions about university policies that cannot be answered by reading the University Catalogue or Student Handbook, to personal problems, to letters of recommendation, and everything in between. Your dean will be available to you to help you navigate the transition to college and life in the United States and to serve as a connecting point to other campus resources so that you can thrive and make the most out of your Colgate experience.

**Writing and Speaking Center**

The Writing and Speaking Center is committed to the improvement of writers of all levels and abilities. Peer writing consultants will work with you at any stage in your writing process with the goal of helping you become confident and accomplished writers. Consultants will not make changes for you, but instead will help you understand an assignment, develop and organize your ideas, edit grammar and punctuation errors, and cite your sources properly. Their goal is to help you learn to identify, understand, and address your writing challenges in order to revise effectively on your own. Peer speaking consultants can help you organize your presentation and practice its delivery.

The Center is familiar with many of the writing and speaking issues faced by students who are not native speakers of English, and several of the peer consultants are fellow international students. Visit their website at [bit.ly/colgatwsc](http://bit.ly/colgatwsc) to learn more.
Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research

The Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research helps students see connections between their own learning and academic priorities and ways to improve their effectiveness by tapping into the knowledge and resources available. The Center provides a variety of resources including academic advising, instruction in learning strategies and study skills, assistance with time management and organization, peer tutoring, and support in study skill development. Visit the Center’s website at www.colgate.edu/cltr for more information.

Librarians

Librarians are professionals who are available to help you navigate the library, brainstorm ideas, and find excellent sources for your research. If you have a question about a research project, need help identifying or finding information and sources, ask a librarian! Check out the library guide for international students at http://libguides.colgate.edu/internationalstudents and the main library site at www.colgate.edu/library.

Code of Conduct

As a student and member of the Colgate community, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with university standards outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the Academic Honor Code, and the Policy on Sexual Harassment, and to be accountable and responsible for the choices you make. Since international students have varying degrees of familiarity with American culture, and American social and academic values, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with university policies and expectations, especially those related to plagiarism, academic integrity, and sexual harassment. Different cultures view these issues quite differently than how they are viewed in the American context, so it is important that you are aware of these issues even before you arrive to campus. You can find these policies in the Student Handbook available at bit.ly/universitystandard, and at the following websites:

- Code of Student Conduct: bit.ly/codestudentconduct
- Academic Honor Code: bit.ly/academichonor
- Policy on Sexual Harassment: bit.ly/egpolicy

Violations of the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor code will be addressed through the university disciplinary process. We encourage you to visit the links above to learn more about the disciplinary process. Additionally, violations of the Code of Conduct that are related to discrimination and harassment (including sexual harassment) may be addressed through the Equity Grievance Process (EGP) which is described in detail in the Student Handbook. Though the university strives to be a safe and inclusive space for everyone, in the case that you have a negative experience or interaction, there are people, services, and departments available to support you. If you experience any form of harassment or discrimination, or if you have a concern about your safety or that of another student, you are encouraged to speak with your Dean, and/or speak with another university official, or to report the incident of concern online at www.colgate.edu/concern (anonymous submissions are accepted).
New International Student Checklist

Use this checklist as a guide to help you prepare for your arrival to the USA and your first weeks at Colgate University. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the things you should do, but simply a help to you so that you can be prepared.

☐ Receive your I-20 from the Office of International Student Services.

☐ Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and print your receipt. Information on the SEVIS fee can be found at www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/

☐ Apply for and receive your F-1 student visa at a U.S. Embassy. Be sure to follow the Embassy's instructions for non-immigrant visa applicants and provide all of the required documentation. (Note: Canadian citizens do not apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy and should refer to the guide titled “Acquiring F-1 Visa Status at a U.S. Port of Entry.”) For more information, read the guide titled “Applying for an F-1 Visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate” that was included with your I-20.

☐ Learn about your immigration status by visiting http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/.

☐ Join the “International Students of Colgate University Class of 2020” Facebook group if you would like the chance to connect with fellow classmates. Request to join the group at bit.ly/oiss2020.

☐ Book your flight to the USA. Plan to arrive to Syracuse International Airport (SYR) on Tuesday, August 16, between 7:00 am - midnight. Refer to the section on “Arrival Information” for more information.

☐ Notify OISS of your flight schedule/arrival plans by completing the OISS Arrival Survey at bit.ly/2020arrivalsurvey by August 1.

☐ Prepare your finances. Anticipate how much money you will need to cover your immediate expenses upon arrival in the USA and plan accordingly. Refer to the section on “Financial Concerns” for more information. Please note that if you have an on-campus job, you cannot receive a paycheck until you receive your Social Security number which may take a few months.

☐ Complete your Medical History Report and get the necessary immunizations.

☐ Keep up-to-date with the checklist on the First Year Students website at www.colgate.edu/2020.

☐ Sign up for the ‘Gate Way program by visiting bit.ly/gatewayprogram and navigate the online resource offering 13 tips to help you transition from high school to Colgate.

☐ Enjoy your flight. You have embarked on an exciting journey to fulfill many of your personal, academic, and professional goals. Take a moment to reflect on all of the hard work that has gotten you to this point in your life. For information on what to expect at the port of entry, read the guide titled “What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry.”

☐ Arrive to Syracuse International Airport. If you are arriving on August 16 between 7:00 am - midnight and have completed the “OISS Arrival Survey” by August 1, a Colgate representative will be at the airport to welcome you at the baggage claim area. With the exception of flight delays, if you will arrive outside of the scheduled arrival time, you will be responsible for your own transportation to Colgate.

☐ Attend International Student Orientation (ISO). ISO will take place starting with your arrival on August 16 through August 20. A detailed orientation schedule will be emailed to you in early August.

☐ Attend Orientation with the Class of 2020. Find out information at Orientation on the Class of 2020 website at colgate.edu/2020.

☐ Have a great semester! Study hard, get to know your professors, and participate in campus activities to make friends and feel more at home. OISS is always here to assist you to make your time at Colgate successful and memorable.