

# COMING TO COLUMBIA

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

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We of the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) on the Morningside campus and the International Affairs Office (IAO) on the Medical Center campus join with the faculty and staff in welcoming you to the University. Studying or working in a foreign country is both an exciting and a challenging experience. We offer this on-line guide *Coming to Columbia: Essential Information for New International Scholars* to help you meet the challenge and enjoy the excitement of this very dynamic environment.

For many of you, this will be your first time in New York City. You will experience a different culture and one of the largest and fastest-moving cities in the world. The staff of the ISSO, for those on the Morningside campus, and the IAO, for those on the Medical Center campus, are available to help you with immigration issues as well as everyday matters and problems. We work with more than six thousand students and scholars from more than one hundred forty countries and are aware that adjustment to a new environment is neither easy nor the same for each person. We hope you will feel free to visit our offices and get to know us.

*Coming to Columbia* is designed to give you information that will be helpful through your first few weeks in New York as you settle in. It contains information about New York and Columbia you will need for planning before you leave your home country as well as what you need to know soon after your arrival.

Again, welcome to Columbia. We invite you to enjoy the richness of New York City and extend to you our best wishes for a successful scholarly experience.

## About the ISSO

The ISSO serves the international students and scholars on the Morningside campus, including doctoral students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) and students enrolled in the School of Public Health. Our office is located at 524 Riverside Drive in International House North, between West 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and Tiemann

Place. We are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Mondays through Fridays, except Wednesday mornings when we open at 10:30 a.m. following a weekly staff meeting. The office is closed on weekends and University holidays. If you wish to contact us, please refer to the information below:

Courier Address:	524 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027
Mailing Address:	2960 Broadway, MC 5724 New York, NY 10027
Telephone:	212 854-3587
Facsimile:	212 854-3966
Website:	<a href="http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/">www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/</a>
Email:	<a href="mailto:isso@columbia.edu">isso@columbia.edu</a>

### Walk-in Advisory Service

The ISSO offers full advisory services during its normal business hours. International students and scholars with questions or requests concerning visas, immigration, travel, employment, or other matters relating to their stay at Columbia are welcome to walk in to speak to a Program Officer. Program Officers and other staff members may also be reached by telephone and e-mail for general inquiries and are available for appointments on an individual basis.

### The ISSO Website and On-Line Calendar of Events

The ISSO maintains a detailed and extensive site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/>. Students and scholars interested in gaining more information about visa and immigration regulations, Columbia's international community, and other related matters are encouraged to view our website. Also included on the website is the ISSO's On-Line Calendar of Events, offering detailed information about ISSO programs, workshops, visa and immigration deadlines, and social and cultural events throughout the New York City area.

## About the IAO

The International Affairs Office (IAO) serves the immigration-related needs of students and scholars on the Medical Center Campus (with the exception of students in the Mailman School of Public Health and GSAS, who are clients of the ISSO). Staff members of the IAO assist prospective and enrolled international students and scholars with initial and continuing visa documentation. Throughout the year the IAO sponsors informative programs and workshops. The IAO broadcasts monthly announcements updating students on immigration issues and inviting them to join programs, workshops and activities. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of social, cultural, and other activities offered by the ISSO.

Office & Courier Address: 650 West 168<sup>th</sup> St.,  
Room 1-126B  
NY, NY 10032

Mailing Address: 630 West 168<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Box 27  
NY, NY 10032

Telephone: 212 305-5455  
Facsimile: 212 305-5208

Walk-in hours are Monday to Friday, 11am-5pm in the Black Building, room 1-126B.

## Visa and Immigration Basics

### Immigration Definitions for Scholars

It is very important that you become familiar with the following terms, as they are used repeatedly in *Coming to Columbia* and other information from the International Students and Scholars Office. It is essential that you understand these definitions, not just as you prepare to come, but throughout your stay in the United States.

**Passport** • All scholars must keep their passports valid at least six months into the future at all times. You may

obtain extensions of your passport through the nearest consulate or embassy of your country. The ISSO or the IAO will provide you with any appropriate documents your government may require.

**Entry Visa** • The entry visa is a machine-readable stamp in your passport issued by an United States consul abroad. It authorizes you to apply for admission into the United States at a port of entry. All international scholars (with the exception of Canadian nationals) are required to have a valid entry visa in their passport at the time of entry into the United States. Your visa specifies the type of immigration status you will hold (H-1, J-1, etc.), the date until which you may enter the United States, and the number of entries you may make before you must apply for a new entry visa. The length of validity of each visa type is determined by an agreement between your home country and the United States government and is not necessarily tied to the length of your program of study. Application for a new entry visa must be made in person at a United States consulate outside the United States. The validity period of your entry visa does not determine the length of time you may remain in the United States after you enter. Your length of stay is determined by the completion date on your DS-2019 or your Form I-94 (see below) expiration date, whichever is earlier.

**Form I-94** • This is a record of your nonimmigrant status and permission to stay in the United States. It is a small white card, known as the I-94 card, given to you by an immigration official when you enter the United States. The I-94 card is your most important immigration document as establishes your J-1, H-1, O-1, or TN immigration status in the United States. The I-94 card also notes the date and port of your arrival in the United States, and the date until which you have permission to stay. The notation "D/S," indicating "Duration of Status," refers to the completion date on the certificate of eligibility (the DS-2019) given to those who wish to enter the United States in J-1 status. Those in H-1 or O status have a specific date by which they must either (1) leave the United States, (2) extend their status, or (3) change to another status. The Form I-94 is also called the Arrival/Departure form because each time you enter the United States you receive a new form, and each time you leave the country you surrender your I-94. Only in the case of short trips of fewer than thirty days to Canada, Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean do you keep this form. The I-94 is an important form and it is difficult to replace; we recommend that you make a photocopy of

both sides of the form to keep separately in case you need to replace it.

**Immigration Status** • Your immigration status, e.g. H-1, B-2, J-1, etc., is determined at the time of entry into the United States by an immigration official and is noted on the Form I-94. Your immigration status is generally the same as your entry visa classification. On arrival in the United States, the customs or immigration official retains the Arrival portion of the I-94, notes your immigration status (nonimmigrant classification such as H-1, J-1 etc.) on the Departure portion, and gives you the I-94 (Departure) card. Unlike your entry visa, your immigration status may be changed in the United States.

Those in J-1 (Researcher or Professor category) are allowed to stay for up to three consecutive years in that status. Those in H-1 status are allowed to stay a total of six years in H status but will only be approved for a maximum of three years at a time. O status can initially be granted for three years and can be renewed indefinitely in one-year increments by application to DHS.

**I-797 Approval Notice** • This is a one-page form issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) when an H-1 or O-1 I-129 Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker has been approved. It provides the dates of validity, and indicates if (1) a change of status has been approved, (2) an extension of status has been approved, or (3) a notification has been sent to the consulate listed on the petition.

**SEVIS** - SEVIS is an acronym for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a data collection and monitoring system that creates an interface between institutions of higher education, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consulates and embassies abroad, and ports of entry. Schools are required to make regular electronic updates in SEVIS throughout each semester on the records of enrolled students in F-1 and J-1 status-and their dependents-and researchers and faculty in J-1 status. This includes, but is not limited to enrollment status, changes in address, changes in level of study, employment recommendations, and school transfers.

**Certificate of Visa Eligibility (Form DS-2019)** • Scholars coming to the University in J-1 status will receive a Certificate of Visa Eligibility (DS-2019). This document certifies eligibility for an entry visa and must be

shown to an immigration official at the time of entry into the United States in order to enter in J-1 status. The Certificate of Visa Eligibility for Nonimmigrant J-1 Exchange Visitor Status is commonly known as the DS-2019. This is the document issued by the program sponsor, i.e., the university, government agency or other organization sponsoring the visit, for presentation at a United States consulate abroad to obtain a J-1 Exchange Visitor entry visa. Those in J-1 status must also present the DS-2019 to a United States immigration official upon entry into the United States. The completion date on the DS-2019 must not expire if there is to be an extension of the original program. Notification of an extension of the program must be made to the United States Department of State (DOS), the government agency that regulates J Exchange Visitor activities. The maximum length of stay in J-1 Researcher or Professor category is usually three years. The DS-2019, when properly recertified by an ISSO or IAO adviser, serves (for the period of its validity) as a reentry document after short trips abroad. We urge you to make copies of all pages of any DS-2019 stamped by Immigration upon entry into the U.S. and store these separately. Retain these originals for your records.

**Duration of Status (D/S)** • Those in J-1 status are admitted with the notation “D/S,” indicating “Duration of Status,” on the I-94 card. Duration of status is the period of time in which the J-1 Exchange Visitor continues to be engaged in the employment or research activity as reflected on the DS-2019 (in section 3, which covers the dates of validity, and section 4, which describes the scholar’s activity). At the conclusion of the J-1 program, those in J-1 status have an additional thirty-day “grace period” in which to travel in the United States and/or prepare for departure. Those in H-1 or O-1 status are admitted to the United States until a date specified on the I-94 card.

**Foreign Residence Requirement** • Scholars in J-1 immigration status and their dependents may be subject to a “foreign residence requirement.” J-1 scholars who receive direct or indirect United States or home government funding, or who are working in fields for which personnel are considered in short supply in their home countries (most developing nations have “Country Skills” lists of varying lengths), are ineligible to apply for a change to most other nonimmigrant statuses (except A or G) or permanent residence in the United States until they have satisfied the “two-year home country physical presence requirement.”

Only those in J-1 status with government funding or whose skills are on the Country Skills List are subject to the foreign residence requirement. This means that, upon completion of the program of study, they must reside in their country of last legal permanent residence for two years before they are eligible to apply for entry into the United States on an immigrant visa or on specialized work visas (H or L). There is no foreign residence requirement for those in any other nonimmigrant status.

**Twelve-Month Bar** • J-1 Scholars in Professor or Researcher category and any dependents are not allowed to return to United States in J-1 status for twelve months if the scholar has been in the United States for more than six months in J-1 status (any category) within the last year and is not “extending” their status or “transferring” from one program to another based on the Exchange Visitor Program’s definition of “extending” or “transferring.” Short-term Scholars are not subject to this restriction.

**Medical Insurance** • Scholars in J-1 status and their dependents are required to have comprehensive medical coverage in order to fulfill U.S. government regulations governing the J Exchange Visitor status. Currently Columbia University offers a comprehensive medical insurance package for full-time employees, which covers all requirements for those in J immigration status. Check with your departmental administrator to see what benefits you qualify for. If you purchase insurance other than the insurance offered through the University for your dependents or yourself, it may cost as much as \$3,000 per year in excess of the usual living expenses. Refer to the section *Overview of Health Insurance in the United States* for more information.

**Social Security Numbers** • United States federal regulations require that all persons who are employed in this country have a Social Security number. The University requires a Social Security number, or a receipt that application has been made, in order to be processed for the payroll. If you do not have a Social Security number, you must apply for one at a Social Security office as soon as you arrive in the United States, as you are not allowed to do so abroad as a nonimmigrant. Application information is in the section “Tax Issues for International Scholars” of this handbook.

## Message for Canadian Scholars

In terms of immigration regulations, the only difference between Canadians and other international scholars coming to the United States is that Canadian citizens are not required to have a passport for entry from Canada and do not require application to a U.S. consulate for an entry visa.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that other regulations that apply to international scholars do not apply to them. Canadians are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirements of maintaining employment and all other provisions for maintaining status. It is especially important for Canadian scholars to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as visitors.

Although current US immigration law does not require Canadians to have a passport when entering the U.S. from Canada, it is advisable to bring it when you come to the United States. Those entering the U.S. to work or do research at Columbia should request the appropriate status (J-1, H-1 or O-1) at the border and must always show the Form DS-2019 or I-797 and supporting documentation to the immigration inspector. Otherwise, the scholar will be admitted in Tourist (B-2) status and will not be able to take advantage of the special benefits allowed those in J-1 or H-1, such as employment. More importantly, it is a violation of B-2 status to work in the United States. Canadian scholars must have an I-94 card to confirm current scholar status. Canadian citizens not entering the U.S. directly from Canada need a valid passport but no entry visa.

Other than applying for a visa, it is important that you read about and abide by all other provisions relating to scholar status.

# How to Obtain J-1 Immigration Status at Columbia University

The following information is provided to help you get to Columbia in the appropriate immigration status in conformance with the regulations of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Please carefully read and follow these procedures.

Please note that there are two major offices that handle the immigration documents of Columbia University students. Some sscholars studying at the Medical Center campus are served by the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) and others by the Immigration Affairs Office (IAO). You can determine which office to contact by looking at the name of the office indicated on your Form DS-2019.

**Canadian Nationals** • Please note that Canadians do not need entry visas to enter the United States. Those entering the United States in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program should request J-1 status at the border and must always show the Form DS-2019 to the Immigration inspector. Otherwise, you will be in Tourist (B-2) status and will not be able to take advantage of the special privileges allowed those in J-1 status. Canadians must have an I-94 card to confirm current J-1 status, which is given by Immigration at the time of entry into the United States.

## If You are Outside the United States

You must first apply at a [U.S. Consulate or Embassy](#) for an entry visa. You will need your visa certificate, Form DS-2019, and, of course, your country's passport. You may also need a little patience. Follow instructions given on the specific Consulate's website.

Please look at the Department of State's website on how to apply for a J-1 visa (<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/pdfs/gettingavisa.02.03.pdf>) for specific instructions. Also be sure to follow the State Department [Visa photo requirements](#). If your family name is different from that of your dependents, be prepared to show documents that prove your relationship.

Original documents will be necessary with your application for a visa. Consular standards for visa

eligibility may be considerably more rigorous than the standards you must meet to qualify for a DS-2019. The consular officer will require you to provide the same (and possibly additional) financial documentation you provided Columbia University. You will be required to show this documentation again upon arrival in the United States at your port of entry.

On occasion, a consular officer may require evidence of English proficiency sufficient to pursue your proposed employment or program. Check directly with the consulate at which you plan to apply for your J-1 entry visa for application procedures. All applications must be made in person, and may cause unanticipated delays. The length of visa validity, number of entries permitted, and application fee are based on reciprocity and generally reflect your country's policies in granting visa privileges to visiting U.S. scholars. In the wake of the attacks of 9/11/01, the U.S. Department of State has put in place procedures that are currently causing severe delays in issuing visas. For more information, see the State Department's [Visa information](#) and [Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry](#).

Individual procedures and the amount of time required to obtain a visa vary from country to country. The consular officer has the final word on your application; his or her judgment is not subject to review. If, for any reason, you encounter difficulties, please contact the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office.

## If You are Already in the United States

**Changing Status in the United States** • If you do not plan to leave the United States before beginning your work or research at Columbia and you are currently in an immigration status other than J-1, you will be required to change your status by application to the USCIS. Changing your status in the United States can be problematic, so please consult an ISSO (212-854-3587) or IAO adviser (212-305-5455) for more information.

**Continuing** • If you are in J-1 Researcher or Professor category and continuing your work or research at the University, the United States Department of State (DOS) Exchange Visitor Program must be informed. In order to extend your J-1 employment authorization and legal stay

in the United States, your department initiates an application to the ISSO or the IAO. After the ISSO or the IAO receives the letter from your department and prepares a new DS-2019, you must bring your passport, I-94 card (and those of your accompanying dependents), and current DS-2019 to the ISSO or the IAO so that we may complete the procedure. Note that an extension of your program must be completed before the ending date on the current DS-2019 form. J-1 scholars are allowed to stay in this immigration status for three consecutive years. Refer to “Two Year Bar” below.

**Transferring Scholars** • As a J-1 Exchange Visitor in Researcher or Professor category you are allowed to stay in the United States for a maximum of five consecutive years. During this period you may transfer from one program sponsor to another within the same category of Researcher or Professor. The “responsible officer” of the program from which you are transferring needs to assign a transfer date in the SEVIS database before Columbia University is allowed to issue a new DS-2019 for transfer to Columbia. It is essential that the transfer of visa sponsorship be concluded before your authorized period of stay from your first program sponsor has expired. This is extremely important. Refer to “Two-Year Bar” below.

**Two-Year Bar** • According to DOS regulations, a scholar (and any dependents) who has been in the United States in J-1 status (any category except short term scholar) within the last two years is not eligible for a new DS-2019 to return to the United States in J-1 status for two years, UNLESS it is for the purpose of a continuous extension of their status or a continuous transfer from one J-1 program to another. If you plan to leave the United States and return in the future as a J-1 researcher or professor, consult the ISSO or the IAO at least two months before the end date of the program in Section 3 of your DS-2019 to discuss the options available to you.

**If You Will Be Accompanied by Dependents** • If your dependents (spouse or unmarried children under twenty-one years of age) will accompany you to the United States or will be joining you shortly after your arrival, you will need to provide the ISSO or the IAO with additional documentation showing your ability to meet your dependents’ expenses. Upon receipt of the required information we will send you the document needed by your dependents to apply for a visa.

## J-1 Arrival on Campus: Reporting to the ISSO

### SEVIS Registration Requirement

**Shortly after your arrival in New York, you must report to the ISSO with your documents. The ISSO must update your SEVIS record with a NY-area address (even if it’s temporary) and change your status from “initial” to “active”. This is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and must take place within 30 days of your program start date, or your SEVIS record will automatically be “terminated” and you will be out of status.**

**Background** • All prospective scholars coming in J-1 status have been issued the relevant documentation through a database referred to as SEVIS, an acronym for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. This was designed by the government as both a data collection and a tracking system that creates an interface between institutions of higher education, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consulates and embassies abroad, and ports of entry. Schools are required to make regular electronic updates in SEVIS throughout the academic year on the records of their enrolled students and scholars in F-1 and J-1 status—and their dependents. Information to be updated includes, but is not limited to, enrollment status, changes in address, changes in level of study, employment recommendations, and school transfers.

When you arrive at a US port of entry, the immigration inspector will update your SEVIS record with information about your arrival. The school (or agency, in the case of some J-1 scholars) that issued your document will receive an electronic notification of your arrival. Your status in SEVIS is “initial”, but must be changed to “active” within 30 days of the program start date in order for your SEVIS record to remain valid.

### SEVIS Address Requirement for J-1 Scholar

**Upon your *initial* arrival in the U.S. to work or engage in research at Columbia, you must notify the ISSO of your**

local address in person or on-line at [https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US\\_address\\_report/US\\_address\\_form.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/US_address_report/US_address_form.html). Thereafter, you must notify ISSO of any change in address within 10 days of moving by completing the [Change of Address Form \(https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address\\_change.html\)](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/address_change.html) online. The ISSO and IAO are responsible for updating your address electronically in your SEVIS record.

## How to Obtain H-1 or O-1 Immigration Status at Columbia

**Canadian Nationals** • Please note that Canadians do not need entry visas to enter the United States. Those entering the United States to work should request the appropriate status (H-1, O-1) at the border once an I-797 approval notice has been received from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Otherwise, you will be in Tourist (B-2) status and cannot be employed at Columbia University. Canadians must have an I-94 card to confirm current H-1 or O-1 status, which is given by an immigration official at the time of entry into the United States.

### If You are Outside the United States

You must first apply at a [U.S. Consulate or Embassy](#) for an entry visa. Applicants for an H-1 or O-1 visa will need their country's passport and the original Form I-797 approval notice or a cable sent to the consulate stating that the requested status has been approved. You may also need a little patience.

Please look at the Department of State's website on how to apply for a worker visa

([http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1271.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1271.html)) for specific instructions. Also be sure to follow the State Department [Visa photo requirements](#). If your family name is different from that of your dependents, be prepared to show documents that prove your relationship.

Original documents will be necessary with your application for an entry visa. The consular officer will require you to provide the same (and possibly additional)

financial documentation you provided Columbia University. You will be required to show this documentation again upon arrival in the United States at your port of entry.

On occasion, a consular officer may require evidence of English proficiency sufficient to pursue your proposed employment. . Check directly with the consulate at which you plan to apply for your entry visa for application procedures. All applications must be made in person, and may cause unanticipated delays. The length of visa validity, number of entries permitted, and application fee are based on reciprocity and generally reflect your country's policies in granting visa privileges to visiting U.S. citizens. For more information, see the State Department's [Visa Information](#) and [Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry](#).

Individual procedures and the amount of time required to obtain a visa vary from country to country. The consular officer has the final word on your application; his or her judgment is not subject to review. If, for any reason, you encounter difficulties, please contact the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office.

### If You are Already in the United States

**Changing Status in the United States** • If you do not plan to leave the United States before beginning your work or research at Columbia and you are changing status to H or O, an application must be made in your behalf by the academic department to the ISSO or the IAO, which will file a change of status application with the DHS.

**Continuing** • If you are in H or O status, an application to DHS similar to the initial application for this status must be filed. The scholar's department initiates this application to DHS through the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office. The application to extend your status should begin six months before the expiration of your current H or O status. H-1 scholars are allowed to stay in that classification for a maximum of six years. The O-1 classification has no maximum period of stay.

**Transferring Scholars** • Those in H or O status must complete an application to DHS similar to the initial application for this status. The scholar's department initiates this application to DHS through the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office. H-1 scholars are allowed to stay in that classification for a maximum of six years. The O-1 classification has no maximum period of stay.

## Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry

There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study in the United States. Heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001 have resulted in delays in visa issuance abroad—regardless of whether you are applying for first or subsequent visas.

Security checks, interview requirements, and transfer of data in SEVIS are causing extended delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> and its link to individual consular posts at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies\\_1214.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html) may be good sources of current information.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also has a useful Information Sheet entitled "Arrival at a US Port of Entry... What a Student or Exchange Visitor can Expect" highlighting the necessary steps and procedures you will face. It may be accessed at [http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/factsheet/100104ent\\_st\\_dnt\\_fs.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_st_dnt_fs.htm)

### VISA INTERVIEW REQUIREMENT

On May 21, 2003 the Department of State announced a new policy that will require almost all non-immigrant visa applicants to be interviewed before a visa is issued, with very few exceptions. This represents a big change in procedures for many consular posts, and is likely to slow down the process significantly.

### SEVIS REQUIREMENTS FOR J-1 VISA ISSUANCE

The DS-2019 form for J-1 visa applicants are processed and issued through the internet-based Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS). Visa officers are required to verify your record—and that of any dependents—in the SEVIS system before a visa can be approved. There have been some SEVIS data transfer problems and delays between the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. If the visa official is unable to access your record in SEVIS and you have a DS-2019, please contact the ISSO by e-mail, phone or fax to alert us to the problem so we can follow up on it.

### TECHNOLOGIES ALERT LIST AND SENSITIVE AREAS OF RESEARCH

Students, faculty and researchers who are considered to be studying, researching or teaching "sensitive areas" as determined by the U.S. government may also be required to undergo security clearances before a visa can be issued. There is a document called the "Technology Alert List" that visa officers consult for this purpose. China, India, Israel, Pakistan and Russia have received special mention by the U.S. State Department in the context of this list because these countries are considered to possess nuclear capability that is of concern to U.S. national security. However, even if you are not a citizen of one of the countries listed above, your field of study (especially if it is in the sciences, technology or engineering) might require your visa application to undergo a security clearance REGARDLESS of the country you are from. Such clearances can add weeks to the amount of time needed for visa approval. There are sixteen broad subject areas listed on the Technology Alert List, with detailed specializations within each broad area. Further information can be found at <http://www.foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0940031X1.pdf>.

If your field of research is in the sciences or engineering and it is not on the technology alert list, you should request a letter from your employer or academic advisor that explains your research topic in laymen's terms. This may help avoid the security clearance.

## **FORM DS-157: SUPPLEMENTAL NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION**

This Department of State form supplements the DS-156 application for a non-immigrant visa. It is required of all males (except those with diplomatic status) between the ages of 16 and 45, and may be requested of any visa applicant, regardless of age, gender, or nationality. (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/state006020.html>) In addition to completion of this form, the DOS continues to require a further security check for men from countries with large Muslim populations.

### **NAME CHECK BY DOS AND DHS**

The ‘name check lookup’ is conducted by the State Department at the time of visa application and by the Department of Homeland Security at the port of entry—irrespective of whether the visitor holds a valid visa. This name check has recently resulted in unexpected and severe problems for non-immigrants—some arising from previous overstay(s), others from discovery of a record of illegal activity in the United States, and others because of mistaken name matches with listings in the database.

### **SPECIAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN FOREIGN NATIONALS**

Since September 11, 2002, certain non-immigrants are required to be fingerprinted and photographed at U.S. ports of entry and to make physical appearances to the local United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office at specified intervals during their stay in the United States.

Currently, the published registration rule applies without exception to nationals or citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Sudan. This list is subject to change at any time, and registration may be required of any non-immigrants of any nationality who are deemed by a consular officer or inspections officer to require closer monitoring.

If you undergo Special Registration when you arrive, failure to comply with ongoing requirements has severe consequences. Requirements are described at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/nseersfs120103.htm>.

## **Arrival at a U.S. Port of Entry**

### **WHAT TO HAVE WITH YOU**

Carry your ORIGINAL documents on your person or in a carry-on bag rather than packed in your luggage. You will have to present them to the immigration inspector upon your arrival, and you won't have access to your luggage until *after* you go through immigration inspection.

Your documents may include:

- Valid, unexpired, passport (for at least six months into the future) with a valid, unexpired entry visa
- Your DS-2019 visa certificate or I-797 Notice of Action, original supporting financial documents, such as letter of appointment or bank statements  
marriage license, medical records if applicable

### **Immigration Inspection and Document Processing**

On the plane, a flight attendant will distribute the I-94 Arrival /Departure form to non-immigrants. You should complete the white form, NOT the green form that is for tourists from certain countries who are eligible for a 90-day visit without a visa.

### **Immigration Inspection**

Upon arrival, you will go first to immigration inspection. The immigration inspector will need to see the appropriate visa page in your passport and the appropriate supporting documents.

Present your passport with an entry visa with Columbia University noted on it (if it is your initial entry in this status), form DS-2019 or I-797 and the I-94 form that you completed on the plane. The inspector will keep part of the I-94 Arrival/Departure form, and return the bottom portion to you. In addition to the date and place of entry, the inspector will add a written notation that says "admitted as J-1 for D/S" (D/S signifies *duration of status*) if you are entering in J-1 status or "admitted as H-1 or O-1 until (the end date on the I-797) if you are in H-1 or O-1 status.

**Canadian citizens:** Canadians should bring their passports for entry and for other purposes such as obtaining a social security number and driver's license.

Although exempt from the visa requirement, Canadian must present form DS-2019 to be admitted in J-1 status, or form I-797 for H-1 or O-1 status, and must obtain an I-94 card as described above. *It is essential that you be issued an appropriate I-94 card. If this does not occur, you will be considered a tourist, not be able to be employed or engage in research while here in the United States.*

**Dependents:** If you are coming with your spouse and/or children, then the same attentiveness to how their admission is processed applies. Dependents of J-1 scholars should enter as “J-2 for D/S”. Dependents of H-1 scholars enter as “H-4 for (end date on the I-797).” Dependents of O-1 scholars should enter as “O-3 for (end date on the I-797).”

#### **Update of SEVIS Record, if you enter in J-1 status**

In addition to processing the I-94 card, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will access the SEVIS record that corresponds to your unique SEVIS ID number and update the record with information on your entry. Columbia University is notified electronically of your arrival through your SEVIS record.

#### **BE PREPARED!**

It is to your advantage to know what to expect and to be mindful of what occurs at the port of entry. Immigration inspectors see many people in the course of a day, and one must allow for human error. Some inspectors may be less familiar with these documents than others. Having your documents processed properly at the time you arrive is extremely important. The I-94 card does not appear significant, but is the most important immigration document you will possess. It is the only document with a record of the *status* in which you were admitted to the United States, the date on which you entered, and at which port of entry. It is difficult and expensive to replace, and you are advised to make a photocopy of it and keep it in a safe place. Often, the immigration officer will staple it into your passport.

## **Packing for New York**

### **Weather**

During the summer, June through September, the weather is often hot and humid and requires lightweight clothing. The temperature ranges from 70 degrees Fahrenheit (21 degrees Celsius) to the 90s (above 32 degrees Celsius). A raincoat and an umbrella will be useful as there is considerable rain.

The winter season, late November through March, is marked by sudden and extreme weather changes; several days of cold weather may be followed by days of moderate temperatures. The range in winter is between 20 degrees Fahrenheit (-7 degrees Celsius) and 45 degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius), and occasionally the temperature drops to zero (-18 degrees Celsius). Days with snow or rain alternate with periods of clear and bright weather. The area around Columbia is quite windy.

The spring and fall seasons are generally moderate, the temperatures ranging from the 40s Fahrenheit (4.5 degrees Celsius) to the 70s (20s Celsius).

Updated weather information for New York City can be found on the The Weather Channel web page:

<http://www.weather.com>

## **What to Bring**

When you arrive to the United States, it is important to carry the following documents on your person or in carry-on luggage:

- Passport: valid at least 6 months into the future
- Visa Stamp: should be stamped inside passport (excluding Canadians)
- DS-2019 issued by Columbia University

- Funding documentation: this may include personal bank statements, financial aid award, award letter from your department
- Street address where you will spend your first night in New York

The documents listed above are the most crucial ones that you could be required to present at the port of entry. In addition, the following items are strongly suggested:

- Credit Card that you can use in the US
- ATM card
- US Currency
- US Traveler's Checks
- Medications you use regularly; extra prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. Many drugs in the U.S. require a prescription from a doctor, so if you have a chronic health problem that requires medication, it is recommended to bring enough to last a while.
- Valuables such as jewelry, or items that can't be replaced if luggage is lost, such as personal photos or letters
- Experienced travelers recommend a change of clothing and toiletry items in case of unexpected delays, missed flight connections, or lost luggage

Moving overseas, and starting school in a new country can be an exciting, and rewarding experience that you will stay with you for a lifetime. However, it can also be intimidating, frustrating, and at times seemingly inconvenient. We offer the following packing suggestions that may make your time in the US more comfortable:

**1. Pack lightly:** You will be responsible for carrying your own luggage, and often arrivals at New York (or any US airports) can be overwhelming. The last thing you want to worry about is your fleet of 50 pieces of luggage! Remember that anything you forget, you can purchase here. New York City is a major shopping metropolis, and almost anything you would want to buy is only a bus or subway ride away.

**2. Clothes and Fashion:** Refer to the section above that discusses the weather conditions here in New York. As a guideline, you should plan on bringing a variety of clothing options to accommodate Summer, Fall, and Winter. Since summers can be very hot and humid, you may wish to pack shorts, t-shirts, and sandals. Fall weather can vary in temperature, and anything from light-weight jackets to leather jackets are typically worn. The winter months call for warm overcoats, scarves, and

winter boots. Since all buildings are heated, clothes of medium weight that you can layer provide the maximum comfort. If you are from a country that does not experience cold weather, you may want to wait to purchase a winter coat here in New York.

Footwear should be comfortable for walking. Sneakers are most common, as are boots during the Fall into Winter. Summers call for sneakers or sandals. Dress at Columbia is typical of student style on most college campuses- casual. Students typically wear jeans, sneakers, and t-shirts. You may wish to pack a few semi-formal/formal items for special occasions. Also, depending on your major, a suit may be a good thing to have handy.

**3. Household Items:** It is recommended to purchase most of your household items (cooking and eating supplies, small electrical appliances, bed sheets and towels) here in the US. These items can add unnecessary weight when you travel, and most can be found for moderate prices. In particular, electrical items from your home country may not be compatible with the US electrical supply and usage may not be permitted in the university residence halls.

**4. Mementos from Home:** You may want to consider bringing some reminders of your home. Photographs of family, and friends, or other small significant items can be very comforting when you're in unfamiliar surroundings.

**5. Additional:**

- Camera
- Small souvenirs from your home to give as gifts
- CDs or cassette tapes of your favorite music
- Alarm clock
- Umbrella

## Getting to Campus

### Transportation from Airports

Columbia University is in the borough of Manhattan in New York City. The main entrances to the Morningside campus are at either Broadway or Amsterdam Avenue and W. 116th Street. The center of the Medical Center campus is located at W. 168th Street and Fort Washington Avenue.

The New York City area is served by three airports. John F. Kennedy (JFK) Airport and LaGuardia Airport are in the borough of Queens, and Newark Airport is in the state of New Jersey. JFK is approximately twenty-five miles from Columbia, LaGuardia is approximately fifteen miles from Columbia, and Newark is about twenty miles from Columbia. Most international students will arrive at JFK. Transportation costs more to come from Newark Airport because it is in another state. LaGuardia Airport has international flights from Canada and Mexico only. All three airports have Ground Transportation Information Counters on the lower baggage claim level.

### **Baggage Claim**

After going through Immigration Inspection, you will walk to 'Baggage Claim' where you will get your suitcases. You can get a luggage cart for a few dollars by putting in U.S. dollars or by swiping a credit card. Depending upon what terminal you arrive in, the cart dispenser could be located near the baggage claim or it could be found right after immigration inspection. If you see the carts, don't wait, just get one! They disappear quickly. After loading your baggage on the cart, head to the "Ground Transportation Desk".

## **Transportation Options**

### **By Taxi**

The easiest way to come to the University from the airport is by taxi. Follow the "Taxis" signs to the uniformed taxi dispatcher. The dispatcher will give you a card with the number of the cab assigned to you and the approximate fare you can expect to pay at your final destination. You should ride only in a licensed yellow taxi from the designated taxi stand outside the baggage-claim area. Do not go with anyone who may approach you in the airport offering you a "good deal" on a ride to the city.

### **Other Options**

In addition to taxis, there are also private buses, van service, and public transportation, including subways and city buses. All are described at:

[http://www.nyctourist.com/travel\\_airports.htm](http://www.nyctourist.com/travel_airports.htm)

### **Baggage**

Baggage cannot be left at the airport, nor will baggage be accepted by any department or school of the University,

the International Students and Scholars Office, or the Immigration Affairs Office. Students who have received confirmation of a room reservation at a University residence hall may send prepaid baggage directly to the address. It will be accepted during the ten days before the beginning of the term. Write your name, residence hall room number, and the address of your residence hall clearly on the shipping ticket.

Small trunks and suitcases that you are carrying with you can usually be transported by taxicab. The charge for carrying a trunk in a cab is usually about \$2; there is no charge for carrying suitcases.

## **Useful Maps**

NYC Subway

<http://www.mta.info/nyct/maps/index.html>

Manhattan Street map

<http://www.aaccessmaps.com/show/map/manhattan>

Interactive Campus map

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/aboutcolumbia/maps/index.html>

## University Offices and Resources

- I need an ID card  
ID Office, 204 Kent Hall, 212 854-4323  
F-1 or J-1 Students must have registered for their courses in order to receive their ID cards. Visiting scholars should bring their visiting scholar designation letter; faculty and researchers should bring their departmental appointment letter.  
[www.columbia.edu/cu/id/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/id/index.html)
- I need an e-mail account  
Academic Information Services, 101 Philosophy Hall, 212 854-1919  
Once registered for classes, students may register for an e-mail account at any CUNIX public terminal. [www.columbia.edu/acis](http://www.columbia.edu/acis)
- I want to learn about the Columbia Libraries  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/>
- I want to find the University Bookstore  
The Columbia University Bookstore is in Alfred Lerner Hall, Broadway and 115<sup>th</sup> Street.  
[www.bkstore.com/columbia/](http://www.bkstore.com/columbia/)  
Many course-related materials are also sold at Labryinth Bookstore at 536 West 112<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue), 212 865-1588, [www.labyrinthbooks.com](http://www.labyrinthbooks.com)
- I want to go to the gym  
Marcellus Hartley Dodge Physical Fitness Center, near Broadway and 120<sup>th</sup> Street next to Havemeyer Hall, 212 854-2548
- I want to improve my English skills  
Columbia University's American Language Program offers courses in English as a Second Language (ESL). See <http://www.ce.columbia.edu/alp> or call 212 854-3584  
  
Teachers College offers inexpensive ESL classes, taught by TC students who are ESL teachers in training. The Community English Program, 212 678-3279 or 212 678-3097,  
<http://www.tc.edu/centers/communityenglish/>  
  
Teacher's College has a writing skills center  
<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/writingcenter/>

- I want to learn more about renting a Columbia apartment  
CU Housing Info for New Tenants at  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/>

## Welcome to New York

### All about New York

Explore New York City with one convenient click of the mouse in a resource page compiled by Columbia University Libraries. The best sites for every category you can think of are here.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/nyc/>

### Getting around Manhattan

#### A Brief Orientation

Manhattan is quite easy to navigate. Named and numbered avenues run north-south from 1st Avenue in the east to 12th Avenue in the west. Cross streets run east-west from 14th Street to the northern tip at 215th Street. Broadway cuts diagonally across the length of Manhattan from a northwest to southeast direction.

If you are presented with an avenue address (such as 524 Amsterdam Avenue or 411 Third Avenue), call ahead to determine the cross street, or use a Manhattan Address Locator found in telephone and guidebooks as well as on-line at <http://www.ny.com/locator/>

Fifth Avenue is the dividing line between East and West. Building numbers go up in both directions from Fifth Avenue, so an address which is, for example, 12 East 23rd Street is in the first block east of Fifth, and the address 12 West 23rd Street is on the first block west of Fifth. Note that Central Park divides the east and west side of the city between 59th and 110th Streets.

Invest in a good street map and NYC guidebook soon after your arrival, and you're sure to make good use of it throughout your stay.

## Public Transportation

The New York City subway system covers 231 miles of track in the five boroughs of New York City—Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island. It runs every day of the year, 24 hours a day, although with reduced frequency late nights and weekends. The subway system is a great, fast way to get around, avoiding above-ground traffic.

Riding buses when you have the time is enjoyable, for the obvious reason of being able to look out the window and see the changing neighborhoods. You board the bus at the front, and pay by using a MetroCard or having \$2 in change. (No bills or pennies are allowed)

Bus drivers stop at bus stops only if there is someone waiting there, or if someone on the bus presses the “stop requested” strip located between windows in advance of the stop. It’s a good idea to take a bus late at night when traveling alone rather than a subway.

## Using a MetroCard

MetroCards are electronic fare cards that are used for public transportation (subways and buses) in all five boroughs of New York City. The basic fare as of June 2003 is \$2.00, regardless of distance.

There are two kinds of MetroCards:

1. The Unlimited Ride MetroCard lets you ride all you want for a specific time period (from when you activate it, not when you buy it)
  - a. the 1-Day Fun Pass for \$7, which allows unlimited usage from the moment it is activated on a bus or subway turnstile until 3:00 a.m. the next day. This is very handy and economical on any day when you know you’ll need to make more than 3 trips on buses and/or subways.
  - b. the 7-Day (\$21) card; and
  - c. the 30-Day Metrocard (\$70).

2. The Pay-Per-Ride MetroCard can be bought in denominations from \$4 to \$80. Put \$10 or more on your card and receive a 20 percent bonus. For example, a \$20 purchase gives you \$24 on your card—12 trips for the price of 10. You get an automatic free transfer between subway and bus, or between buses, within a two-hour period from the time you pay your first fare. For maps

and schedules of NYC transportation and commuter rail lines, see <http://www.mta.info/metrocard/index.html>.

## Taxis

Taxicabs (called “cabs” or “taxis” are yellow and have a medallion number on the top of the roof. If it is lit up and says “on-duty”, it is available. The passenger is charged by the time and distance on a meter. It is usual to tip the driver 10-15% of the fare. It is also possible to use private car services by calling in advance to pick you up. One reliable car service in the Columbia neighborhood is AA Car Service at 212 866-3434, usually arriving within minutes of your call.

## Settling In

### Local Post Offices

- West 104<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue) 212 662-0355  
Monday - Wednesday 8:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Thursday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Friday 8:00 am - 7:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 534 W. 112<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue) 212 864-7813  
Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 365 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street (near St. Nicholas Avenue) 212 662-1540  
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- 511 W. 165<sup>th</sup> Street (off St. Nicholas Avenue) 212 568-2387  
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

ZIP (postal) codes are required for all U.S. mailing addresses. The correct ZIP code for a particular address can be found using the ZIP Locator on the United States Postal Service website at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

## Shopping

### Food (Supermarkets)

- Apple Tree - 1225 Amsterdam Avenue at 120<sup>th</sup> Street
- Citarella's - Broadway and 75<sup>th</sup> Street
- C-Town - 125<sup>th</sup> Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue
- D'Agostino - Broadway and 110<sup>th</sup> Street
- Fairway - 131<sup>st</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. by the Hudson River; also Broadway and West 74<sup>th</sup> Street
- Met Foodmarket - 1316 Amsterdam Avenue between 123-124<sup>th</sup> Street
- Morton Williams - Broadway and West 115<sup>th</sup> Street
- Zabar's - Broadway and 80<sup>th</sup> Street

### Specialty / Ethnic Foods

You can find foods from all over the world in NYC. Here is a very short list:

- All ethnic foods: Soho Provisions at 518 Broadway
- Asian foodstuffs: Asia Market at 71½ Mulberry Street
- British food items: Myers of Keswick at 634 Hudson Street
- Chinese: Chinese American Trading Company at 91 Mulberry Street
- Chinese Bakery: Fung Wong Bakery at 30 Mott Street
- German specialties: Schaller & Weber at 1654 Second Avenue
- Greek specialties: Likitsakos at 1174 Lexington Avenue between 80-81<sup>st</sup> Streets.
- Titan Foods at 25-56 31<sup>st</sup> St. L.I.C., NY 11102 (Tel:718 626-7771 or <http://www.titanfood.com/main.htm>)
- Indian and Middle Eastern Spices: K. Kalustyan at 123 Lexington Avenue, 28-29<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Foods of India at 121 Lexington Avenue
- Italian specialty foods: Melampo at 105 Sullivan Street between Spring and Prince Streets
- Raffetto's Corporation at 144 West Houston Street between Sullivan and MacDougal Streets
- Japanese foods at Katagiri & Company at 224 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues
- Japanese products at Yohan Plaza - 595 River Road, Edgewater, New Jersey, 201 941-9133. Special shuttle leaves from Port Authority Bus Terminal platform 51 every hour
- Korean: Han Arum at 25 West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Polish specialties: East Village Meat Market at 139 Second Avenue
- Vietnamese specialties: Thuan-Nguyen Market at 84 Mulberry Street

- West African specialties: West African Grocery at 535 Ninth Avenue

### Furniture and other Items for Your Room or Apartment

- Bed Bath & Beyond - 620 Avenue of the Americas (between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets), 212 255-3550. Also on Second Ave. and 61<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Century 21 - 22 Cortlandt Street 212 227-9092
- Columbia Hardware - 2905 Broadway (between 113<sup>th</sup> and 114<sup>th</sup> Streets), 212 662-2150
- Crate & Barrel - 650 Madison Avenue (59<sup>th</sup> Street), 212 308-0011
- Discount Stores - 32<sup>nd</sup> Street (between Broadway and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Odd Job, Weber's, Jack's and more...
- Gothic Cabinet Craft - 2652 Broadway (between West 100<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Streets), 212 749-2020
- House of Futon - 637 Broadway (between Bleeker and Houston Streets, in SoHo), 212 529-9190
- IKEA - Call 1800 BUS-IKEA for a weekend bus schedule from Port Authority at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue East. (The ISSO has a bus from campus to IKEA the last four Thursdays in August—check the ISSO On-Line Calendar for details.)
- Kmart - 1 Pennsylvania Plaza at 250 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues), 212 760-1188
- Macy's Herald Square - 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 695-4400
- 99¢ Discount Store - between Broadway and Amsterdam on West 125<sup>th</sup> Street
- Pottery Barn - 1965 Broadway at West 67<sup>th</sup> Street, 212 579-8477
- Webers - East side of Broadway at 71<sup>st</sup> Street
- Zabar's (Upstairs) - 2245 Broadway (between 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Streets), 212 787-2000

### Used Furniture and Other Household Items

- Aunt Meriam's - 435 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street 212 531-0322
- Columbus Avenue Flea Market at 77<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbus Avenue on Sunday
- Flea Market - 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue on Saturday and Sunday
- Salvation Army - 536 West 46<sup>th</sup> Street (between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue), 212 664-8563, and 268 West 96<sup>th</sup> Street at Broadway, 212 663-2258

### **Computers, Telephones, and Other Electronic Items**

- CompUSA Superstore - 1775 Broadway (at 57th Street and 8th Avenue), 212 262-9711
- Gateway Country - 4 Columbus Circle (on 8th Avenue between 57th and 58th Street. 212 246-5575, <http://www.gateway.com/index.shtml>)
- J& R Computer World and J&R Music World, 15 Park Row (Ann and Beekman Streets) 212 238-9100 <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/sales/>
- Radio Shack - 2812 Broadway at 108th Street, 212 662-7332
- The WIZ - 2577 Broadway at 97th Street, 212 663-8000

### **Bicycles, Rollerblades, and other Sports Equipment**

- Blades, Board and Skate - 120 West 72nd Street, 212 787-3911
- Eastern Mountain Sports - 20 West 61st Street (between Broadway and Columbus Avenues), 212 397-4860
- Modell's Sporting Goods - 300 West 125th Street (between St. Nicholas Avenue

## **Staying Safe at Columbia and in NYC**

New York presents some of the same security concerns as any other urban area, but by using common sense and caution, you can do a great deal to increase your personal safety. These are some tips to follow.

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Express yourself with confidence and control (i.e., when you're asking for directions or walking alone), rather than with fear or anxiety.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable about where you are, or are suspicious of someone near you, leave or stay away.
- Let roommates, friends, or partners know where you will be, when to expect you, or if you're going to be late or out of town.
- Avoid walking (and exercising) alone—have a friend, roommate, or partner join you. At the Morningside Heights campus, if you cannot find someone to walk with you from 8 PM to 3 AM, call Columbia's escort service at x4-SAFE / -7233. Outside of the se hours, call Columbia Security at ext. 2798 for an escort. For the Medical Center campus, call x7-8100 twenty-four-hours-a-day for an escort. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to call for an escort—your safety, well-being, and peace of mind are at stake.
- At night, take the well-lit and well-traveled paths. Avoid shortcuts through dark or isolated areas.
- Be prepared and ready with your keys before you approach your residence hall, apartment, home, or automobile.
- If you think someone is following you, don't lead her/him to your destination — instead, abruptly change directions. If this person continues to follow you, get help at a public place.
- Be aware of your valuables and belongings, such as your backpack, handbag, or wallet. Even if you're in a "safe" place for a short time, take them with you rather than leave them behind.
- When taking the bus or subway, stick with well-lit, and preferably well-peopled, bus stops and subway platforms. When riding the bus, sit near the driver. When riding the subway, avoid the isolated sections of the platform, such as the ends, and avoid the empty or fewer-peopled subway cars. Don't sleep on the bus or subway. Also be aware of who gets off the bus or subway with you. Head directly to a public place, such as a store, restaurant, or residence hall, if you feel that someone is following you.
- Be an active, safety-conscious student: notify Columbia's Facilities Management Department at x4-2275 (Morningside) or x7-7367 / -8100 (Medical Center) about broken lights, emergency call boxes, windows, doors, locks, etc. Report all crime(s) to Columbia's Department of Security or the police precinct (for Morningside Heights, the 26th Precinct number is 678-1311; for Medical Center, the 33rd Precinct number is 927-3200).

(This information was adapted from crime prevention material supplied by The National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, D.C., Copyright 1995.)

Free shuttle service (with Columbia ID) is available between the Morningside Heights and Medical Center campuses, and also within the Morningside Heights area at night. Call x4-2796 for more information and a current schedule. In case of an emergency situation, you can contact Columbia's Department of Security at x4-5555 (Morningside) or x7-7979 (Medical Center).

## Housing Information

### Temporary Housing Options

This list of temporary housing options has evolved over several years in collaboration with the Off-Campus Housing Assistance office (OCHA). Accommodations are not inspected or "approved" by the ISSO or OCHA. Listing of accommodations does not constitute recommendation of such facilities, nor is the accuracy of the description verified.

You should check current availability and the cost of the accommodations when making a reservation; prices noted here were effective in May 2003 but change seasonally. Mention that you are a Columbia student/affiliate to receive possible discounts.

All listing are located in Manhattan unless otherwise indicated. Hotels near the airports are grouped together at the end of this document. An asterisk (\*) indicates walking distance to Columbia.

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#### **INSTITUTIONAL GUEST ROOMS WITHIN THE COLUMBIA NEIGHBORHOOD**

Please note that most of the following have a maximum of 7 nights stay. These rates do not include tax and are subject to change seasonally.

#### **\*INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

500 Riverside Drive (at W. 122 St.)  
New York, NY 10027  
Phone: (212) 316-8473

<http://ihouse-nyc.org/>

11 Guest Rooms (maximum stay is 30 days)  
Single/Double: \$115-140  
Triple: \$135-145

#### **\*TEACHERS COLLEGE**

1230 Amsterdam Ave. (at W. 120 St.)  
(212) 678-3235

12 Guest Rooms; complex pricing structure from \$45 - \$100 per night for singles, doubles, and suites with kitchen/bath. Call for details M-F.  
<http://www.tc.edu/housing/>

#### **\*UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY - LANDMARK GUEST ROOMS**

3041 Broadway (at W. 121 St.)  
212-280-1313

<http://www.uts.columbia.edu>

25 Guest Rooms. Single/Double: \$120 and up (w/private bath)  
Complimentary breakfast included M-F. Local calls are free.

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#### **DORM-STYLE / HOSTEL ACCOMODATIONS**

This type of accommodation usually has fully furnished private or shared rooms, shared bathrooms, and sometimes a kitchen available. There is usually a maximum stay of 28 days.

#### **BIG APPLE HOSTEL**

119 W. 45<sup>th</sup> St. (between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.)  
(212) 302-2603

[www.bigapplehostel.com](http://www.bigapplehostel.com)

Shared room \$33

Private room \$90

Shared bathrooms. Includes cable TV and linens.

Maximum stay is 21 days.

#### **CHELSEA CENTER HOSTEL**

313 W. 29<sup>TH</sup> St. (between 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.)  
(212) 643-0214

Daily: \$30

Shared rooms and baths. Includes breakfast and linens.  
Kitchen available.

Maximum length of stay is one week.

**CHELSEA INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL**

251 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7 & 8 Ave.)

Phone: (212) 647-0010, Email:

[chelsea\\_international\\_hostel@msn.com](mailto:chelsea_international_hostel@msn.com)

[www.chelseahostel.com](http://www.chelseahostel.com)

Dorm: \$27

Private room: \$65

Shared cooking facilities, laundry, shared baths. Lockers available. Does not provide towels or locks for lockers.

Must present passport.

**DE HIRSCH RESIDENCE**

(Operated by the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street YM-YWHA)

1395 Lexington Avenue (At 92<sup>nd</sup> Street)

Phone: (212) 415-5650; (800) 858-4692; Fax: (212) 415-5578

[www.92ndsty.org](http://www.92ndsty.org) or [www.dehirsch.com](http://www.dehirsch.com)

Single: \$1,095 and up/month

Double: \$895 and up/person/month

Minimum stay is 30 days and maximum is one year.

Share baths and kitchens. Must apply a couple of months in advance. Fully furnished.

**HARLEM YMCA**

180 W. 135<sup>th</sup> Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> & Lenox Avenues)

Phone: (212) 281-4100

Private room \$50, Doubles \$100 per day (shared bath)

Doubles or Private room w/ private bath \$125 per day

Private room: \$150/week/seniors (65+), \$350/week all others. \$175/week/students

Microwave available, linens provided. Maximum stay is 28 days.

**\*HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL**

891 Amsterdam Avenue (At 103<sup>rd</sup> Street)

Phone: (212) 932-2300, Email: [hiayhnyc@aol.com](mailto:hiayhnyc@aol.com)

[www.hostelling.com](http://www.hostelling.com)

Daily: \$29 - 35/day (HI members), \$32 - \$38/day (non-members)

Includes linens and towels, shared kitchen and bath.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER**

38 W. 88<sup>th</sup> Street (at Central Park West)

Phone: (212) 787-7706; Fax (212) 580-9283

Daily: \$20

Reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance, or check possible availability the morning you wish to stay. 2-week maximum stay. Provides linens, shared bath & kitchen, no lockers, but there is a safe.

**\*JAZZ ON THE PARK**

36 W. 106<sup>th</sup> Street (between Central Park West and Manhattan Avenue)

Phone: (212) 932-1600

[www.jazzonthepark.com](http://www.jazzonthepark.com) or [jazzonthepark@hotmail.com](mailto:jazzonthepark@hotmail.com)

Daily: \$27-\$30 (dorm room)

Weekly \$200 - rates are for Columbia University students and affiliates only.

Includes full continental breakfast. Offers organized events and jazz in the evenings. Karaoke and BBQ on Saturdays.

**VANDERBILT YMCA**

224 E. 47<sup>th</sup> Street (between Second & Third Avenues)

Phone: (212) 756-9600; Fax (212) 752-0210

Daily: \$65 – 79/single/double occupancy/shared bath

Premium Rooms: \$95-135

**WEST SIDE YMCA**

5 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street (at Central Park West)

Phone: (212) 875-4100; Fax: (212) 875-1334

[www.ymcanyc.org](http://www.ymcanyc.org)

Daily: \$59 – 69

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**ACCOMMODATIONS RUN BY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Usually private furnished rooms with shared bath. No cooking facilities but may have up to 2 meals provided. Usually require reservations a few months in advance.

**THE BRANDON**

340 W. 85<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: (212) 496-6901

[brandon@voa-gny.org](mailto:brandon@voa-gny.org)

Daily: \$60, Monthly: \$895 – \$1067

Shared bath, 2 meals per day. Housekeeping Services. 24/7 Front Desk. Women only.

**CENTRO MARIA RESIDENCE**

539 W. 54<sup>th</sup> Street (Between Tenth & Eleventh Avenues)

Phone: (212) 757-6989; Fax: (212) 307-5687

Single: \$175/week

Double: \$150/person/week

Curfew 11:30 PM. Breakfast and dinner included. \$85 registration fee is nonrefundable. Student rate available. Operated by the Religious Sisters of Mary Immaculate.

**Women only, Must be 18-29 Years of age.**

**EL CARMELO RESIDENCE**

249 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 242-8224; Fax: (212) 242-7233  
Weekly: \$160  
Variable rates depending on length of stay. Curfew.  
Breakfast and dinner included five days a week. **Women only, must be between 18-30 years of age.**

#### GREENPOINT YMCA

99 Meserole Avenue, Brooklyn  
Phone: (718) 389-3700 ext.13; Fax: (718) 349-2146  
Daily: \$43 – 58, Weekly: \$231-350  
Shared bath. Full access to facilities. Breakfast included.  
10% student discount.

#### JAMAICA YMCA

89-25 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica (Queens)  
Phone: (718) 739-6600; Fax (718) 658-7233  
Daily: \$48, Weekly: \$332  
\$550/month for students w/ proof of registration.  
Student rate available w/ID. \$10 key deposit. 28 day maximum stay if non-student.

#### **JEANNE D'ARC RESIDENCE**

253 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 989-5952  
Monthly: \$300-500  
Long waiting list, call at the end of the month for application. Prefer three-month minimum stay. **Women only.**

#### **KOLPING HOUSE**

165 E. 88<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 369-6647; Fax: (212) 987-5652  
Daily: \$50  
Weekly: \$165  
Includes lunch or dinner M-F. Shared bath. Make reservations 3 months in advance. Maximum stay 3 months. Preference given to graduate or international students. Operated by the Catholic Kolping Society of New York. **Men only.**

#### **MARKLE EVANGELINE RESIDENCE**

123 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 242-2400; Fax (212) 229-2801  
Weekly: \$140 – 240  
Includes 2 meals of choice per day. Shared baths.  
Minimum stay of one month. Application needed 4-6 weeks in advance. Operated by the Salvation Army.  
**Women only.**

#### **PARKSIDE EVANGELINE RESIDENCE**

18 Gramercy Park South  
Phone: (212) 677-6200; Fax: (212) 677-0640  
Weekly: \$198 – 227  
Private and shared baths. Operated by the Salvation Army. Includes 2 meals per day. Three month minimum stay. **Women only.**

#### **PENNINGTON FRIENDS HOUSE**

215 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street (Near Third Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 673-1730  
Daily: 80-115  
Monthly: \$622-961.  
Operated by the Quaker community. Breakfast and dinner included.

#### **SACRED HEART**

432 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street (between 9-10 Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 929-5790; Fax (212) 924-0891  
Weekly: \$240  
Breakfast and dinner included Monday through Friday, curfew. **Women only.**

#### **ST. MARY'S RESIDENCE**

225 E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 249-6850; Fax: (212) 249-4336  
Weekly: \$165 - \$215 depending on length of stay.  
Shared bath. Two years maximum stay. No meals served – kitchenette available. No smoking building. **Women only.**

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#### **HOTELS**

Generally indicates that no kitchens—or meals are provided. Some have a choice of private or shared bath.

#### **ABINGDON GUEST HOUSE**

13 Eighth Avenue (between 12 St & Jane St.)  
Phone: (212) 243-5384; Fax: (212) 807-7473  
[abingdon@msn.com](mailto:abingdon@msn.com) or [www.abingdonguesthouse.com](http://www.abingdonguesthouse.com)  
Daily: \$137 and up. Private rooms and baths.

#### **AMSTERDAM INN**

340 Amsterdam Ave. (at W. 76 St.)  
(212) 579-7500  
<http://www.nyinns.com/>  
Daily: \$59 - 129  
Private rooms with private or shared baths.

#### **BEACON HOTEL**

2130 Broadway (between 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Streets)  
Phone: (212) 787-1100  
[www.beaconhotel.com/](http://www.beaconhotel.com/)  
Daily: \$145 – 195  
Private baths.

**BELVEDERE HOTEL**

319 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (407) 740-6442; Fax: (407) 740-8222  
[info@reservation-services.com](mailto:info@reservation-services.com) or [www.reservation-services.com](http://www.reservation-services.com)  
Daily: \$125 - 210

**BEST WESTERN/WOODWARD**

210 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 247-2000; Fax: (212) 581-2248  
Daily: \$169 - 299

**CARLTON ARMS HOTEL**

160 E. 25<sup>th</sup> Street (Off Third Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 679-0680  
[www.carltonarms.com](http://www.carltonarms.com)  
Daily: \$60 (single) - \$117 (4 people) per night reflects discounted student rate. Further weekly discount available.

**CHELSEA STAR HOTEL**

300 W. 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 244-7827 or toll free (877) 827-6969  
Dorm Rooms: \$30/day  
Single: \$69 (with shared bath)  
Double: \$89 (for the room with shared bath)

**CHELSMORE APARTMENTS**

205 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
(212) 924-7991 press #2 for reservations  
[www.chelsmore.com](http://www.chelsmore.com)  
Monthly: \$1,500-3,000. Furnished and unfurnished apartments.

**DOUBLETREE GUEST SUITES**

1568 Broadway (at W. 47<sup>th</sup> St.)  
(212) 719-1600  
Single: \$239  
Double \$269 and up  
Microwave and refrigerator in rooms.

**EDISON HOTEL**

228 W. 47<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: 212 - 840-5000

[www.edisonhotelnyc.com](http://www.edisonhotelnyc.com)  
Daily: \$160

**EXCELSIOR HOTEL**

45 W. 81<sup>ST</sup> St. (between Central Park West & Columbus Ave.)  
(212) 362-9200  
[www.excelsiorhotelnyc.com](http://www.excelsiorhotelnyc.com)  
Daily: \$140 and up

**GERSHWIN HOTEL**

7 E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street (between Fifth and Madison Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 545-8000 Fax: (212) 684-5546  
<http://newyork.citysearch.com/E/V/NYCNY/0003/99/26/>  
Dorm Style: \$33-53 (shared bath)  
Private Style: \$99 – 219 (economy suite)

**GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL**

<http://www.gramercyparkhotel.com/>  
Two Lexington Ave  
Phone: (800)-221-4083, Fax: (212)-505-0535  
Rates from \$210

**HABITAT HOTEL**

130 E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street (on 57<sup>th</sup> and Lexington Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 753-8841; Fax: (212) 829-9605  
[info@stayinny.com](mailto:info@stayinny.com) or [www.habitatny.com](http://www.habitatny.com)  
Daily: \$105-155  
Shared and private bath

**HOTEL BELLECLAIRE**

250 W. 77<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway & West End Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 362-7700, Fax: (212) 362-1004, Toll Free: (877) 468-3522  
[www.hotelbelleclaire.com](http://www.hotelbelleclaire.com)  
Daily: \$99-159  
Private art deco rooms with shared bath, 18 night maximum stay  
Special rate for students/affiliates of Columbia

**HOTEL LUCERNE**

201 W. 79<sup>th</sup> St. (at Amsterdam Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 875-1000  
<http://www.thelucernehotel.com/>  
Single/Double: \$130-170  
Junior Suite: \$210  
Parking: \$25

**HOTEL NEWTON**

2528 Broadway (at W. 94<sup>th</sup> St.)  
(212) 678-6500  
<http://www.thehotelnewton.com/>  
Single/Double: \$95 and up  
Parking: \$20

#### **HOTEL WALES**

1295 Madison Avenue (at 92<sup>nd</sup> Street)  
Phone: (212) 876-6000  
[www.boutiquehg.com](http://www.boutiquehg.com)  
Daily: \$139-329

#### **HOWARD JOHNSON**

851 Eighth Avenue (at 51<sup>st</sup> Street)  
[www.hojo.com](http://www.hojo.com)  
Phone: (212) 581-4100; Fax: (212) 974-7502  
Daily: \$89 – 299 (depending on season)

#### **LEO HOUSE**

332 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.)  
Phone: (212) 929-1010  
Daily: \$62 – 78  
Shared or private bath.

#### **MILBURN HOTEL**

242 W. 76<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and West End Avenue)  
Phone: (212) 362-1006  
[www.milburnhotel.com/](http://www.milburnhotel.com/)  
Studio: \$135/day  
Suite: \$165/day (up to 5 people can be accommodated in Suites for an additional per person charge). Mention that you are from Columbia University.

#### **MURRAY HILL INN**

143 E. 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 545-0879; Fax: (212) 545-0103  
[www.murrayhillinn.com](http://www.murrayhillinn.com)  
Daily: \$99-109. Single occupant room with private bath.

#### **PARK SAVOY HOTEL**

158 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street (between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues)  
Phone: (212) 245-5755; Fax: (212) 765-0668  
[www.citysearch.com](http://www.citysearch.com)  
Daily: \$85-155

#### **PORTLAND SQUARE HOTEL**

132 W. 47<sup>th</sup> Street (between Avenue of the Americas and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Phone: (212) 382-0600 or (800) 388-8988; Fax (212) 382-0684  
Daily: \$65/shared bath/\$110-160/private bath

#### **QUALITY HOTEL ON BROADWAY**

215 W. 94<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 866-6400 or (800) 695-8284; Fax: (212) 866-1357  
Daily: \$90 and up

#### **RADIO CITY APARTMENTS**

142 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street (between Avenue of the Americas and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue)  
Phone: 1-(877) 921-9321 or (212) 730-0728; Fax: (212) 921-0572.  
<http://www.radiocityapartments.com/>  
Daily: \$152 and up

#### **RIVERSIDE TOWER HOTEL**

80 Riverside Dr. (at W. 80 St.)  
(212) 877-5200  
[www.riversidetowerhotel.com](http://www.riversidetowerhotel.com)  
Single: \$98  
Double \$100  
Suites: \$115-150 (up to 5 people)  
Cooking facilities

#### **RIVERVIEW HOTEL**

113 Jane Street (between Washington St. & the West Side Highway)  
Phone: (212) 929-0060; Fax: (212) 675-8581  
[hriverview@aol.com](mailto:hriverview@aol.com)  
Daily: \$40 single, \$65 double (shared bath)  
Weekly: \$202 single, \$306.50 double (shared bath)  
[www.hotelriverview.com](http://www.hotelriverview.com)  
No private baths, theater on premises.

#### **SEAFARER INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

15<sup>th</sup> Street & Irving Place  
Phone: (212) 677-4800 [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org)  
Daily: \$50  
Shared bath. Students need letter from their school verifying current registration or a valid student ID card. MasterCard or Visa needed to hold reservation. Maximum stay is 21 nights.

#### **TRAVEL INN**

515 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> St.  
(212) 695-7171  
[www.nyhotel.com](http://www.nyhotel.com)

Single/Double: \$125-250  
Free Parking

#### **WESTPARK HOTEL**

6 Columbus Circle, at 58<sup>th</sup> St.  
Phone: (212) 246-6440 or (800) 248-6440; Fax: (212) 246-3131  
[Westparkny@aol.com](mailto:Westparkny@aol.com) or [www.westparkhotel.com](http://www.westparkhotel.com)  
Daily: \$139-249

#### **WYNDHAM HOTEL**

42 W. 58<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phone: (212) 753-3500  
Daily: \$140 – 170

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#### **AIRPORT HOTELS**

To make a reservation any of the following hotels near New York's three airports, call 1-888-382-7213 in the US or 516-771-7213 from outside US or go to <http://www.bookahotel.com/bookahotel.htm> and select "New York Airport Hotels".

#### **JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT (JFK)**

The following hotels are located four miles from JFK Airport and twenty miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to JFK. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking. Cancellation policy 24hrs in advance.

#### **SHERATON FOUR POINTS**

151-20 Baisley Blvd  
Single: \$139  
Double: \$149

#### **HOLIDAY INN AT JFK**

144-02 135th Avenue  
Single: \$149  
Double: \$159

#### **RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL**

Only hotel located in JFK Intl Airport  
Single: \$139  
Double: \$149

#### **PAN AMERICAN HOTEL**

79-00 Queens Blvd  
Single: \$129  
Double: \$149

Located six miles from JFK airport and five miles from LaGuardia airport. Has free shuttle pick up and drop off to both JFK and LaGuardia airports.

#### **LA GUARDIA AIRPORT (LGA)**

The following hotels are located one mile from LaGuardia Airport and eight miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to LaGuardia. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking. Cancellation policy 24hrs in advance.

#### **CLARION HOTEL LAGUARDIA**

9400 Ditmars Blvd  
Single: \$126  
Double: \$135

#### **CROWN PLAZA LAGUARDIA**

104-04 Ditmars Blvd  
Single: \$159  
Double: \$169

#### **LAGUARDIA MARRIOTT**

102-05 Ditmars Boulevard, East. Elmhurst (Queens)  
Phone: (718) 565-8900; Fax: (718) 898-4955  
<http://marriotthotels.com/marriott/>  
Single: \$139 and up.

#### **PAN AMERICAN HOTEL**

79-00 Queens Blvd  
Single: \$129  
Double: \$149

Located six miles from JFK airport and five miles from LGA airport. Has free shuttle pick up and drop off to both JFK and LGA airports.

#### **NEWARK AIRPORT (EWR)**

The following hotels are located three miles from Newark Airport and about twelve miles from NYC. They have free shuttle pick up and drop off service to Newark. All have restaurants, bars, cable TV, and parking.

#### **RAMADA HOTEL AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

US 1&9 at Haynes Avenue  
Single: \$109  
Double: \$119

#### **DAYS INN NEWARK AIRPORT**

450 Route 1 South

Single \$100  
Double \$115

#### **HOLIDAY INN NORTH AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

160 Frontage Road  
Single: \$115  
Double: \$129

#### **ECONOLOGDE AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

853 Spring Street  
Single: \$65, Double: \$75  
No restaurant.

#### **HILTON HOTEL AT NEWARK AIRPORT**

1170 Spring Street  
Single: \$159, Double: \$169

## **Non-University Housing**

Non-University housing is difficult to find and rentals are extremely expensive. If you hope to obtain non-University housing, try to come to New York *at least* three weeks ahead of time, and pre-arrange a temporary place to stay for one to two weeks. It is recommended you start your search no earlier than four weeks before your desired move-in date, and that you be as flexible as possible with your plans. An investment of time and money early on in your search may save you a good deal of both in the longer term.

**The Off Campus Housing Assistance (OCHA) office is a University office that can be very helpful in your search.** OCHA has information about various neighborhoods, relationships with reputable real estate brokers, and maintains online listings of non-Columbia owned rooms and apartments for lease, sublet, or share—long or short term, furnished or unfurnished—throughout New York City. You must have a Columbia ID and password to access their online listings, but you may arrange access by sending a copy of appointment letter. Details are available on the OCHA Web site at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/ocha>. Of special interest on this site is a section called *Tips on Apartment Hunting*. The OCHA office is located at 419 W. 119th Street, lower level, between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive. OCHA's phone number is 212-854-2773 and the office is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday..

You will need to have immediate access to cash so that you can provide the deposit after you are approved for an apartment. It would be wise to bring your funds to the United States in U.S. dollar traveler's checks. Your funds will be insured against loss or theft and traveler's checks are easily given to the real estate broker or landlord for your deposit. When renting a room or an apartment, you should always request a lease with all relevant charges noted, such as rent, and any other costs charged to you (electricity, gas, etc.) from the landlord. Without a lease, you have no binding agreement, and your landlord may decide to alter arrangements previously agreed upon.

When you are apartment hunting, you will be making a lot of phone calls and you will need to leave a number at which you can be reached. It can be inconvenient to make these calls from public phones, and costly from a hotel room. You can make this easier if you set up wireless/cellular service for a month soon after arrival.

Many of the following companies offer short-term *pre-pay for minutes* plans without a contractual obligation. Some companies to look into are:

Sprint PCS (<http://www.sprintpcs.com/>)

Verizon ([www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com))

T-mobile (<http://www.t-mobile.com/>)

Cingular ([www.cingular.com](http://www.cingular.com))

OCHA has a list of dealers nearby.

## University Housing Information

At present, because the demand for housing greatly exceeds the supply of available apartments, only full-time, compensated Officers of Instruction and Research, including those with visiting appointments, full-time Officers of the libraries, and Senior Officers of Administration (Grades 14 and above) are eligible to apply for housing. For housing information for faculty and administration

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/housfac.html>

Post-doctoral fellows interested in obtaining University Housing should apply directly through their Faculty sponsors or Department Chairs.

## Immigration Regulations Governing Your Stay

### Your Legal Obligations

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It is your responsibility to maintain your status with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). That is, you are responsible for finding out, knowing, and following pertinent regulations. If you take time early on to familiarize yourself with your obligations to the DHS, you should find it easy to maintain your legal status. If, however, you allow yourself to become “out of status,” you may be subject to serious repercussions that may impede your ability to return to the United States in future years.

If you have any questions you should consult the staff of the ISSO or the IAO. Every effort has been made to provide reliable and accurate information on rules that govern scholar immigration classifications. When regulations change—as is frequently the case—the ISSO or the IAO will have up-to-date information. Come in and ask questions anytime. As your visa sponsor, Columbia University has legal obligations that are met by the ISSO or the IAO.

## How to Maintain Legal J-1 Scholar Status

The guidelines listed below apply to individuals in J-1 status in the category of Research Scholar or Professor. If you follow them, you should have few problems maintaining your immigration status.

**1. Keep your passport valid.** Refer again to “Immigration Definitions”.

**2. Never stay in the United States beyond the permissible time.** In J-1 status there is a “grace period” of thirty days in which to prepare for departure beyond the completion date on the form DS-2019. However, if you complete your purpose for being in J status earlier than the indicated date, you must leave the United States earlier. It may also be possible to apply for a change of status to another immigration status within the appropriate time allowed, if eligible.

**3. Accept no employment of any kind, either on or off campus, without written permission from the**

## **International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office.**

Working without proper authorization is considered to be the most serious violation of non-immigrant status. If you refer to your I-94 you will see the statement “Warning—a nonimmigrant who accepts unauthorized employment is subject to deportation.” It is most important, therefore, that you consult with the ISSO or the IAO before you accept an offer of employment or begin to work. Refer to [Employment for J-1](#) Scholars. We will advise you whether it is possible for you to work and assist you with the appropriate documents. Please bear in mind that it is illegal to begin to work in anticipation of being granted permission to do so; you must have permission first.

### **4. Have medical insurance at all times.**

Regulations require those in J status to have very comprehensive medical insurance covering the scholar and all dependents. Refer to [Health Insurance for J-1 Scholars](#) for more information about complying with these requirements.

### **5. Notify the appropriate office if there is any change in address.**

If you are in J-1 status, complete the on-line [address change form](#) in order for the ISSO to notify SEVIS, the DHS database. If you are under the sponsorship of an Exchange Visitor Program other than Columbia, such as CIES, you must notify them directly of any address change.

### **6. Obtain extensions, as needed, of your permission to stay in the United States.**

Those in J-1 immigration status are admitted to the United States for “duration of status”, or D/S. The completion date in section 3 on the DS-2019 represents the period of time for which you are employed at Columbia or for which you have been designated a Scholar. If you require and are eligible for additional time, you will need to apply for an extension with your visa sponsor (the ISSO or the IAO for Columbia-sponsored scholars—IIE, Amideast, Laspau, etc. for others). Your department should request the extension from the ISSO or the IAO at least ninety days before the completion date on your DS-2019. If eligible, we will update your SEVIS

record and issue a new DS-2019 form. This MUST be done BEFORE the current form expires.

### **7. Inform the ISSO or the IAO of the intention to transfer your J-1 sponsorship to another institution in a timely manner.**

As a J-1 Exchange Visitor in the Research Scholar or Professor category, you are allowed to stay in the United States for a maximum of five consecutive years. During this period you may transfer from one program sponsor to another within the same category, consistent with the original objectives in coming to the U.S. as a J-1 Exchange Visitor. The “responsible officer” of the program from which you are transferring needs to assign a “transfer out” date in the SEVIS database on which the next school will gain access to your record to issue a new DS-2019 for transfer. It is essential that the transfer of visa sponsorship be concluded BEFORE the authorized period of stay from your first program sponsor has expired.

### **8. If there are any changes contemplated to your employment or program, e.g. salary, title or rank, completion date, funding, department, or immigration status, you must notify the ISSO or the IAO immediately.**

Additionally, if you are leaving Columbia earlier than the completion date on your DS-2019 form, you must inform the ISSO or IAO.

## **How to Maintain Legal H-1 or O-1 Status in the United States**

**1. Keep your passport valid.** Refer again to “Immigration Definitions”.

**2. Notify the appropriate office if there is any change in address.** All non-immigrants are required to notify the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within 10 days of a change of address. If you are in H-1 or O-1 status, notification is accomplished by completing Form AR-11, downloadable from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), and mailing

the completed form to USCIS. It is advisable to send the AR-11 by certified mail, return receipt requested.

**3. Accept no employment of any kind other than that which is authorized by your H-1 or O-1 petition.**

H-1 and O-1 status are employer-specific and, as such, do not allow you to accept compensation, including honoraria, from any other entity. You may have more than one employer at the same time, but each employer must file an H-1 or O-1 petition for you.

**4. Never stay in the United States beyond the date shown on your I-94 card.**

Keep in mind, however, that your status is dependent upon your continued employment. This means that if you complete your purpose for being in H or O status earlier than the date indicated on the I-94 card, you are no longer maintaining your status and must leave the United States earlier. There is no grace period for H-1 and O-1 status.

Two exceptions that allow you to remain in the United States with an expired I-94 card are :

- when a timely petition to extend your H-1 or O-1 status has been filed and the petition is pending with USCIS.
- when a timely application for a change of status has been filed and is pending with USCIS. A change of status must be filed before the current status expires. This allows you to remain in the U.S. after the I-94 card expires while the application is pending, but does not allow you to work during this time.

**5. Obtain extensions, as needed, of your permission to stay and work in the United States.**

H-1B1: Those in H-1B1 status are allowed to stay a total of six years\* in H status but will be approved for a maximum of only three years at a time. The earliest a petition to extend H-1 status can be filed is six months in advance of the expiration of the current approved petition. Departments are advised to apply for the extension early on as processing time by USCIS cannot be predicted or guaranteed. The H-1 petition for extension is the same as the original, except that you do not need to include

documentation relating to other non-immigrant status(es) you may have held prior to H-1, and that all prior H-1 approval notices (form I-797) should be included. If you have any dependents with you in H-4 status, they must have their status extended as well. An additional form I-539, and fee, must be included with your extension petition.

If a timely extension is filed (i.e. before the expiration of the current status), regulations allow individuals in H-1 status to continue to work for the same employer for up to 240 days while the extension petition is pending at USCIS. You will need to complete a new I-9 form with your department manager so that your salary is not interrupted.

O-1: O status can initially be granted for three years and can be renewed indefinitely in one-year increments by application to USCIS. The earliest a petition to extend O-1 status can be filed is six months in advance of the expiration of the current approved petition. Departments are advised to apply for the extension early on as processing time by USCIS cannot be predicted or guaranteed. The O-1 petition for extension does not need to include all the same documentation as required by the original. You should, however, update your C.V. and publications list, and include copies of one or two new publications, if available. If you have any dependents with you in O-3 status, they must have their status extended as well. An additional form I-539, and fee, must be included with your extension petition.

**6. Have an H-1 or O-1 petition filed by each concurrent or subsequent employer.**

Since H-1 status and O-1 status are employer-specific, an H-1B or O-1 petition approved for Columbia cannot be used to work anywhere else. A subsequent employer must also file an entire, new petition for you.

There is a "portability" provision in H-1 regulations which allows an applicant who is already in H1B status to begin working at the new employer as soon as that employer receives a notice of receipt for their H1B petition from the USCIS. This means that employment can begin before the processing and approval of the petition is complete. Portability does NOT apply to O-1 status. An individual in O-1 status must wait for the subsequent employer's O-1 petition to be approved before they can begin to work there.

**7. If there are any changes contemplated to your employment or program, e.g. salary, title or rank, funding, department, or immigration status, you must notify the ISSO or the IAO immediately.**

Also, the ISSO needs to be informed if you are leaving Columbia before the completion date of your approved petition.

**8. Columbia-sponsored H-1 visitors may engage in clinical research and patient care services ONLY if DHS has been notified and licensure and exam requirements have been met.**

Contact the IAO for further information.

## Employment for J-1 Scholars

If a scholar is sponsored by Columbia University's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program as a *Professor or Research Scholar* (see category indicated on the DS-2019, section 4), the scholar may apply for employment authorization in certain circumstances.

The most common employment authorization is that indicated on the DS-2019 issued by Columbia University which is used to enter the United States or to transfer from another program within the United States. This employment authorization requires a **University appointment** (i.e. Visiting Professor of Chemistry, Postdoctoral Research Scientist/Scholar in Microbiology) and is indicated on the DS-2019, with funding included in section 5.

**Occasional Lectures or Consultations**, either at Columbia University or elsewhere, must be authorized **in advance** of accepting the employment and must be in writing. The employment may be authorized if the proposed employment meets the following criteria:

- is directly related to the objectives of the Exchange Visitor's Program
- is incidental to the primary program activities

- will not delay the completion of the Exchange Visitor's Program

To obtain authorization for such incidental employment, the scholar should present the following documents to the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO):

- **A letter from the prospective employer** describing the terms and conditions of the proposed employment, including the duration, number of hours, field of study, amount of compensation, and a description of the activity for which the scholar is being hired.
- **A letter from the department head or academic sponsor** which includes the following:
  1. refers to the letter from the proposed employer
  2. confirms that the proposed employment is directly related to the scholar's principal reason for being at Columbia University, is indeed incidental, and will not delay completion of the program
  3. explains how the proposed employment would enhance the scholar's Exchange Visitor Program
  4. recommends approval of the proposed employment
- **DS-2019**
- **Passport and I-94 card**

Employment other than that defined by the University appointment held by a scholar must be authorized. The scholar must receive written authorization from the designated Responsible Office of the J-1 Program if a specific opportunity is approved. In the case of a Columbia University DS-2019, employment must be authorized by the ISSO.

**Note:** Visiting scholars/scientists (i.e. those designated by the Provost's Office and without a University appointment) may not be employed at Columbia University. However, a visiting scholar/scientist may, under certain circumstances, give up this designation and hold a University appointment, thereby allowing the scholar to be employed by Columbia University.

## Employment Authorization for Dependents in J-2 Status

**Eligibility:** Dependents of J-1 Exchange Visitors in J-2 visa status are eligible to apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for employment authorization. Bear in mind that J-2 dependents are NOT permitted to work or to receive a US Social Security Number until they have received an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from the USCIS. Expect the processing time for the EAD to be at least two to three months.

**How long may I work?** J-2 dependents with employment authorization may work until the date on the EAD card or until the J-1 principal visitor completes his or her program, whichever is earlier. J-2 dependents may apply to renew work authorization, as long as the J-1 visitor remains in status. If the J-1 receives an extension of stay, the J-2 dependent must re-apply for work authorization once the extension has been granted. We recommend that applications for extensions of the EAD be made at least 3 months in advance of the expiration date on the card.

**May I still work if the status of the J-1 ends?** If the J-1 visitor discontinues the program at Columbia or changes to another visa category, the work authorization for the J-2 dependent will be withdrawn. Legal work authorization for J-2 dependents is always dependent on the status of the J-1 principal.

**How do I apply?** A complete application must include all of the following:

Refer to the ISSO Website:  
([http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/faculty/J\\_dpt\\_mgr/J-2\\_employment\\_authorization.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/faculty/J_dpt_mgr/J-2_employment_authorization.html))

## Employment for H-1 Temporary Workers and O-1 Aliens of Extraordinary Ability

H-1 status is for temporary workers in a specialty occupation. The applicant for H-1 status must have a bachelor's degree equivalent or higher and the position that he/she will accept must require a bachelor's degree equivalent or higher. Columbia University petitions on behalf of each applicant for a specific position. Because

the petition is specific to the employment, those granted H-1 status may work only for the employer who filed the petition and only in the position for which the petition was filed. If there is a substantial change in this position, a completely new H-1 petition may be required.

Temporary workers with H-1 status may not accept employment at any other institution unless that institution files an H-1 petition for concurrent employment. This means that H-1 workers may not accept any other offers of employment, including fees for consultations or lectures at other universities, without specific authorization. Please direct any questions to the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office.

O-1 status is also employer specific. Those in O-1 status may not accept employment at any other institution unless that institution files an O-1 petition for concurrent employment. This means that O-1 workers may not accept any other offers of employment, including fees for consultations or lectures at other universities, without specific authorization. Please direct any questions to the International Students and Scholars Office or the Immigration Affairs Office.

### Dependent Employment

DHS regulations do not permit the spouse (H-4) of an H-1 Temporary Worker or the spouse (O-3) of an O-1 principal to apply for work permission.

## J-1 Exchange Visitor Travel Regulations

When leaving the U.S. temporarily during your program of study at Columbia, you will need to have the necessary documents to both permit entry to another country as well as to permit re-entry to the U.S. in J-1 student status. For travel to a country other than the home country, students should check with the consulates of the country they wish to visit for specific entry requirements. A list of consulates in Manhattan can be found at <http://www.citidex.com/252.htm>.

To travel outside the U. S. and return to the U. S. during your approved appointment period, you must:

1. **Carry a passport that will be valid for at least 6 months into the future from the day you return from your trip abroad.**
2. **Have your form DS-2019 recertified as needed.**

Your DS-2019 must be recertified once a year, for the length of the DS-2019. If you are traveling, your annual recertification should be done before your departure.

In order for your form DS-2019 to be recertified, you must maintain an affiliation with Columbia University and provide financial documentation covering all expenses for one year for both you and your dependents. Request recertification of your DS-2019 from the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) or the Immigration Affairs Office (IAO) at least five business days before you plan to leave.

3. **Have an unexpired J-1 entry visa stamp valid for further entries in your passport.**

Obtaining a new visa stamp: If you visit countries outside the U. S. other than Canada, the Caribbean (with the current exceptions of Cuba and Bermuda), or Mexico, you must have a valid J-1 entry visa stamp in your passport in order to return to the U. S. This is essential in addition to having a form DS-2019. If your visa is no longer valid, you must take your passport and DS-2019 to the nearest U. S. consulate or embassy in the country you are visiting to apply for a new visa stamp.

Evidence of financial support for your stay in the U. S. must also be presented when applying for a visa. If you have ever stayed in the U. S. beyond the date of your authorized permission to stay, you may not be able to obtain a visa in any country but your country of citizenship or permanent residence. If you believe that this restriction applies to you, please consult the ISSO or IAO before leaving the country.

4. **There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study in the United States.** Heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001 have resulted in delays in visa issuance abroad—regardless of whether you are applying for first or subsequent student visas in the F classification. Security checks for those whose field of research or study is deemed to be "sensitive", interview requirements for almost all non-immigrant visa applicants, and problems in transfer of data in SEVIS are causing extended delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> and its link to individual consular posts at <http://usembassy.state.gov/> may be good sources of current information. For more detailed information, refer to Potential Delays in Visa Issuance.
5. **Carry a recent letter stating that you are currently affiliated with Columbia University, your title, your duties, and your salary or your Visiting Scholar/Scientist Designation letter from the ISSO.**

### J-1 Dependents Traveling Alone

Dependents of J-1s must obtain an DS-2019 for J-2 before traveling abroad, if they will be returning to the U.S. unaccompanied by the J-1 principal. The DS-2019 issued to dependents is a replication of the J-1's DS-2019 annotated as being for use by dependents. Dependents must carry documentation showing sufficient funds to cover expenses (as shown on the DS-2019 ). Dependents wishing to return to the U.S. in J-2 immigration status may not be permitted to return unless the J-1's DS-2019 is valid at the time of the dependent's

return. Otherwise, documentary requirements are the same as those for holders of J-1 visas.

### **Travel to Canada, the Caribbean (except Cuba and Bermuda), or Mexico**

If you are traveling only to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean (except Cuba and Bermuda) for fewer than thirty days, you may not need to obtain a new visa stamp to return to the U.S. To qualify for this privilege, you must:

1. Be in lawful J-1 status.
2. Have an unexpired I-94 card with you when you return. Do not surrender it when you leave the U.S. If you do, you will need a valid entry visa to re-enter the U. S.
3. Have a passport valid at least 6 months into the future on the day you return.
4. Travel only to one of the destinations named above and for fewer than 30 days. For example, you cannot use revalidation to enter Canada, depart to another country, return to Canada and then return to the US within 30 days.
5. **Not** apply for a visa while in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean.  
If you apply for a visa while in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean, you must wait for it to be issued before you return. If your visa application is denied, you are not allowed to use "automatic revalidation" to return to the U.S. and must travel to your country of citizenship to apply for a new visa.
6. Have a current DS-2019 in your possession.
7. Have a J-1 visa (expired or valid) in your passport that matches the immigration status described by your I-94 card.  
If you have changed your non-immigrant status in the U.S., the visa in your passport probably corresponds to your previous non-immigrant status. You may use this visa to enter - even though it is for a different non-immigrant status- when entering the U.S. after less than 30 days in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean (except Cuba and Bermuda).
8. Be a citizen of a country other than Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, North Korea, or Libya. If you are a citizen of Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, North Korea, or Libya you do not qualify for this privilege. You are required to present all documents described

in this section, including a valid visa for your current status.

## **H-1B and O-1 Travel Regulations**

When leaving the U.S. temporarily during your program of study at Columbia, you will need to have the necessary documents to both permit entry to another country as well as to permit re-entry to the U.S. in J-1 student status. For travel to a country other than the home country, students should check with the consulates of the country they wish to visit for specific entry requirements. A list of consulates in Manhattan can be found at <http://www.citidex.com/252.htm>. You should check the US [Consulates](#) abroad website before you go to determine the current procedures in place for obtaining a visa. Recent regulations have caused considerable changes to these procedures.

To travel outside the U. S. and return to the U. S. during your approved appointment period, you must:

1. **Carry a passport that will be valid for at least 6 months into the future from the day you return.**
2. **Have a valid H-1B or O-1 entry visa stamp in your passport (unless you are a Canadian citizen).**

If you do not have an H-1B or O-1 visa, you must obtain it at the U. S. consulate in the country you are visiting. Refer to the U.S. Department of State Web site for information on obtaining a visa in the U.S. If you have ever stayed in the U. S. beyond the date of your authorized permission to stay, you may not be able to obtain a visa in any country other than your country of citizenship or permanent residence. If you believe this restriction applies to you, please consult the ISSO or IAO before leaving the country.

3. **There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study in the United States.** Heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001 have resulted in delays in visa

issuance abroad—regardless of whether you are applying for first or subsequent student visas in the F classification. Security checks for those whose field of research or study is deemed to be "sensitive", interview requirements for almost all non-immigrant visa applicants, and problems in transfer of data in SEVIS are causing extended delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors.html> and its link to individual consular posts at <http://usembassy.state.gov/> may be good sources of current information. For more detailed information, refer to Potential Delays in Visa Issuance.

4. **Carry the original Form I-797 which shows your H-1B or O-1 approval for Columbia University. If you do not have it, please request it from the ISSO or the IAO.** Do not give the original I-797 to the Consulate when applying for a visa. Bring the original to present to the consular officer but leave only a copy of the I-797 with your application. You may need the original I-797 in the future and it is extremely difficult to replace.
5. **Have a letter from your department that confirms your salary and employment dates.**
6. **Have your original I-94 card.**  
If you entered the U. S. in H-1B or O-1 status, you should have a separate I-94 card. The I-94 card will be taken from you upon departure from the U. S. and you will receive a new one upon your return.

**If you do not have a valid H-1B or O-1 visa** (and are not a Canadian citizen), you will need to apply for a visa at a U. S. Consulate overseas. You will need items 1,3, & 4 above. Remember, it is easiest to obtain a visa in your home country. If you have ever stayed beyond the date allowed in the U. S., you may be required to go to your country of citizenship or permanent residence in order to obtain a visa for the U. S. Do not give the original I-797 to the Consulate when applying for a visa. Bring the original to present to the consular officer but leave only a copy of

the I-797 with your application. You may need the original I-797 in the future and it is extremely difficult to replace.

**If you are traveling to a country other than that of your citizenship** (commonly called a "third country"), always call the U. S. Consulate in that country before leaving to determine what the procedures and time-frame for obtaining a visa, as each Consulate may request different documents to issue the visa. If difficulty in obtaining the visa is foreseen, you may wish to have the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) attest to your H-1B or O-1 status in the U. S. by requesting a cable to be sent to the U. S. consulate in the third country. This is done by filing an I-824 Request for Consulate Notification, which must be filed by Columbia University. Please contact the ISSO or the IAO for cost and details.

**If you already have a H-1B or O-1 visa stamp in your passport, but need it renewed in order to return to the U.S. AND you are traveling overseas for a short period of time and are worried that you will not have time to obtain a new visa, you may apply for a visa revalidation through the State Department in Washington D.C.** approximately one and one half months in advance of your departure. Detailed instructions are below.

**Revalidation of H-1B or O-1 Visa** - If you already have received an H-1B or O-1 visa that has currently expired, you may - with appropriate planning - obtain revalidation of the H-1B or O-1 visa by applying to the U. S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. Once a complete application has been made, it can take 8 or more weeks to receive a visa. Complete instructions on how to apply are available on the State Department Web site. Recently, the State Department has been denying visa revalidation to those who are subject to a security clearance. An interview, which can only be conducted at a US Consulate abroad, is required as part of the clearance, making visa revalidation impossible. If you do not know if you are subject to a security clearance, you may contact the ISSO or IAO for advice.

**Dependents in H-4 or O-3 Status** - If you are traveling with your dependents, be certain to carry all items listed above; your dependents must carry valid passports with valid H-4 or O-3 visa stamps. If your dependents will be traveling alone, they must carry the original form I-797 and employment letter in addition to passports with a valid H-4 or O-3 visa stamps. Please note that your

dependents in H-4 or O-3 status cannot be issued an H-4 or O-3 visa if you do not have an H-1 visa in your passport. If you made a change of status application in the U.S. and have not traveled abroad to obtain the H-1 visa, your dependents are not eligible for H-4 or O-3 visas at a U.S. consulate.

### **Travel to Canada or Mexico**

If you are traveling only to Canada or Mexico for fewer than thirty days, you will not need to obtain a new visa stamp to return to the U.S. To qualify for this privilege, you must:

1. Be in lawful H-1B or O-1 status
2. Have an unexpired I-94 card with you (do not surrender it when you leave the U.S.)
3. Have a passport valid at least six months into the future on the day you return
4. Travel only to one of the destinations named above and for fewer than 30 days. For example, you cannot use revalidation to enter Canada, depart to another country, return to Canada and then return to the US within 30 days
5. **Not** apply for a visa while in Canada or Mexico. If you apply for a visa while in Canada or Mexico, you must wait for it to be issued before you return. If your visa application is denied, you are not allowed to use "automatic revalidation" to return to the U.S. and must travel to your country of citizenship to apply for a new visa.
6. Have a current original I-797 Approval Notice in your possession
7. Have a H-1B or O-1 visa (expired or valid) in your passport that matches the immigration status described by your I-94 card (If you have changed your non-immigrant status in the U.S., the visa may correspond to your previous non-immigrant status before the change was granted.)
8. Be a citizen of a country other than Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, North Korea, or Libya (If you are a citizen of Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, North Korea, or Libya you do not qualify for this privilege. You are required to present all documents described under General Information, above, including a valid visa for your current immigration status.)

If you are in H-1B or O-1 status, you must have a valid passport, a valid I-797 Approval Notice and an I-94 card. If your I-94 card and I-797 are valid for H-1B or O-1

status and will not expire during your trip, you are eligible to enter the United States again even if your H-1B or O-1 visa has expired, unless you have applied for a new visa.

### **Other Travel Matters**

**Canadian visas:** At present, persons from many countries are required to obtain a Canadian entry visa when entering Canada from the U. S. Visas may be obtained from the Canadian Consulate General at 1251 Avenue of the Americas (at 50th Street., tel. 596-1600) between 8:00 and 10:00 am. Consult the Canadian Consulate General for visa regulations concerning your country before making travel arrangements.

**Mexican visas:** Tourists cards or visas may be required for travel to Mexico. Information is available from the New York Consulate General of Mexico, 27 East 39 Street, telephone (212) 821-0313 or 821-0378.

### **Travel Within the United States**

In general, no special permission is needed to travel within the continental U. S. However, we recommend you carry your passport and I-94 card when you travel any distance from home.

## **The Two-Year Home Country Residence Requirement**

The J-1 Exchange Visitor program is administered by the United States Department of State. Exchange Visitors (including students and scholars) are, under certain circumstances, subject to the "two-year home country residence requirement" which obligates some J-1 visa holders to return to their country of nationality or permanent residence for an aggregate of at least two years upon completion of their program. [Code of Federal Regulations 22 514.31 (a) (1)].

The two-year home country residence requirement *prevents an Exchange Visitor who is subject to the requirement from changing visa status to H temporary worker or trainee, L intra-company transferee, or*

*permanent resident of the U.S.*. The individual would not be permitted to change these categories at a U.S. Consulate outside the US until the requirement was satisfied or waived. The requirement also prevents the Exchange Visitor from changing status within the U.S. to any other nonimmigrant category, although it is possible to leave the U.S. and re-enter in a visa category other than H, L or permanent resident without first satisfying the two year requirement. Once the requirement has been fulfilled (i.e. the individual has been physically present in his or her home country for an aggregate of two years after completing the Exchange Visitor program), the individual is free to re-enter the U.S. in any nonimmigrant visa category for which he or she is qualified.

This requirement is imposed upon the J-1 Exchange Visitor under one or more of the following circumstances:

- When the Exchange Visitor's program is financed by the U.S. government or by the home country government. This includes, but is not limited to, Exchange Visitors whose visas were sponsored by organizations such as Fulbright, the Exchange Visitor Program, Organization of American States, Amideast, etc. Note: Funding that is part of a Columbia professor's government grant and which partially used as stipends or salaries for graduate students or research fellows is not considered government funding for this purpose.
- When the Exchange Visitor has acquired a skill which is in short supply in his or her own country, and that skill appears on the *Exchange Visitor Skills List* of the U.S. Department of State (published in the *Federal Register*, June 12, 1984, and subsequent updates). Refer to the document titled [United States Information Agency Country Skills List](#) for additional information. The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) has copies of this list.
- When the Exchange Visitor is a graduate of an international medical school participating in an internship, residency, or clinical training program in the U.S. sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG).

The two-year home country residence requirement and other conditions of J-1 status are explained to the J-1 Exchange Visitor on page 2 of the form DS-2019. The J-1 Exchange Visitor is required to sign both of these pages to signify that he or she understands the conditions before applying for the J-1 visa.

The U.S. Consular officer and/or the DHS officer at the port of entry usually makes a preliminary determination as to whether the J-1 Exchange Visitor is or is not subject to this requirement. The determination is noted on the Exchange Visitor's DS-2019 and/or on the visa page of the individual's passport. It is important, however, to realize that these notations are sometimes incorrect and that a final determination is made by the Department of State (see "Advisory Opinions", below). If the Exchange Visitor is uncertain whether or not the requirement applies, an advisor in the ISSO should be consulted.

The following information also may be important for Exchange Visitors to understand:

- If a J-1 Exchange Visitor who is subject to the requirement marries a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, he or she is still subject to the requirement, unless a waiver is obtained or the requirement is fulfilled.
- If the J-1 Exchange Visitor is subject, any J-2 dependents are also subject. If the J-1 obtains a waiver, J-2 dependents are included in the waiver, unless they have held J-1 status and are subject in their own right.
- If the J-1 Exchange Visitor who is subject to the requirement goes abroad and reenters the U.S. in another visa status (e.g. F-1 Student), the individual is eligible to continue in that new status, but is still subject, unless a waiver is obtained or the requirement is fulfilled.
- If the J-1 Exchange Visitor is sponsored by the Fulbright commission or another governmental or international organization which causes the Exchange Visitor to be subject, the Exchange Visitor is still subject even if he or she subsequently transfers visa sponsorship to Columbia's Exchange Visitor Program.

## Advisory Opinions

In some cases it may be unclear if the two year home country residence requirement applies. An advisor in the ISSO may suggest that you request an "advisory opinion" by writing a letter to the Waiver Review Division of the U.S. Department of State. You should include legible copies of all the pink copies of your DS-2019 with this request. The Waiver Review Division will send you a letter which states whether you are or are not subject to the two year home country residence requirement. If it is determined that you are subject to the requirement, you may need to obtain a waiver (see below). Information on requesting an advisory opinion can be found at [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info\\_1288.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1288.html).

## Waivers

J-1 Exchange Visitors who are subject to, but do not wish to comply with, the two-year home country residence requirement may, under certain circumstances, be able to obtain a waiver of the requirement by applying to the Waiver Review Division, using one of the four possible options described below. It is important to understand that the Waiver Review Division will make a recommendation to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) either for or against a waiver. It is the DHS which makes the final decision, although in most cases it will accept the recommendation of the Waiver Review Division. Instructions for obtaining a waiver are on the Department of State Web site at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors\\_info\\_waivers.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_info_waivers.html)

The four possible options are listed below.

Note: Once an Exchange Visitor has acquired a waiver he or she may no longer be eligible for J-1 visa extensions. Please discuss your future plans with an advisor in the ISSO *before* beginning the process of applying for a waiver. A waiver alone does not extend your stay in the U.S.

### 1. **No Objection Statement from the Home Government**

A J-1 Exchange Visitor who is subject to the two year home country residence requirement may request that his or her home government's embassy in Washington, D.C. send a letter through diplomatic channels to the Waiver Review Division of the U.S. Department of State stating that the government has no objection to

the Exchange Visitor remaining in the U.S. after completion of the Exchange Visitor Program. In most embassies, a particular office or official handles these requests and will be able to inform the Exchange Visitor of the procedures which have been established for the issuance of these statements. Some governments issue the "no objection" statements routinely and quickly; others take much longer, particularly those whose procedure requires obtaining clearance from several agencies in the home country.

Certain Exchange Visitors who are subject to the two year home country residence requirement are not able to obtain a waiver using this procedure. Exchange Visitors who are subject because of U.S. government funding (e.g. Fulbright recipients) may not be able to apply for a waiver based on a "no objection" statement from their home government. The Waiver Review Division usually takes the position that the Exchange Visitor who received U.S. government funding is required to return home in order to fulfill the goals of the program which funded the Exchange Visitor. In addition, international medical graduates who were sponsored by the ECFMG for graduate medical education or training in the U.S. are not eligible to apply for a waiver on the basis of a "no objection" statement from the home government. In both of the situations described above, the Exchange Visitor who does not wish to comply with the two year home country residence requirement will need to use one of the other procedures to apply for a waiver.

### 2. **Interested Government Agency**

If a J-1 Exchange Visitor is engaged in a program of vital interest to a U.S. government agency (e.g. the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education), the head of the agency may apply to the Waiver Review Branch of the Waiver Review Division of the U.S. Department of State for a waiver of the two year home country residence requirement on his or her behalf. It will be necessary to demonstrate to the head of the government agency that the granting of the waiver would be in the public interest and that the Exchange

Visitor's absence from the U.S. would clearly be detrimental to the success of the program. If the Waiver Review Division agrees with the head of the U.S. government agency interested in the Exchange Visitor that a waiver is justified, it will forward its recommendation to the DHS. Please note that such waivers are granted only in the interest of the agency involved, not in the interest of the Exchange Visitor. Waivers using this procedure are very difficult to obtain, and the procedure is extremely time-consuming.

**3. Persecution**

If the Exchange Visitor is able to demonstrate that he or she will be persecuted because of "race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group" [Code of Federal Regulations 22 514.31 (b)] if forced to return home to comply with the two-year home country residence requirement, a waiver application should be sent directly to the Department of Homeland Security on Form I-612. The DHS may consult with the U.S. embassy in the country involved, the U.S. Department of State, and the USIA. The final decision on granting the waiver rests with the DHS. Please note that hardship or lack of opportunity to advance in profession are not considered grounds for a waiver.

**4. Exceptional Hardship to a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident Spouse or Child**

If the Exchange Visitor is able to demonstrate that his or her U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse or child will experience "exceptional hardship" if forced to accompany the Exchange Visitor to the home country in order to comply with the two-year home country residence requirement, he or she may apply directly to the Department of Homeland Security on Form I-612 for a waiver. The term "exceptional hardship" is usually interpreted quite strictly; neither the separation of the family nor the loss of employment alone may be considered "exceptional hardship". The Exchange Visitor must demonstrate, for example, with considerable documentation, that the U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse or child would be unable to obtain necessary medical

treatment for an existing illness or that the spouse or child would be subject to persecution. The DHS will consult with the Exchange Visitor Program of the Department of State. This option is extremely difficult to use successfully.

The address of the Waiver Review Division is:

<b>U.S. Postal Service Mailing Address</b>	<b>Courier Service Address</b>
U.S. Department of State Waiver Review Division P.O. Box 952137 St. Louis, MO 63195-2137	U.S. Department of State Waiver Review Division 1005 Convention Plaza Box 952137 St. Louis, MO 63101-1200

***All waiver application procedures are time-consuming. The Exchange Visitor should be aware that it may take up to a year or longer to obtain a waiver. The Exchange Visitor who wishes to obtain a waiver should always consult with an advisor in the International Students and Scholars Office before taking any steps independently. However, the ISSO cannot aid in the completion of the waiver.***

# Tax Issues for International Scholars

Because of legal restrictions, the staff of the International Students and Scholars Office and the Immigration Affairs Office is not qualified to answer individual questions from international scholars regarding their tax liabilities. U.S. tax law is extremely complex, and each individual's situation varies. It is the responsibility of each international scholar at Columbia to understand his or her own tax situation. To assist you in learning about your tax-filing obligations and to provide you with correct and current information, the ISSO offers an annual tax seminar for all international scholars. Held on campus in March, the program is conducted by accountants who specialize in international taxation. If you have questions when it is time to file your tax return, you should plan to attend this seminar or view the video of the presentation. Current tax information is also available from the local [IRS office](#) (1-800-829-1040). Most of the relevant forms you will need are available for download at the [IRS Topical Index site](#) under the heading *Aliens, U.S. Tax Guide for*.

## For more information go to

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/>

## Important Date

**April 15** • The last day to file an annual tax return with the U.S. government for both residents and nonresidents. This includes those with no US Source income who file [Form 8843](#). It must be postmarked by April 15. During tax season (January 1 through April 15), forms are available in most post offices, libraries, and some banks. Forms and Publications may be ordered by calling the IRS at 1-800-829-3676 or downloaded from the [IRS Web site](#).

## Social Security Numbers

Social Security numbers are required for all employees of Columbia University. If you do not have a Social Security number you must apply for it at a Social Security office. You should wait until you have been in the US 10 days before applying. This gives Immigration sufficient time to have your entry into the US noted in their database as required to obtain a social security number. Social Security offices are located throughout the city and are open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through

Friday, except legal holidays. The two offices closest to Columbia University are at:

- 55 W. 125th Street  
(at Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard)
- 4292 Broadway  
(at 182nd Street)

The employee should bring his or her passport, I-94 card, and the I-797 or DS-2019 (for those in J-1 status), plus a letter from the ISSO or the IAO to the Social Security Administration office. It will take approximately three weeks to obtain a Social Security card from the Social Security Administration.

## Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers

Social Security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers are needed to file U.S. and state and local income tax forms. If you or your dependents in the United States are not eligible for a Social Security number, you must apply to the Internal Revenue Service for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). If you were assigned an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number without filing an application, that number is no longer valid. You must apply for a new, permanent number and receive it before your tax form is filed.

## Internal Revenue Service

The following two IRS offices will accept applications with identification (passport, I-94 card, and DS-2019 if in J status):

- 55 W. 125th Street  
(at Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard)
- 290 Broadway  
(near Duane Street)

Business hours at both offices are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

## Sailing Permits

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations require international scholars in H-1, O-1 or TN status to obtain a certificate of tax compliance from the IRS called a "sailing permit" before departure from the United States. Those in

J status are no longer subject to this requirement. Those leaving temporarily use IRS [Form 2063](#). Those leaving with no definite plans to return to the U.S. complete [Form 1040-C](#), U.S. Departing Alien Income Tax Return, in order to get a sailing permit. More information is available in [Publication No. 519](#), *US Tax Guide for Aliens*, on the IRS website on [Alien Tax Clearance](#).

## Medical Care

You must pay for medical services in the United States. Hospital costs in the New York area can be \$2,000 a day, and that does not include physicians' fees, which are also very high. One cannot afford to be without medical insurance. If you and your dependents are in J immigration status, you are all required by the Exchange Visitor Program to have a comprehensive health insurance policy in order to maintain your immigration status. Therefore, it is doubly important that you purchase insurance.

## Spouse/Family Health Care

It is extremely important to have health insurance for your spouse and children due to the high cost of health care in the United States. Health insurance for dependents of scholars holding a University appointment may be purchased through the University at additional cost. Insurance may also be purchased through private insurance companies which provide coverage for international students and scholars and their dependents. You will also need to include the cost of health insurance for your family in your overall budget. Bear in mind that health insurance does not cover pre-existing conditions, including pregnancy. If your spouse arrives in the United States pregnant, be prepared to incur all costs associated with the pregnancy and delivery, which average \$10,000. If you are in a nonimmigrant status, you are not allowed to accept any federal funds, such as Medicaid (the health coverage available to U.S. citizens with low incomes). Current U.S. federal regulations bar you from reentry into the United States if you have accepted federal funds from health programs requiring low incomes.

Highly recommended is the William F. Ryan Community Health Center, conveniently located near the Morningside campus at 110 W. 97th Street, 316-7911, which offers a wide variety of medical services on a sliding scale—that is, the fee is dependent on one's income. Also, the New York City Department of Health offers many free and low-cost services to all residents of the city, such as child health, dental, prenatal, social hygiene, and eye clinics. For more information, look under "Health Department" in the New York City Government Offices section of the "blue pages" of the telephone directory.

The University Health Service can provide recommendations for reputable physicians. Be aware of which medical services your health insurance covers and which ones it does not. When you telephone for an appointment, ask about doctor's fees and services.

## Overview of Health Insurance in the United States

All J-1 holders and their dependents are required by Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) regulation to have health insurance with specific minimum coverage requirements while in the United States. In broad terms, your insurance policy must include (1) medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500; (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$10,000; and (4) a deductible not to exceed \$500.

If you are a full-time employee of Columbia University on Columbia University's payroll and receiving full-time benefits of the University, it is most likely that you and your dependents will be eligible to receive health insurance through Columbia University with your portion of the total monthly premium deducted from your salary. Therefore, you should ascertain from your hiring department whether you will be eligible for this benefit. If you are receiving health insurance as a benefit of your employment, you should wait to talk to a Benefits Officer in the Human Resources Department at Columbia and select from the health insurance options (different from the list below) offered by the University.

If you are not a full-time employee of Columbia University, or if you are a Visiting Scholar or Scientist, you must obtain health insurance from an outside carrier.

It is your responsibility to select, obtain and maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and any of your dependents in the U.S. The following is provided to assist you in your pre-arrival consideration of the confusing and expensive realm of health insurance. You will find this information helpful, even if you secure acceptable health insurance before arriving in the U.S.

Health insurance in the U.S. is mostly private. This means that you must apply to a private company in order to obtain insurance, your application must be approved, and you must pay your monthly premiums on time in order to remain insured. Health coverage for individuals is significantly less expensive than coverage which includes family members. Some insurance policies are supplements to other policies.

There are many coverage conditions, coverage limitations and coverage exclusions which will be part of the insurance policies you will encounter. You must understand these details in order to make an informed choice. Insurance companies often use words in their policies with very specific meanings, relevant to their business. It is extremely important that, before purchasing any insurance policy, you understand as much as possible about your policy and its conditions. You are purchasing a product from a health insurance company; do not hesitate to ask them as many questions as necessary, as often as necessary.

The following is a list of approximate definitions of terms and conditions often found in U.S. health insurance policies:

**Policy (Whole)** • A contract with a health insurance company providing for a broad range of medical treatments and/or payments in case of accident or illness. Most whole policies usually provide a standard set of benefits, but the provisions, conditions, and benefits of different policies can vary widely.

**Supplement** • A policy providing only very specific, limited benefits (e.g., medical evacuation, repatriation of remains), which can supplement the benefits of another policy you already have.

**Premium** • The amount you must pay each month to purchase the insurance coverage. In some policies, the premium varies with the age(s) of the insured.

**Dependent Coverage** • Coverage for your spouse or children. Sometimes, dependents can be enrolled in a policy independent of you.

**Deductible** • The amount of money you must pay, in each case of accident or illness, before the insurance starts paying. Most policies have a deductible.

**Application Deadline** • Sometimes you and/or your dependents must be enrolled in the insurance within a certain period after arrival in the United States.

**Coverage Period** • The units of time in which the insurance can be bought (e.g., six months, one year). Most policies are renewable, but the premiums may increase at renewal.

**Coverage** • The percent of costs the insurance will pay and the maximum amount up to which the insurance will pay per accident or illness or per coverage period. The coverage starts after you pay the deductible.

**Hospitalization** • Usually includes a semi-private room, doctor's fees, drugs, x-rays, laboratory tests, etc. Sometimes there is a limit on the number of days covered.

**Maternity** • Includes visits to your doctor, the delivery, and related hospital charges. Some policies limit or do not offer this coverage. Some policies do not cover abortions.

**Prescriptions** • Coverage for medications ordered by a doctor for use outside of the hospital.

**Dental** • Most policies cover injuries to teeth, but not preventive or maintenance dental care.

**Evacuation** • The amount the insurance policy will pay if you need to be transported to your home country for medical treatment.

**Repatriation** • The amount the insurance company will pay to transport your remains to your country.

**Accidental Death and Dismemberment** • The amount the insurance company will pay if you are killed or maimed accidentally.

**Exclusions** • These are the injuries, illnesses, or treatments for which the insurance will not pay. "Usual

Exclusions” normally are: pre-existing conditions; eye care; foot care; infertility and birth control; injuries while playing organized sports or piloting an airplane; injuries or death from war, terrorism, revolution, or suicide; cosmetic surgery; experimental treatments; treatments administered by a member of your family; and expenses covered under other insurance policies you may have. This is not a complete list of exclusions. Different policies may have different exclusions.

### **Health Insurance Providers**

While Columbia University cannot evaluate, recommend, or endorse any specific health insurance company or policy, a list of health insurance providers can be found at [http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/scriptcontent/YP\\_auto/c12.cfm](http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/scriptcontent/YP_auto/c12.cfm).

## **Family Matters**

### **Information for Spouses and Partners**

Although it is exciting to have the opportunity of living in another country for a while, it can be challenging for the spouse of a student or scholar to settle in and find their own independent reasons for being here, and their own circle of friends. Students and scholars are very busy and must spend a great deal of time studying or doing research. But in addition to being busy, the student or scholar has built-in opportunities to interact with others and form friendships. Spouses and partners, on the other hand, must actively seek out those opportunities. This task may be a bit more difficult for international spouses whose immigration status does not allow them to be employed in the United States, or who may not be proficient in English. U.S. immigration regulations prohibit employment for spouses in H-4 immigration status, while those in J-2 are allowed to work only after applying for and receiving work authorization from Immigration.

Fortunately, there are many ways for spouses and partners of international students and scholars to become involved with the University and its community.

### **International Spouse Network**

Other spouses are an excellent resource for companionship and information sharing, so the ISSO coordinates the International Spouse Network. We have a Welcome Lunch at the beginning of each semester and compile an international spouse directory. There is an informal monthly lunch for spouses, usually on the first Monday of the month, throughout the academic year. You will meet other spouses of students and scholars who are also new to this neighborhood, as well as those who joined the spouse network last year and will be happy to share their knowledge and experience with you. You will find others who have interests in common—such as visiting museums, jogging, tennis, movies, or forming a playgroup for parents and kids. In addition to enjoying all that New York has to offer in terms of museums, sightseeing and entertainment, many spouses have found that becoming involved in one of NYC’s many volunteer opportunities has enriched their lives and provided more of a sense of belonging. *The Network* will acquaint you with some volunteer opportunities. Your participation in the International Spouse Network can help you adjust to life here in New York and at Columbia, provide you with opportunities to meet others, form friendships, learn about American culture, and simply have fun! Children are welcome.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### ***Can I use Columbia facilities, such as the library and gym?***

Spouses who are not studying at Columbia are not eligible for a Columbia ID; therefore they will be denied access to most Columbia facilities. One exception is the gym, which they may pay to use. Spouses may apply for a library card granting *reading privileges* (but not borrowing privileges) at 201 Butler Library, tel. 212 854-2271. Bring some documentation with both your name and your spouse’s name and address on it, such as a lease or bank statement, or documents reflecting your immigration status as an F-2, J-2, or H-4.

#### ***Can I work in the United States?***

It depends on your status. Immigration regulations do not allow H-4 dependents of H-1B employers to work. J-2 dependent spouses of J-1 scholars are eligible to apply for work authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The I-765

employment authorization application can be downloaded from the [www.immigration.gov](http://www.immigration.gov) web site, and more information is available at the ISSO.

***Can I apply for a Social Security Number?***

Social Security numbers are issued only to those who have eligibility to be employed in the United States. Therefore, an H-4 spouse—or a J-2 spouse without work authorization—cannot get an SSN, but can apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). The ITIN is needed for filing tax Form 8843, required of all those in F and J status, including dependents. The ITIN is obtained by application to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); the ISSO has information about this process. It takes 6-8 weeks for the IRS to issue the ITIN. A J-2 spouse can apply for an SSN only after he or she has applied for and received work authorization from the USCIS.

***I'd like to improve my English. Are there classes for spouses?***

There aren't classes specifically for spouses, but there are local resources. Many spouses take advantage of the inexpensive ESL classes at the Community English Program (CEP) at Teachers College that are taught by TC students who are ESL teachers in training. Teachers College is located on 120<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. Information on registration is available by calling 212 678-3279 (a recorded message) or 212 678-3097 (office phone). The Community English Program's website <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/CEP.htm> is the best source of information on registration dates, fees, programs and class schedules. Registration for the fall semester is usually in mid-September.

Also refer to International Center below.

***Since I'm not working or studying full-time—and my spouse is extremely busy all the time—I'm concerned about how to meet other people and find productive ways to spend my time. Any suggestions?***

**International House** • 500 Riverside Drive (north of 122nd Street), New York, NY 10027, 212-316-8400. Life at International House is an experience in international understanding. Its hundreds of members come from more than eighty countries and study or train in most academic and professional fields. An extensive program of academic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

provides a medium for members to exchange ideas and perspectives and to form friendships. You may be interested in applying for Non-Resident Membership. As a Non-Resident Member, you will receive a monthly calendar of events in the mail and have the opportunity to become a part of this exciting and enriching experience. To apply for Non-Resident Membership, contact the Admissions Office of International House at (212) 316-8436. To get a sense of the types of programs and activities they offer, refer to <http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/>.

**Metro International** • 285 W. Broadway, Suite 450, New York, NY 10013 (near Canal Street), 212-431-1195. This organization helps international students, scholars, and their families in the New York area make use of the cultural, ethnic, and professional resources of the city. Its aim is to build inter-institutional contact and cooperation among students and staff, and to help international students and spouses meet the challenges of living in New York City. They sponsor various activities, including tours throughout New York and weekend trips to nearby cities. In the process, *Metro* ensures that international students make important personal contacts while they are in the U.S., so as to return to their home countries with an informed perspective about American life. Funding for *Metro's* programs and services comes from government, foundation, and corporate grants, private contributions, membership fees of participating universities, and program fees from individual participants. *Metro's* web site is <http://www.metrointl.org>.

**International Center in New York** • 50 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 7th floor, New York, NY 10010, 212-255-9555. Students and their family members, medical personnel, business trainees, diplomats, and official visitors from abroad are served by this center, a privately funded nonprofit volunteer organization. English conversation practice is offered by volunteers to individual members, and there are English classes taught by professional teachers. Other services include discussion groups, films, invitations to visit American homes, theater parties, discount and free tickets for plays and concerts, and weekend tours to places of interest. There is an annual membership fee for students, scholars, and spouses and partners. <http://www.intcenter.org/>

**China Institute in America** • 125 E. 65th Street, New York, NY 10021, 212-744-8181. This organization serves Chinese students, visiting scholars, business

professionals, and their families, as well as others who are interested in China. Programs include English and Chinese language exchange, field trips, weekly films, lectures, discussions, participation in the Institute chorus, and dance parties.

<http://www.chinainstitute.org/>

**Japan Society** • 333 East 47th Street New York, NY 10017 Phone: 212.832.1155 Japan Society, America's leading resource on Japan, is a private, nonprofit, nonpolitical institution offering programs in the arts, business, education and public affairs. Founded in New York in 1907, Japan Society promotes greater understanding and cooperation between Japan and the U.S. <http://www.japansociety.org/>.

**Public Libraries** • The New York Public Library and its branches provide a wide variety of resource information and special programs for residents, including lecture and film series of general interest for adults. To apply for borrowing privileges—a library card—one must present proof of residence by showing a rent receipt or utility bill. Videotapes, DVDs, record albums, and books are available for borrowing. Many libraries will also have special sections and activities for children.

<http://www.nypl.org/branch/man/cl.html>

**Community Impact** • 105 Earl Hall, Columbia University 854- 1492

Community Impact is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to serving disadvantaged people in the Harlem, Washington Heights, and Morningside Heights communities. Community Impact strives to provide high quality programs, advance the public good, and foster meaningful volunteer for students, faculty, and staff of Columbia University through partnerships with more than 100 community organizations and agencies who do service work in these neighborhoods. Many spouses and partners have enriched their own lives by helping to make a difference in the lives of others.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ci/>

## Information for Families with Children

### Childcare

For preschool children, there are several possibilities for full- or part-time child care:

**Babysitters** • A baby-sitter will sometimes come to the family's home to watch the child (or children); sometimes a parent takes the child to the baby-sitter's home. It may be a one-on-one situation, i.e., the baby-sitter alone with your child, or you can look for situations that include other children.

Columbia Student Employment, located at the Center for Career Education at East Campus (on the Morningside campus), is a job referral service available to all registered Columbia students and their spouses. If you are looking for child care, you can post an "ad" at the job board there. Another strategy families have used is to advertise on bulletin boards on campus, in their apartment buildings, at playgrounds, and at pediatricians' offices. It is always recommended to get references from a prospective child care provider, and speak with parents she or he has worked for in the past.

**Day Care Centers** • Day care centers may be public centers, run by churches, or privately owned. Some day care centers require that the parent give time to help care for the children one or two mornings or afternoons a week. Resources of interest to parents are the organizations Child Care Inc., 322 Eighth Ave., 212-929-4999 (<http://childcareinc.org/>), and the Day Care Council of New York, Inc., 12 W. 21<sup>st</sup> St., 212-206-7818 (<http://www.dccnyinc.org/>), which provide information on the options open to families (public and private day care centers, family day care, nursery schools, and after-school programs) based on your location, children's ages, hours of care, and family income.

Columbia University has compiled information about options and resources at

[http://neighbors.columbia.edu/pages/programsandservices/educational\\_programs/childcare.html](http://neighbors.columbia.edu/pages/programsandservices/educational_programs/childcare.html)

### School-Age Children

Education from kindergarten through the completion of high school (grade twelve) is offered in both public and private schools. Public school education in the United States is free. As an apartment renter or homeowner, you pay taxes indirectly or directly and thus earn the right of access to your town or city public school system. The school year starts in September and runs through mid to late June. Registration will require your child's birth

certificate and immunization records. The quality of public schools varies from zone to zone, and town to town.

New York City public schools are divided by residential districts—your home address determines your district. Those who live near the Morningside campus are generally in School District 3, 300 W. 96th Street, 212-678-2800, or District 5, 433 W. 123rd Street, 212-769-7500. Those who live near the Medical Center campus are generally in School District 6, 560 W. 169th Street, 212-927-0608. If your child chooses to attend a school outside your district, you are required to have your child gain admission to that school. School district offices and individual schools may be contacted directly for more information.

New York City's Department of Education has a web site with information at

<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>.

Other great resources can be found at

<http://www.insideschools.org/>

<http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~schoolsandyou/textdocs/resources.html>

Private schools in New York are quite expensive, although there may be scholarships available for families with limited income. An on-line resource for learning more about independent (private) schools is at

<http://home.earthlink.net/~schoolsandyou/textdocs/resources.html#Indep>.

Columbia University operates a K-8 school. More information at <http://theschool.columbia.edu/>

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