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# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ARRIVAL GUIDE

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

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Discover what's in the guide.

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# PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Plan your trip and arrival at WU. Complete all steps prior to arrival.

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## 1) Accept your offer & create your Self-Service account.

- You will login to the WU Self-Service portal with your WU credentials.

## 2) Request & receive your signed electronic I-20

- Directions on how to request your I-20 and required documents will be emailed to you.

## 3) Complete a DS-160 visa application form & obtain your visa

- Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your arrival date in the US.
- Complete the DS-160 visa application [here](#).
- Review instructions for F-1 visa process [here](#).
- Schedule and attend visa interview. Once approved, receive your passport and visa.

## 4) Pay the I-901 SEVIS fee

Pay the SEVIS fee [here](#). Take your SEVIS fee receipt to your visa interview.

## 5) Plan your housing

- **On-campus** housing info [here](#)
- Plan where you'll stay when you first arrive.

## 6) Schedule your flight to the US

- You can arrive **no more than 30 days prior** to your I-20 program start date.
- Plan your airport transportation.

## 7) Prepare proof of immunizations

- Complete **mandatory** forms & policies [here](#). Records must be in English. More info [here](#).

## 8) Pack and prepare for your trip to the US

- Review the list of important documents to have in your carry and packing info.

## 9) Fly to the US!

Complete port of entry inspections.

## 10) After you arrive

- Update your US address in Self-Service.
- Complete "New Student Arrival Orientation Check-in".
- Purchase books & materials.
- **Attend all mandatory sessions of orientation.**

## Important WU Self-Service information

Do **not** share your WU login details with anyone. Your username and password is your private information.

# ARRIVAL PREPARATION & PACKING INFORMATION

Prepare for a smooth trip to the US

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## Important carry-on items & documents

The items below should be brought with you in your carry-on (hand luggage). **Do NOT pack these items in your checked luggage.**

### IMPORTANT ITEMS TO PACK IN YOUR CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa
- I-20
- I-901 SEVIS fee receipt
- Admission letter
- Immunization record
- Residential address (where you'll stay when you arrive) for port of entry form
- Financial support documents
- Copies of documents & passports
- Money for initial expenses
- Phone & charger

## Don't arrive in the US too early!

First-time students entering the US in F-1 status are allowed to arrive only within 30 days before the I-20 start date

## Prepare for the weather!

West Virginia has four distinct seasons. Remember to pack clothing to stay comfortable during your first few months.

### Summer:

- Avg. temp: 75°F (24°C) - 85°F (30°C)
- Very warm and humid. Some strong storms
- Wear: cool, loose clothing

### Fall:

- Avg. temp: 60°F (16°C) - 70°F (21°C)
- Weather gets cooler, especially at night
- Wear: layers, sweaters & pants

### Winter:

- Avg temp: 35°F (2°C) - 45°F (7°C)
- Weather is cold with some snow
- Wear: heavy coats, gloves, warm layers

### Spring:

- Avg temp: 55°F (13°C) - 75°F (24°C)
- Weather starts getting warmer. Sun & rain
- Wear: jacket & light layers for varied temps

## Additional packing information:

Bring a touch of home! Pack a couple of mementos to keep you feeling comfortable while navigating U.S. customs. Check the provided link for prohibited items! View the list [here](#).

**Always hold a small amount of cash in your wallet for important emergency purposes. You never know when you might need it.**



# AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION & CONFIRMING YOUR ARRIVAL

Get to campus from the airport & let us know you're here

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## Transportation from local airports

The following airports are the closest to WU:

- PIT (Pittsburgh International Airport)  
Distance to WU: 61 miles  
Uber/Lyft/Taxi:

Average trip cost: \$80-120 USD

- CMH (John Glenn Columbus International Airport)  
Distance to WU: 116 miles  
Uber/Lyft/Taxi:

Average trip cost: \$230-260 USD

## Ride Services & Tipping

If you use a ride service (taxi, shuttle, Uber or Lyft) - **Don't forget to tip your driver.**

- For app-based service, tip can be added in the app after your ride.
- If you are paying by card, you can add a designated amount to your total.
- A 20% minimum tip is recommended.

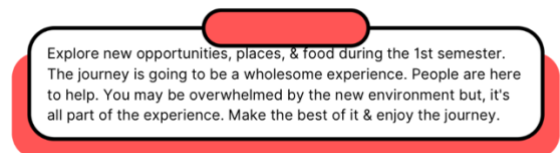
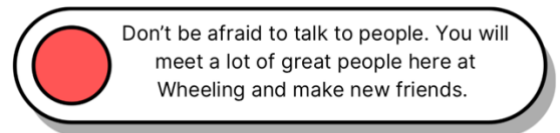
## Confirm your US arrival

When you arrive in the US, remember to complete the New Student Arrival Orientation Check-in to confirm your arrival (this is mandatory).

- You do NOT need to come the International Admissions Office or make an appointment to notify us of or confirm your arrival.

## How to complete New Student Arrival Documentation:

- Follow the directions in the application and upload the required documents.



# CELL SERVICE & BANK ACCOUNTS

Set up essential accounts & services

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## Cellphone service

There are a number of options to obtain service and a local phone number. Most students start out with a sim card option for the first few months. Once they learn how they use their service, they set up service with a contract (prepaid option).

- Many students also use WiFi to access communication apps such as WhatsApp, GroupMe, and We Chat when they arrive.

## Cellphone service options

### Number on arrival with CampusSims:

CampusSims allows you to have a US phone number and service immediately upon arrival. You pay ahead for a designated amount of credit. Order a SIM [here](#).

### Contract/Prepaid plan:

Most service operates on contract plans. Contracts are usually 2 years in length for the cheapest option. With a contract, you pay a prepaid amount on a monthly basis.

### Pay-as-you-go (PAYG):

PAYG is similar to CampusSims. You purchase credit as needed with a local carrier.

## Local carriers

Compare plan options across carriers to determine the best plan for you. Local carriers with locations near WU:

- Verizon
- AT&T
- T-Mobile
- Metro PCS

## Setting up a bank account

It's very important to setup a bank account in the US. When you open a bank account you will need to provide proof of identity. Call ahead to confirm what documents you need to provide. This usually includes:

- Passport
- I-20
- Proof of address
- Initial deposit

## Bank locations

Local banks include:

- Chase Bank
- WesBanco
- Community Bank

# GROCERY STORES & FOOD DELIVERY

Where to purchase food & discover new favorites

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## Grocery stores near WU

Many of these stores are very close to campus housing and accessible with car.

- Kroger
- Walmart
- Riesbecks
- Aldi

## International groceries near WU

This is only a small selection of the international grocers located in Pittsburgh about 1 hour from campus. Check out the options.

- Nataliya European Food
- Jmart International Market
- Panda Supermarket
- Magnet International Market

## Online food ordering and delivery:

Want to order your groceries online or have a meal delivered? Use one of the websites/apps below. **When using food delivery services, always make sure you tip the driver.**

- Instacart
- Uber Eats
- Door Dash
- GrubHub
- Seamless

## Local farmers markets

Want farm fresh produce from local vendors? Visit one of the area's farmers markets. Some markets have limited hours or open certain months. Check websites for hours.

- Wheeling Farmers Market
- Warwood Farmers Market
- Ohio Valley Farmers Market
- Bellaire Farmers Market
- St. Mikes Farmers Market

### Online Ordering & Pickup

Many shops offer online ordering & curbside pickup options if you want to limit your in-person shopping.

If you choose to shop in-person, follow all health & safety guidelines.





# LOCAL STORES & ACCESSING EVERYDAY NEEDS

Where to purchase food & everyday items

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## Everyday goods and furniture

There are a numerous large retail stores where you can purchase household necessities, furniture and supplies. For larger and longer distance trips, a car is recommended.

### Everyday goods and some furniture:

- Target, Walmart, Big Lots, Dollar Tree

### Furniture and décor:

- IKEA, HomeGoods, Bed Bath & Beyond, Target, TJ Maxx

### Hardware:

- Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Lowes

### Electronics:

- BestBuy

## Pharmacies

Visit a pharmacy for health, medicine and wellness products. Pharmacies near UMBC campus include:

- CVS Pharmacy
- Walgreens Pharmacy

## Affordable winter clothing

Need extra winter clothing? You can often find warm winter coats and jackets at affordable prices at many stores. Some options:

- Outlet malls: Tanger
- Discount stores: TJMaxx, Marshalls, Kohls
- Thrift stores: Goodwill

## Saving on purchases

Make sure you check for specials, including student discounts, when making purchases, online or in-person.

- Grocery stores usually update their store specials on a weekly basis
- You can also look at online coupon websites or the Sunday newspaper for coupons to save extra

## Online Ordering & Pickup

Many shops offer online ordering & curbside pickup options if you want to limit your in-person shopping. If you choose to shop in-person, follow all health & safety guidelines.

### Grocery & Food Delivery Services

Many online grocery & food services offer discounts on first orders & contactless delivery.





# AREA TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

How to get around Wheeling & the surrounding area

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## Buses & trains - long distance

Want to travel further outside Wheeling? Look into these bus, train, and plane options.

Bus:

- There are a number of affordable long-haul bus companies. Some options are: Greyhound, FlixBus

Train:

- Amtrak – US-wide train network. Pittsburgh is the nearest to WU.

Plane:

- PIT is the nearest airport to WU campus
- Other airports: CMH (Columbus, OH)

## Ride-share

Popular ride-share options available:

- Uber
- Lyft
- IC Cab

**Don't forget to tip you driver in the app!**

## Driving in the US

If you plan to drive in the US you are **required** to obtain a **valid** US driver's license. For instructions on obtaining a West Virginia driver's license visit [this page](#).

Explore new opportunities, places, & food during the 1st semester. The journey is going to be a wholesome experience. People are here to help. You may be overwhelmed by the new environment but, it's all part of the experience. Make the best of it & enjoy the journey.

### Ride Services & Tipping

If you use a ride service (taxi, shuttle, Uber or Lyft) - **Don't forget to tip your driver.**

- For app based service, tip can be added in the app after your ride.
- If you are paying by card, you can add a designated amount to your total.
- A 20% minimum tip is recommended.



# PLATFORM, EMAIL & CAMPUS CARDS

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## Cardinal Account

The Cardinal Account gives you access to Canvas, email, grades, billing and other services. Follow and connect with groups and organizations. Also, find and sign-up for campus events and activities.

- The Cardinal Guide will teach you how to setup your account
- **Do not** share your My Cardinal Account password with anyone. This information is private to you.

## WU email

WU email is hosted by Gmail. **It is strongly recommended that students check their WU email account on a daily basis.**

## Software

WU offers students a selection of software and services available for download.

## Canvas

Canvas is WU's course management system. You can view all of your courses, submit assignments, view presentations and recorded lectures, and check your grades.

## What if I have questions about WU's technology resources?

WU's Department of Information Technology has an extensive FAQ page in case you ever need help troubleshooting something yourself. Find it [here](#).

Still need help? Request a help ticket through the Support Center [here](#).

## Campus cards

Your campus card is your student ID. Use it for:

- Meal plans
- Library
- Swipe Access Rooms

### Important Cardinal information

**Do not share your Wheeling University login details with anyone! Your username and password is your private information!**

# BILLING, TUITION & FEES

Understanding your bill & best campus contacts if you have questions

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## Tuition

Tuition is the cost charged to pay for your classes at WU. Your tuition costs are based on your level of study at WU and the number of credits you are enrolled in. Tuition is charged every semester and is mandatory.

- A breakdown of tuition (and fees) is updated on your account in Self-Service or click [here](#).

## Fees

Fees are charges for services you access as a student at WU. **All fees are mandatory.** Some fees are charged only once, others are charged each semester. Find an explanation of fees [here](#).

## Health insurance

Health insurance is something that you will need during your time at WU. There are affordable health care plans available [here](#).

## How do I get my bill or know what amount I owe?

WU issues all bills electronically. Access your e-bill by logging into your Cardinal Account.

## Who do I contact about my tuition, fees and billing?

You should contact Student Accounts regarding any charges to your account for tuition and fees and any billing questions. Email: [studentaccounts@wheeling.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@wheeling.edu)

**Have more questions about billing ?**  
The Business Office Staff are the best team to help you with questions about billing. If you need help, submit an inquiry [here](#)



# EVENTS, CLUBS & WELCOME WEEK

Meet new friends, share your learning and make your voice heard

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## Welcome Week

A WU tradition is New Cardinal Days! At the start of the semester, WU departments and offices come together to welcome new and returning students back to campus. There's also free food and WU gear giveaways!

Get involved with on-campus organizations, even if it's out of your comfort zone!

## Student Organizations

Discover WU's clubs, and organizations. Join to explore your interests with other students. If there's not a club for it, start your own! There are opportunities for everyone to get involved [here](#)!

Get involved with on-campus organizations, even if it's out of your comfort zone!

## Student Government Association

The WU SGA organizes undergraduate students to create community, support cocurricular and academic experiences, and gives a voice to students. Get involved [here](#).

## Sports & events

Visit the McDonough Center to catch WU sports and events. There is always something to do!

# WELLBEING & STUDENT SUPPORT

Comprehensive & confidential support

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## WU Student Health Services

The Health Center provides healthcare resources internally and works as a liaison between external health care providers when needed.

Services are available to students on a walk-in or appointment basis during office hours.

The Health Center offers services of basic triage, minor first aids, availability of some over the counter medications, tuberculosis testing, influenza vaccination, and other low intensity services mostly at no extra charge.

Students can come to the Health Center for an initial assessment and, if necessitated, a referral to Family Medicine Center or other local medical resources. Off-campus referrals to other medical providers will be the financial responsibility of the student.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## WU Counseling Services

The WU Counseling Center offers individual consults, assessments, screenings, counseling services, advocacy, crisis interventions, information, linkage and referral. We also work collaboratively with the student's treatment team, family, coaches, clergy and others as authorized by the student.

**No fees are charged for counseling sessions provided to WU students.**

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Student Success Services

The WU Student Success Center provides support services to WU undergrad students. Services include, tutoring, career services, writing center, peer study sessions, workshops and more.

## Student Code of Conduct

For information, policies, and details please see the WU Student Handbook. Click [here](#).

# WU STUDENT LIFE

Take a break, catch up with friends, or even, explore the world

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## Starbucks

Starbucks is the hub of student life. Situated under the Benedum Room, it is the place to go before, between and after classes. Eat, study and relax here.

Welcome Week is the first event of the year to participate in. It's a great chance to have fun, get free food and win great prizes!!

## WU Dining

Go to the **Benedum Room (B-Room)** for a delicious place to eat with plenty of options to choose from. Pick up a favorite or try something new!

A favorite campus spot is the creek area. If the weather is nice it's a great option to chill with friends.

## 24-Hour Lounge

A favorite spot to socialize for many WU students! Take a break and have some fun. There's billiards, TVs, arcade games and more! It's a great way to meet people!

Explore new opportunities, places, & food during the 1st semester. The journey is going to be a wholesome experience. People are here to help. You may be overwhelmed by the new environment but, it's all part of the experience. Make the best of it & enjoy the journey.

## The Ratt

Nestled within our campus is The Ratt, a lively on-campus pub that stands as a hub of entertainment and social engagement. Throughout the year, The Ratt comes alive with the rhythm of local bands that grace its stage, filling the air with captivating melodies. The Ratt offers a diverse range of entertainment options, creating memorable moments for our university community.

## Recreational Facility

The McDonough Center is the fitness and recreation facility. Activities include: gym, club and intramural sports, indoor track, basketball and volleyball courts and more! Check it out [here!](#)

# RELIABLE INFORMATION & NEWS

Stay up to date with campus information and current events

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## Social media

WU, State and National departments and organizations have social media accounts which share information. Always make sure your news is from a verified and reliable source.

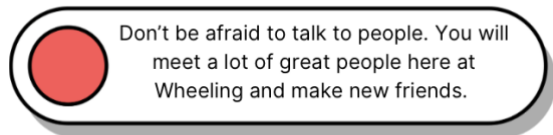
## WU email

Check your WU email, at minimum, daily. Important course and university updates and info are often shared via email. The WU International Admissions Office will email students directly with any important information, including any changes to current immigration or employment regulations.

## Weather Information

West Virginia has wide-ranging temperatures during the year. Ensure that you are prepared for any inclement weather. An installed weather app on your phone is recommended. Options include:

- Accuweather
- Weather Channel
- Weather Underground





# CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION

## Campus Contacts & Services

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### Adding or Dropping Courses

Registrar's Office (304) 243-2090

[Registrar@wheeling.edu](mailto:Registrar@wheeling.edu)

- Adding & dropping courses, enrollment, and prerequisite policies

### Billing, Tuition & Fees

Student Accounts (304) 243-2389

[studentaccounts@wheeling.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@wheeling.edu)

- Paying tuition & fees, payment plans & resolving financial holds

### Campus Life, Clubs & Organizations

Student Affairs (304) 243-2350

[reslife@wheeling.edu](mailto:reslife@wheeling.edu)

- Get involved on campus, join clubs, and socialize

### Campus Ministry

Campus ministry (304) 243-2385

[camp-min@wheeling.edu](mailto:camp-min@wheeling.edu)

- Integrate faith and academic life to care for the whole person

### Campus Safety

Public Safety (304) 243-2486

[lpalmer@wheeling.edu](mailto:lpalmer@wheeling.edu)

- Emergency safety/health situations
- Parking services, parking permits

### Disability Services

Student Disability Services (304) 243-4482

[ds@wheeling.edu](mailto:ds@wheeling.edu)

- General info/accommodated testing
- Test/exam accommodations, note-taking assistance, interpreting/transcribing services, alternate format for printed or inaccessible text, assistive technology, accessible housing

### Diversity, Inclusion & Equality

Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Christy Benner (304) 243-8700

[cbenner@wheeling.edu](mailto:cbenner@wheeling.edu)

- Culture & diversity resources

### Doctor & Medical Care

Student Health Center (304) 243-2225

[healthcenter@wheeling.edu](mailto:healthcenter@wheeling.edu)

- On-campus health center, nurse
- Health insurance information requirements, waiver if applicable

### Fitness, Sport & Recreation

McDonough Center (304) 243-2365

[athletics@wheeling.edu](mailto:athletics@wheeling.edu)

- Gym, sports, intramurals

### International Student Support

Student Success Center

(304) 243-2272

[international@wheeling.edu](mailto:international@wheeling.edu)

- Support, programming & services for WU international community

### Library

Bishop Hodges Library (304) 243-2226

[library@wheeling.edu](mailto:library@wheeling.edu)

- Access books, databases & materials, study space, technology rental

### Living On-Campus

Residential Life (304) 243-2390

[reslife@wheeling.edu](mailto:reslife@wheeling.edu)

- Campus housing, residence halls

# CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION

## Campus Contacts & Services

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### **Mental Health & Wellbeing**

Student Health Center (304) 243-2081

Tina Tordella

[ttordella@wheeling.edu](mailto:ttordella@wheeling.edu)

- Free, confidential counseling services, mental health & wellbeing support for students

### **Registration, Enrollment & Transcripts**

Registrar's Office (304) 243-2090

[registrar@wheeling.edu](mailto:registrar@wheeling.edu)

- Enrollment, registering for classes & pre-requisite requirements, graduation progression
- Requesting transcripts & transcript evaluation

### **Scholarships**

Office of Financial Aid (304) 243-2304

[finaid@wheeling.edu](mailto:finaid@wheeling.edu)

- Administration & information about WU scholarships

### **Technology Support**

Tech Support (IT) (304) 243-8181

[its@wheeling.edu](mailto:its@wheeling.edu)

- Assistance with email accounts, software, campus network, Canvas

### **Tutoring & Academic Support**

Student Success Center (304) 243-2272

[nkjaerholt@wheeling.edu](mailto:nkjaerholt@wheeling.edu)

- Peer tutoring services
- Academic skills support



**Tip: Understand the syllabus well. If you have difficulties, speak to your professor or the teaching assistant for support.**