



The University of Pittsburgh  
Office of International Services

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## Spring 2010

Dear International Student,

Welcome to the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt)! On behalf of the Pitt community, the Office of International Services (OIS) wants to be among the first to offer you these words of welcome. You will soon become part of an international community that includes more than 4,000 international students and scholars from more than 130 countries. We trust you will find your time here rewarding and complimentary to your personal and professional goals.

Following this letter you will find a list of NEXT STEPS for you to take in the process of becoming part of the Pitt community. If applicable, you will also find your Form I-20 (for F-1 Student Status) or Form DS-2019 (for J-1 Student Status). Please review this important information carefully. Please note that if you are already in the United States in another nonimmigrant visa classification (e.g., H-4, L-2, etc.) and are not currently seeking a change of nonimmigrant classification to F-1 or J-1 student status, you have not been issued a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from OIS. As a result, some of the information contained in this Welcome Packet may not be applicable to you, **however you must still check-in with OIS upon your arrival at the University.**

OIS Orientation for new international students arriving for the Spring 2010 semester will be held on Tuesday, January 5, 2010, the day before classes start. OIS Orientation provides an opportunity for new international students to help make the transition to life in the U.S. and at the University of Pittsburgh. The Orientation program is a great start to your journey! It will help you meet people, and it will also provide important information to help insure that you start off on the right track for a successful academic career at Pitt. During Orientation, you will also have the opportunity to complete the required Check-In process.

Have a safe and enjoyable trip to the United States. We look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh soon!

Sincerely,

The Office of International Services

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## Your Next Steps

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### Pre-Departure

1. **Passport:** If you have not already done so, apply for your passport or verify that your passport is valid.
2. **Pay the SEVIS FEE:** For detailed information or to pay the fee, please go to <http://www.fmjfee.com/>.
3. **Apply for your Student Visa:** In order to obtain the F-1 or J-1 entry visa needed for admission to the United States, you will need to take the enclosed Form I-20 or Form DS-2019, your passport, and financial support documentation (e.g., award letter, bank statement, etc.) to the US Embassy or Consulate nearest you. For tips on applying for a nonimmigrant visa, please go to [www.ois.pitt.edu/pdf/VisaTips.pdf](http://www.ois.pitt.edu/pdf/VisaTips.pdf) (NOTE: Citizens of Canada are *not* required to apply for an entry visa at a US Embassy or Consulate.) For additional information about specific US Embassies or Consulates, including hours of operation and detailed procedures for accessing Consular Services, select from the listing that can be found at the following Web site: [www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies\\_1214.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html).
4. **Travel arrangements:** After you receive your visa, make your travel arrangements to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Please remember that international students in F or J visa status may not enter the United States more than 30 days prior to the start date on the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. Upon your arrival, you must check in with OIS.

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## Your Next Steps

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### Upon Arrival in Pittsburgh

5. **Arrival at Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT):** The Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) is located approximately 15 miles from the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt). The University of Pittsburgh is located in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh. Plan to take the Port Authority (PAT) bus 28X to Oakland. For more details, please see *Arrival Information* on our web-site <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/OrientationArrival/arrival.html>.
6. **OIS Check-In & Orientation:**
  - a. **OIS Check-in** All international students must check-in with OIS (regardless of visa status). A Check-In Session will be offered during the OIS Orientation program. Students who are unable to attend Orientation must sign up for a make-up Check-In Session. At Check-In you will:
    1. Submit required information forms (**NOTE: To expedite the check-in process when you arrive at OIS, please complete the check-in forms in advance and bring them with you to the Check-In program. The forms can be downloaded from [www.ois.pitt.edu/forms.html#checkinforms](http://www.ois.pitt.edu/forms.html#checkinforms).**)
    2. Receive essential information about your immigration documents, visa status, and other immigration-related issues.
  - b. **OIS Orientation:** OIS Orientation and Check-in is scheduled for Tuesday, **January 5, 2009**.

For additional details, see the OIS Web site: <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/OrientationArrival/Home.html>.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are required to bring your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019, your passport, and your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record to Check-In with OIS. Failure to check in with OIS in a timely manner may result in problems with your immigration status in the U.S. The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a system designed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to monitor all internationals in F, J, or M visa classifications, will automatically invalidate your record in the system if you do not report to the Office of International Services within 30 days of the start date listed on your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 Form.

**[NOTE: The University of Pittsburgh is CLOSED for Winter Break from December 24, 2009 - January 3, 2009. There are NO services available to students during this time, so please plan accordingly!]**

7. **Housing:** Please see <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/LifePittsburgh.html#housing> for more information.
8. **Additional Resources:** For additional information go to the following Web sites:

<a href="http://www.ois.pitt.edu">www.ois.pitt.edu</a>	Office of International Services – for further information on OIS Orientation, office hours and services
<a href="http://www.pitt.edu">www.pitt.edu</a>	University of Pittsburgh – for information on the University of Pittsburgh
<a href="http://www.sorc.pitt.edu">www.sorc.pitt.edu</a>	Student Organization Resource Center – for information on Student Organizations at Pitt
<a href="http://www.ocl.pitt.edu">www.ocl.pitt.edu</a>	Housing Resource Center – for temporary housing options and permanent apartment and roommate listings
<a href="http://www.fmjfee.com">www.fmjfee.com</a>	Information on the SEVIS Fee
<a href="http://www.cbp.gov">www.cbp.gov</a>	US Customs and Border Protection – for information on what you can expect when you get to the US border