



International Student Handbook

Fall 2025 Edition

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WELCOME!

A big welcome to our new Golden Wolves!

We are thrilled that you have chosen Alvernia University as your destination for your collegiate experience. One of our most cherished goals is to create a globally diverse community and make that goal a reality. We are excited to see the continued growth in the number of countries and cultures represented among our student population. While the process of accessing international studies is complex and difficult at times, we are confident that now you are here, it will be worth it!

There are many individuals supporting you here at Alvernia. We hope you find our faculty and staff knowledgeable, kind, and approachable. Please contact us with any questions, concerns, or ideas. The three primary offices that will support you are listed below:

INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS



Sibel Ahi, Ph.D.

Senior Director of International Student Recruitment, DSO

Email: sibel.ahi@alvernia.edu

Phone: (610) 568-1473

Office location: Student Center, 2nd floor, Rm 223.

Dr. Ahi oversees the admissions process. She helps guide students and families through the steps necessary to arrive at Alvernia.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Pearl Leung, M.S.

Director of International Student Engagement, DSO

Email: pearl.leung@alvernia.edu

Phone: (610) 685-3260

Office location: Campus Commons, 2nd floor, Rm 204A

Ms. Leung supports our international students with their transition to Alvernia, through orientation programs, engagement opportunities and advising on campus and community resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

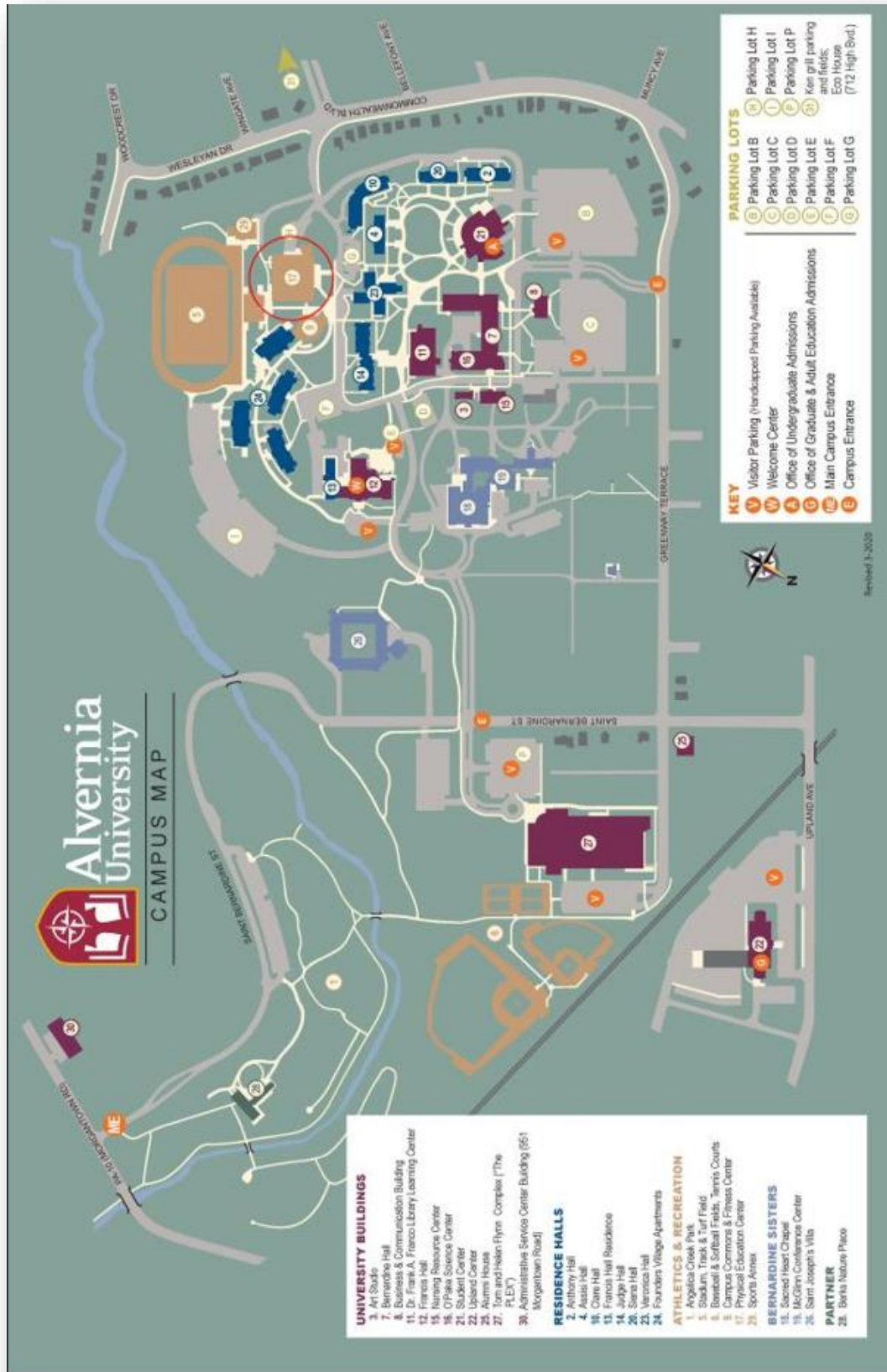
The Alvernia University Student Handbook, which is produced by the Office of the Dean of Students, together with the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Catalogs, constitutes a compilation of the official policies of the University. Students are responsible for complying with all University rules and regulations.

Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Community Standards or the Dean of Students in the event they have questions or need advice regarding university policies. Rules and policies are reviewed annually and may be changed at any time; the community is notified of policy changes when the Student Handbook is published each fall.



Francis Hall

CAMPUS MAP





The Student Center (Dining Services & Bookstore)



The Plex (Indoor Athletics Facility)

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Alvernia University's academic year is based on the traditional two-semester (fall and spring) calendar. Semesters generally run fifteen to sixteen weeks, depending upon the holiday schedule. Most classes are delivered in lecture format in traditional classroom settings, with science labs meeting in laboratory-equipped classrooms.

During the fall and spring semesters, lecture-based classes generally meet two or three times per week. Lecture-based classes that meet twice weekly are generally 75 minutes long; classes that meet three times weekly are generally 50 minutes long. Laboratory classes meet once weekly for longer periods of time. Some lectures scheduled in the evening may also meet once weekly for longer periods of time.

Alvernia also offers courses during winter break and over the summer. Winter and summer courses are scheduled in shorter sessions and meet more frequently for longer class periods.

Visit <https://www.alvernia.edu/current-students/academic-calendar> to view the current and upcoming academic calendars.

Holidays and Semester Breaks

At Alvernia University, we understand that international students may experience challenges during extended holidays, such as winter break, when the campus is closed. That's why we provide support and resources to ensure that our international students are taken care of during these times.

Before the break, our International Student Services team will communicate with each international student to learn their plans and needs during the break. We can assist with finding transportation to and from the airport or train station.

During the break, our staff is available to answer any questions or concerns that international students may have. We also organize social events and activities to help students stay connected with each other and with the university community.

Additionally, we provide resources to help students navigate cultural differences during the holiday season. This includes information about American customs and traditions, as well as guidance on how to celebrate holidays in a way that is meaningful to each student's individual culture and beliefs.

Our goal is to ensure that international students feel supported and cared for, even during extended holidays when the campus is closed. We believe that by providing resources and a sense of community, we can help our international students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

COMMUNICATION

Alvernia Email

Alvernia email is the official means of communication between the university and students. It is the easiest way to keep in touch with faculty and staff on campus. As an Alvernia University student, you are automatically assigned an Alvernia University email account.

Make sure to check your Alvernia University email account frequently for important information, including messages from instructors, tuition bills, and communication regarding your visa status. Many students choose to link their personal and Alvernia University email accounts.

U.S. Mail

Alvernia University provides postal services, mailboxes and postal delivery for students who reside on campus and have their mail and packages delivered to an on-campus address, which is located on the main floor of Library. For more information you can visit <https://web.alvernia.edu/faq/index.php?action=artikel&cat=125&id=424&artlang=en>

Helpful Phone Numbers

On campus:

International Admissions	(610) 568-1473
Alvernia Medical & Counseling Center	(610) 568-1467
Alvernia University Public Safety	(610) 796-8350
Campus Ministry	(610) 796-8300
Academic Success Center	(610) 796-8263
Registrar	(610) 568-1548
Student Financial Services	(610) 796-8201
IT Service Help Desk	(610) 230-5700
International Engagement Office	(610) 685-3260

Off campus:

Mental Health Crisis Center: (610) 236-0530

Dial 988 – If you are in mental health distress or considering self-harm.

AMERICAN CULTURE, SOCIAL LIFE AND CULTURE SHOCK

This is a brief guide to American culture and customs. The United States is varied in its geography, ethnic backgrounds and traditions, it is not possible to comment on every aspect of the culture or to say there is one acceptable or prominent set of social rules. It is a heterogeneous society with some common norms and cultures, and where different cultures coexist.

It is important to note that some people you meet will be more informed and accepting of cultural differences than others. Many people will be curious about your home culture and will ask numerous questions about the language, society, history, religion, and traditions of your country.

Basic Etiquette

Due to the friendly nature of most Americans, they are quick to use first names. Although this may make those who are accustomed to a more formal social environment somewhat uncomfortable, it is the norm for American culture. Formal titles (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Fr., Sr., Dr., etc.) are used together with the person's family name and should be used if you are speaking with the elderly or people in authority. They may invite you later to address them by their first names.

Punctuality is highly valued in the U.S. and is considered a sign of respect toward the person whom you are to meet. Punctuality for private parties and casual events is more flexible; however, always inform the host of a dinner or formal occasion if you are late or must cancel.

Students are expected to be on time for class and appointments with instructors. Your grade may be affected if you are late multiple times. Many instructors and administrators welcome personal interactions with individual students. Students are encouraged to ask questions and express their opinions in the classroom. Observe the American students' actions to identify acceptable behavior.

Courtesy

Politeness and patience will serve you well in the United States. This includes remembering to say "please" and "thank you". This common form of respect is not reserved only for those in a position of authority, but for each person you meet in a store, on the street, in class or in an office. If you need a favor or have a simple request, saying "please" will be much more effective than if you are simply demanding. Similarly, saying "thank you" to someone who tried to satisfy your request or when someone helps you (e.g., holds the door) is also appreciated.

Provided that you are courteous and kind, the person with whom you are speaking will likely return your kindness and view you more favorably.

Personal Space

Americans prefer to maintain about 18 inches (46 cm) of space between themselves and the person with whom they are speaking. This personal space is very important and, if limited, the individual may become uncomfortable. Typically, Americans do not hug or kiss an acquaintance upon greeting, but rather shake hands or nod their heads. They also do not touch while speaking, although a brief touch on the arm or shoulder might indicate sympathy or concern to someone they know well. Once a friendship has developed, some may greet each other with a hug or embrace.

Tipping

In the United States it is expected that you tip for various services. Restaurants, taxis and food deliveries are all situations where you would be expected to tip. Tipping is not an exact science; it is up to customers to decide how much they are willing to tip. However, there are some general guidelines to follow:

- If you are generally pleased with your service, a tip of 15% of your total bill is standard.
- If you are very impressed with your service, you might decide to tip 20% or more.
- Likewise, if you are dissatisfied with your service, you might leave a 10% tip.

It is considered extremely rude to leave no tip at all.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is not quite as “shocking” or sudden as most people would expect. It is part of the process of learning about a new culture that is called *cultural adaptation*. You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well in a new setting; this is known as the *culture shock* stage of the adaptation process.

Just as you will bring with you to the United States clothes and other personal items, you will also carry invisible “cultural baggage” when you travel. That baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcases, but it will play an important role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage may include the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture.

The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter while in the United States.

Emerging Differences

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, the differences will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to feel more irritating than interesting, and small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic and social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. But culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community. For many, this gradual process culminates in an emotional state known as culture shock.

The common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework
- Loss of sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

Coping with Culture Shock

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your native language, catch up with what is going on at home via email and social media, take a short trip if possible, exercise, get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the United States.

UNDERGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Students from other nations seeking admission to Alvernia University should submit the following:

1. Completed Application for Admission (<https://admissions.alvernia.edu/apply/>)
2. Official secondary school transcript or general equivalency diploma (GED). If the secondary school is not in the USA, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Peru, India or Morocco, the transcript must be accompanied by a NACES member evaluation.
3. Official university transcripts, each accompanied by a NACES member evaluation in if the transcript is from a non-USA university.
4. All international students who speak English as a second language must show proof of English proficiency scores.
 - a. TOEFL (minimum score 550 for paper-based test, 190-213 for computer-based test, or 75-80 for the internet-based test), IELTS (minimum score 5.5) or Duolingo (95 or higher).
 - b. The English proficiency score is not required for a student who has had at least two consecutive years of education in an American high school or institution of higher education. A transcript from the American school should suffice for proof of American education unless otherwise determined by the Admissions Office.
5. International Student Financial Statement document (see in Appendix I for important details about what must be included in your Financial Statement)
6. Valid Passport, with more than six months remaining before the expiration date.

The university uses the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to facilitate compliance with regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security (DoH) and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Notification of International Admissions

Alvernia University notifies applicants of a decision after receiving and evaluating all credentials. Students must submit a non-refundable enrollment deposit of \$300, along with the Confirmation of Enrollment form before the start date of the semester.

All offers of admission are contingent upon successful completion of the student's high school program or equivalency. Alvernia University will issue an I-20 document after an accepted student has confirmed his or her enrollment to Alvernia.

Transcripts

Transcripts published in other languages must be submitted with an official English translation. Alvernia University does not accept any documents in other languages, without an accompanying translation to English.

New, First Semester Freshman Students

All freshman students must submit their original diploma or original transcript from secondary school or general equivalency level. The admission process cannot start without proof of high school graduation or equivalent.

International Admissions uses the high school record to evaluate the student's admissibility, and they can process the admission with the copy of the high school diploma or transcript. However, the student must provide the official high school transcript before the start date of their program. The international students' admission letter states:

"All offers of admission are contingent upon successful completion of the student's high school program or equivalency."

For that reason, Alvernia University will have the right to remove the student from the program if the student does not provide an official transcript.

International applicants must provide a foreign transcript evaluation of their high school diplomas in order for Alvernia University to determine the academic equivalency of their grades in the U.S. education system. Alvernia University has the capacity and expertise to evaluate academic secondary level transcripts for some countries outside the United States, including for Saudi Arabia and Canada. This foreign transcript evaluation will be valid only for Alvernia University.

Misspelled Names on Transcripts

If the student submits an official high school transcript that has a previous name instead of their current name, or if their current name is misspelled on the transcript, international admissions will evaluate the official secondary school transcript and decide whether the student needs to submit a copy of the corrected transcript, or if the student needs to submit another official secondary school transcript.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Official Transcripts

Alvernia University considers transcripts mailed directly by an international institution official, and digital copies or paper copies submitted by the student are considered unofficial.

Colleges/Universities within the U.S.

An official transcript of all previous work is required whether a student has earned transfer credits or not, or whether a student wants transfer credits.

Colleges/Universities outside of the U.S.

While it is not required, Alvernia University might accept transfer credits from colleges or universities from a foreign institution only if the international applicant submits a course-by-course evaluation by a [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services \(NACES\) member](#).

Alvernia University encourages international applicants to transfer their foreign post-secondary credits. It is the student's responsibility to provide/submit college level foreign transcripts during the admission process. If the student does not provide the official transcript of colleges/universities and the foreign transcript evaluation of their previous credit bearing courses, the student cannot claim those credits after their start date of the first semester.

If the student cannot provide the official foreign transcript and the course-by-course transcript evaluation for their foreign college/university transcripts, they will be considered as a freshman. This cannot be changed during their program.

After the student completes the course-by-course foreign transcript evaluation, they still follow the transfer admission process of Alvernia University. The maximum credit transfer is defined in the Undergraduate Student Catalog as:

Students may transfer a maximum of 75 credits from regionally accredited two or four-year institutions. Transfer credit may be given for college courses in which the applicant has earned a "C" or higher in a 100-level course or higher from a regionally accredited institution (C+ or higher in fundamental sciences for Nursing students). Students must complete a minimum of 45 credits at Alvernia University to be eligible to earn a degree.

The results of foreign transcript evaluations must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions at ugoperations@alvernia.edu prior to the start of the academic year.

Number of Credits

Department chairs and the Registrar's Office at Alvernia University determine international transfer course credits and the equivalency of the credit hours.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BILLING

All international students must have their balances cleared before their start date. Students who pay, then later withdraw, are subject to Alvernia University refund policies.

All international students who are self-pay may set up a payment plan, which gives students the ability to spread the semester balance over 5 monthly payments: August-December for Fall and January-May in Spring.

Alvernia University has partnered with Flywire which is a secure way for international students to pay their cost of attendance. Students can make international payments with real-time currency conversion.

First Payments

All international students must make a minimum first payment of \$5,000 before their arrival to the United States. Alvernia University has the right to cancel a student's F-1 document if the student did not pay the required deposit of at least \$5,000 prior to arrival.

NOTE: If their visa appointment happens within 30 days from the semester start date, students must pay the non-refundable \$5,000 USD tuition deposit within 7 days following verbal approval at the visa appointment.

The entire \$5,000 USD deposit will be applied to semester charges.

Failure to Pay Deposit

If the admitted student fails to make the deposit within the specified timeframe, Alvernia DSO's will cancel the Form I-20 of the student which will prevent the student from entering the United States with an Alvernia I-20.

International students cannot rely on U.S. financial aid, school support funds / awards / scholarships, or plan on wages from any future employment on campus to pay their expenses.

Please see the payment plan information in Appendix VIII.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Alvernia University offers a limited number of international scholarships to full-time freshman or full-time transfer day undergraduate students.

Eligibility Requirements

Full-time freshman or full-time transfer undergraduate students on Alvernia's main Reading campus. Merit scholarships are renewable for four years (up to eight semesters) in the same amount. Other than the Catholic School Scholarship (see below), an international student scholarship cannot be combined with any other scholarships, including government scholarships.

- Undergraduate, full-time, degree-seeking students.
- Minimum 3.00 overall cumulative GPA by application deadline on August 1st.
- Meet the institution's English proficiency and financial requirements.

Merit Scholarship for International Students

First-year and transfer students' scholarship:

- **Presidential Scholarship** is \$26,000 per year for the top tier of international applications completing their previous studies with recognized achievements and standardized test scores each year.
- **Trustees Scholarship** is \$ 25,000 per year for qualified recipients, creatively adventurous students, with experience or achievements.
- **Veronica Scholarship** is \$23,000 per year to qualified international students who exhibit leadership potential and a desire to serve as a cultural ambassador in the United States.
- **Heritage Scholarship** is \$19,000 per year for full-time day students pursuing a bachelor's degree who maintain satisfactory academic requirements.
- **Catholic School Scholarship** is \$1,000 to first-time, full-time freshmen graduating from a Catholic high school. It can be combined with other awards as well as incorporated into financial aid packages and will be automatically applied to eligible students' applications.

Alvernia will combine the Catholic Scholarship with the International Scholarship if the student graduated from a Catholic High School.

Transfer student scholarship opportunities:

- **Provost Scholarship** is a \$21,000 scholarship given to students who have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher from all previous institutions and/or are members of Phi Theta Kappa.
- **Bernardine Scholarship** is a \$19,000 scholarship given to students who have earned a cumulative GPA between 3.25 and 3.49 from all previous institutions.
- **Dean Scholarship** is a \$17,000 scholarship given to students who have earned a cumulative GPA between 3.0 and 3.24 from all previous institutions.
- **Transfer Scholarship** is a \$15,000 scholarship given to students who have earned a cumulative GPA between 2.5 and 2.99 from all previous institutions.

Selection process: documents will be reviewed and evaluated.

Continuing your scholarship during your studies: International students must be enrolled each semester full-time, which is minimum of 12 credits, and they must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 or higher if required by the scholarship. If an international scholarship is received, it should be deducted from the yearly tuition.

There are no full tuition scholarship opportunities for international students. However, they can apply to outside scholarship opportunities. *For a list of outside scholarship opportunities, see Appendix XI.*

HEALTH INSURANCE

Alvernia University requires all students to provide proof of their health insurance.

All students, regardless of their financial requirements, must upload their health insurance card to the Alvernia University health portal before the start date of the semester.

Health Insurance Costs

All Alvernia University students are required to have Health Insurance. You can find some options for health insurance at the links below:

- <https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/>
- <https://www.isoa.org/>
- <https://wellfleetstudent.com/>

F-1 VISAS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International Student Visa Issuing Procedure

Alvernia University students need **F-1 visas**, which require students to obtain an I-20 document:

A matriculating student is someone enrolled to earn a degree from Alvernia University. They are usually the same age as domestic matriculating students and have not earned a degree from any other higher-education institution; however, sometimes individuals who studied or completed degrees in another country want to pursue a second diploma from Alvernia University. These students are therefore older than our traditional undergraduate students. These students hold an ***F-1 Visa*** and an ***I-20***.

F-1 (non-immigrant) visas require students to have valid passports, proof of financial capability of the students, and proof of SEVIS I-901 Fee payment.

Passports: Students' passports must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the expiration date to do any legal procedures.

U.S. Visa: Students must present a valid visa in their education category.

Initial F-1 students: All new matriculating students receive their visa packages from the Alvernia University Admissions Office after they provide the required documentation. After they receive their visa package, all new students must pay their SEVIS I-901 Fee before their visa interviews and pass their American consulate interview.

BY OR BEFORE 30 days from the start date recorded on the I-20, all students with approved visas **MUST** pay the full tuition and fees for the semester OR be enrolled in a payment and have made the minimum first payment of \$5000 USD in addition to the \$300 enrollment deposit.

After initial F-1 students receive their I-20 documents, they must:

- Promptly notify the Admissions Office about their visa appointment date.
- Notify the Admissions Office about the results of the visa appointment.
- Satisfy the bill 100% for the upcoming semester before student arrival.
- Enroll for on-campus study.

Alvernia University Financial Student Services will apply the full value of deposits to students' first semester charges, after students are registered for their classes, and have selected their residence halls and meal plans for the semester.

Transfer F-1 Students: If international students are in the U.S. with an active F-1 status, they need to process and receive their F-1 forms from the Admissions Office. These students can stay in the United States if their studies will start in less than 5 months, or they can travel to their home country after they receive their new I-20's from Alvernia University. Students can use their previously issued visas if they do not stay longer than 5 months in their home country.

- All transfer students must create a payment plan and make their first payments before the start of International Student Orientation.

Suspended or Terminated Students: If an Alvernia student is terminated or suspended from SEVIS, but can attend the following semester or in future, the Admissions Office issues them an initial I-20. The students can use their previously issued visa if they NOT stay longer than 5 months in their home country. Otherwise, they need to apply for an initial F-1 visa with their initial I-20 which requires that they resubmit an updated passport and bank statement (less than three months old) to the Admissions Office.

All new students and suspended or terminated students must pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee. If they cannot find their SEVIS fee receipt, students can visit the Student and Exchange Visitor Program SEVIS I-901 fee-processing website to request a copy of their receipt.

Regain F-1 Status

If students fail to maintain their F-1 status, they have two options to regain it:

- 1) Apply for reinstatement
- 2) Leave the U.S. and re-enter under a new I-20.

Option 1: Reinstatement

This option is only available if students have not left the United States. To ask for reinstatement, a student must convince the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the following:

- 1) The student has not been out of status at the time of filing requested reinstatement.
- 2) The student does not have a record of repeated or willful violations of immigration regulations.
- 3) The student is currently pursuing or intends to pursue a full course of study in the immediate future at Alvernia University.
- 4) The student has not engaged in any unauthorized employment.
- 5) The student cannot be deported on any grounds other than overstaying or failing to maintain the status.

Reasons for not maintaining F-1 status can be:

- 1) Violation of status occurred due to circumstances beyond the student's control such as serious injury or illness, natural disasters, or oversight on the part of the University.
- 2) They do not include a pattern of repeated violations or willful neglect to maintain status such as not informing Admissions properly on any address or employment information changes or failure to complete changing degree level/program or institution in a required time period.
- 3) A reduction in full-time course load (i.e., less than 12 credits per semester).

If the USCIS approves a student's reinstatement request, the USCIS officer will endorse student's I-20 and return it to the student. If the USCIS does not approve the reinstatement request, students may appeal the decision, or they must prepare to leave the United States immediately.

Reinstatement Application Procedure

- 1) Make an appointment with a Designated School Official (DSO) who will review a student's eligibility for reinstatement and discuss the application process with the student.
- 2) Gather the following forms and documentation. Students will need to bring them to their appointment:
 - Form I-539 with filing fee payment and Form G-1145
 - Photocopies of all previous I-20s
 - Current I-94
 - A photocopy of new Reinstatement I-20 signed by a DSO
 - A letter to the USCIS requesting reinstatement explaining the situation and truthfully stating any and all reasons for the failure to maintain status.
 - Any supporting documentation a student might have attesting to the circumstances that led to the failure to maintain status.
 - Current transcript and transcripts from every other school the student previously attended in the U.S., if any.
 - A photocopy of passport identification and visa pages.
- 3) Students are advised to make photocopies of the entire application to keep for their records.
- 4) Students should send their applications by certified mail, requesting a return receipt from USCIS.

Option 2: Leave the U.S. and Re-enter with an Initial I-20

If students must leave the U.S. and re-enter with an initial I-20, They will need to acquire an initial I-20 from Alvernia University, depart the U.S. (if still in the country), and if the current visa has not expired, students will be able to re-enter. If the F-1 visa stamp in their passports have expired, they will need to apply for a new visa through the U.S. Consulate in their home country.

If students take this option, the USCIS will view them as “initial attendance”. They will be treated as new students and will be ineligible for Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training until they have completed a full academic year. If they are currently out of the U.S., they can email sibel.ahi@alvernia.edu to submit the required documentation, including updated passports and financial document to receive a new I-20 form.

After Arrival in the U.S.

To maintain F-1 status, students must make progress towards completing their degrees and comply with all immigration regulations, including but not limited to the items below.

Immigration Regulations:

- As an undergraduate student, a student must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits per semester at Alvernia University.
- Students may remain in the U.S. for no longer than the grace period after graduation or after completing program.
- Students must keep a valid passport at all times.
- Students may only accept employment authorized by the Admissions Office in accordance with immigration regulations.
- Students must report any change in address, phone number, or other contact information to the Admissions Office within 10 days.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

We are thrilled to have you as an international student, and we understand that transitioning to a new country and culture can be challenging. That's why we have designed an international student orientation program to help you feel comfortable and supported from the moment you arrive on campus.

During the orientation program, you will have the opportunity to meet other international students, as well as faculty and staff who are dedicated to helping you succeed. Our program will provide you with important information about academic requirements, campus resources, and cultural norms in the United States.

We will also offer workshops on topics such as navigating the healthcare system, opening a bank account, and setting up cell phone accounts. Additionally, you will have the chance to participate in social events, tours of the campus and surrounding areas, and other fun activities to help you get acquainted with your new community.

At Alvernia, we value diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all students can thrive. We look forward to welcoming you and supporting you as you embark on this exciting new journey.

As part of our commitment to making your transition as smooth as possible, Alvernia University provides transportation to the international student orientation program. We understand that navigating transportation in a new country can be challenging, so we want to make sure that you have a stress-free arrival to campus. Details on this transportation will be sent through further communications.

We will arrange for transportation from the Philadelphia International Airport to the university, so you don't have to worry about finding your way on your own. We are here to support you every step of the way and want to make sure that you have a positive and memorable experience at Alvernia University.

We require all new students to Alvernia (First-year & Transfer) to attend the International Orientation which will take place 3-4 days prior to the General Orientation that all students attend.

STUDENT ARRIVAL PROCESS

Incoming international students must check in with several campus officials and offices upon their arrival on campus. The process for completing their check-in includes:

1. Check-in with Designated School Official (DSO)
2. Check-in with Medical and Counseling Center
3. Check-in with Student Financial Services to settle their current balances or create payment plans
4. Check-in with Public Safety for their student ID card
5. Check-in with Residence Life for residential students

All international students under F-1 visas must contact the Designated School Officials (DSO) on campus at the start of each semester to provide updated information to keep their SEVIS records active. We call this the *Check-In Procedure* for new students as well as for continuing students.

SEVIS Check-In Procedure for New and Continuing Students

The SEVIS Check-In Procedure is the process of gathering specific documentation from all international students at Alvernia University and reporting this information to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Students (SEVIS), campus DSO's must report to ICE and the SEVP that students have successfully arrived on campus and are legally within the limits of their visas. This process must be done within 30 calendar days after the start date as listed on the students' I-20 documents.

Check-in with DSO

DSOs must obtain electronic copies of each international student's (matriculating or visiting exchange students) documentation. This includes copies of the following:

- Visa to ensure the students' visas are valid through the end of their time at Alvernia University
- Passport to ensure the correct date of birth, as well as correct information concerning the students' name, country of citizenship, etc.
- I-20 documents
- I-94 that indicate the student's record from Homeland Security of the last time a visa-holder has crossed the border into the United States.
- Student must complete a check-in form for the Admissions Office with local emergency contact information, their U.S. phone number, etc.

Each of these documents contains unique information regarding the students' legal status, and DSOs must take all this information and update the students' record in SEVIS to reflect the students' entry into the U.S. and onto campus. The Check-In Process is essential because it allows students to be on campus and in the country legally and prevents them from violating their visas.

Visa Check-In Procedure for New and Continuing Students

All international students receive check-in procedure emails before the orientation program or the start date of each semester.

Students must complete their check-in files and submit them to one of the DSOs on campus (Sibel Ahi, John Carl Hepler, and Pearl Leung):

1. Create a check in folder for each student with a folder name, which is the last name and first name of the student with “FA 25 Check in”
2. The folder will include copies of the ID page of the passport, the student visa, the I-20 and the completed I-94 page <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : [REDACTED]
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 June 05
Class of Admission : F1
Admit Until Date : D/S
Details provided on the I-94 information form:

Last/Surname : [REDACTED]
First (Given) Name : [REDACTED]
Birth Date : [REDACTED]
Passport Number : [REDACTED]
Country of Issuance : China

[Get Travel History](#)

► Effective April 26, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a preprinted Form I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a lawful record of admission. See 8 CFR § 1.4(d).

► If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.

► Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

2016/06/12 11:11:11
System Date: 06/12/2016

Example I-94 Record

DSOs will register international students to complete the check-in process in SEVIS:

- a. Go to “Initial Status Student” for new students and “Active Students” for continuing students in SEVIS and
- b. Go to “Registration” and enter the current semester end date and the start date of following semester, then update the information at the bottom of the page.
- c. For graduating students: if students are in their last semesters, check the box. DSOs do not need to enter the start date for the next semester. A DSO can shorten a program if the student is on the graduation list.

F-1 students also must follow these regulations:

- Enroll in a full course of study – minimum 12 credits every semester
- Consult with a DSO before dropping below a full course of study for any reason
- Consult with a DSO to extend or shorten their programs
- Report address changes within 10 days period
- Contact a DSO before engaging in any employment or practical training or volunteer work
- Report any changes in program of study or academic status
- Notify a DSO prior to traveling outside the United States
- Notify a DSO upon applying for change of nonimmigrant visa status or any changes on the dependent's visa status.
- Notify a DSO if the student intends to transfer

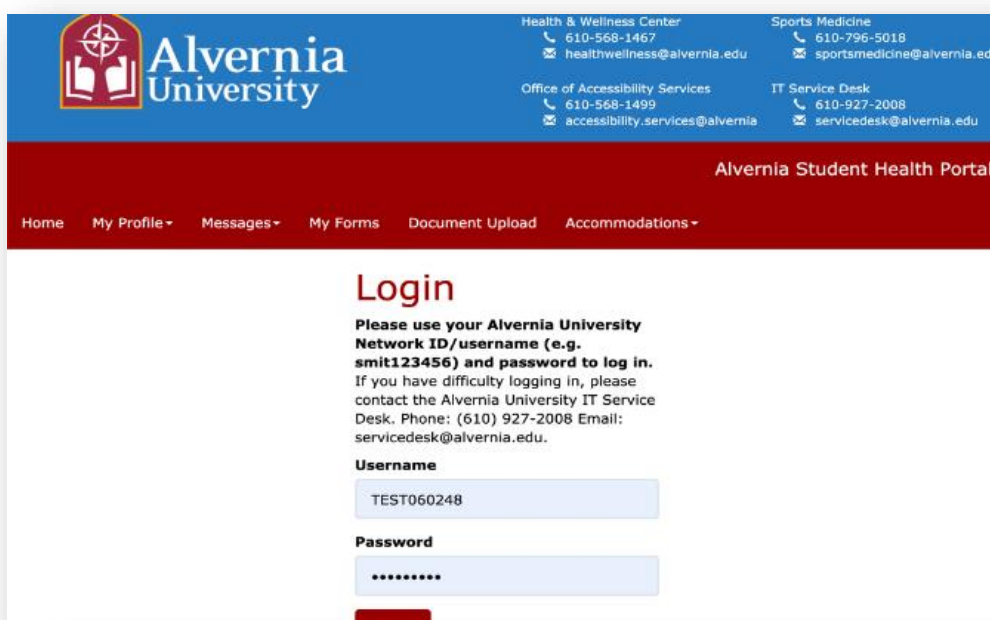
Adapted from NAFSA's Student and Exchange Visitor Program Training for Designated School Official Manual.

Check in with the Alvernia Medical and Counseling Center

All international students are required to complete a Medical History form. Immunizations Cards in other languages must be submitted with an official English translation verified by the primary care provider. Students enrolled in certain professional majors are also required to have a physical exam.

Steps to complete the Health & Wellness requirements:

1. Log in via <https://www.alvernia.edu/logins>
2. Go to Alvernia Student Health Portal
3. Enter your USERNAME and PASSWORD

The image shows the Alvernia Student Health Portal login page. At the top, there is a blue header with the Alvernia University logo on the left and contact information for the Health & Wellness Center, Sports Medicine, Office of Accessibility Services, and IT Service Desk on the right. Below the header is a red navigation bar with links: Home, My Profile, Messages, My Forms, Document Upload, and Accommodations. The main content area is white and features a 'Login' section. It includes instructions to use the Alvernia University Network ID/username and password, a link to contact the IT Service Desk if there are login difficulties, and two input fields for 'Username' (containing 'TEST060248') and 'Password' (containing '*****').

Student Health Portal Login

4. Go to “Document Upload” and upload all required documents, including:
 - Health Insurance card
 - Vaccination card
 - Covid-19 Vaccination
5. Go to “Forms” and complete all required forms, including:
 - Immunization History
 - Medical History
 - Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Questionnaire
 - Communication Preference

The screenshot shows the Alvernia Student Health Portal. At the top, a red navigation bar contains links: My Profile, Messages, My Forms, Document Upload, Accommodations, and Log Off. Below this, the 'My Forms' section is titled, followed by the text 'The following forms need to be completed.' A table lists five forms: Alvernia Immunization History, Alvernia Medical History, Alvernia Tuberculosis Risk Questionnaire, Communication Preferences, and Off Campus Educational Experience Release Form. Each row includes columns for Form Name, Form Type, Appointment Date, and Instructions. Callout boxes with arrows point to specific elements: 'To know the updates at Alvernia' points to the 'My Forms' link; 'To upload document' points to the 'Document Upload' link; and 'To complete the required' points to the 'Alvernia Immunization History' link.

Form Name	Form Type	Appointment Date	Instructions
Alvernia Immunization History	Immunization	N.A.	
Alvernia Medical History	Health History	N.A.	
Alvernia Tuberculosis Risk Questionnaire	Health History	N.A.	
Communication Preferences	Administrative	N.A.	
Off Campus Educational Experience Release Form	Administrative	N.A.	

Check-in with Student Financial Services to Settle Balances

Students are billed by semester, and invoices are published online approximately 30 days in advance of the due date. Students with a local address may receive a mailed paper statement when 1st published.

How to make the payment:

- Check or Money Order payments must be mailed to: Alvernia University, Attention: Student Financial Services, 400 St. Bernardine Street, Reading, PA 19607.
- A semester Payment Plan is available to students who would prefer to pay in monthly installments. There is a fee of \$30 to enroll.
- Students with government scholarships must submit their proof of Financial Guarantee statements from the government before the start of semester.

For more information, see Appendices V, VI.

Check-in with Public Safety for Student ID Cards

To obtain Alvernia Student Identification Cards (ID), students should go to the Public Safety office (located inside Francis Library) with valid identification (e.g. passport & I-20 document) and verification of enrollment status. For new students, initial ID cards are issued free of charge by Public Safety.

Check-in with Residence Life

Students should pick up their keys at the Office of Residence Life, located in Veronica Hall (See *Campus Map* on pg. 6). They then can find the assigned building and begin the moving-in process.



Interior of a Campus Residence Hall



Exterior of a Campus Residence Hall

FINANCIAL GUARANTEES FOR SACM STUDENTS

To get their Financial Guarantee, SACM students should follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://safeer2.moe.gov.sa/portal/>
2. Scholarship Services > Financial Guarantee (FG)
3. Accept terms and conditions
4. Choose FG for academic purposes
5. Attach acceptance letter for freshman students and official transcripts for continuing students.

The top screenshot displays the 'الشروط والأحكام' (Terms and Conditions) page. It contains several lines of Arabic text regarding the financial guarantee process. A red rectangular box highlights the 'موافقة وإرسال' (Agree and Send) button at the bottom left of the page.

The bottom screenshot displays the 'الضمان المالي' (Financial Guarantee) page. It features a header with 'الضمان المالي (FG-401)' and a tab for 'التقديم' (Application). Below this, there is a dropdown menu for 'نوع الطلب' (Type of Request) with 'أخر' (Last) selected. A large section titled 'المرفقات' (Attachments) contains a '+ إرفاق جديد' (+ Add New Attachment) button. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'تقديم' (Submit), 'حفظ' (Save), and 'إنهاء' (End).

For more information, check the Safeer2 user manual online at [safeer2 user manual](#).

TRANSPORTATION

If you have questions about transportation to and from campus, contact the International Student Engagement Office via phone (610) 685-3260 or email pearl.leung@alvernia.edu

Airport Information

Airports near Reading:

Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE)

It is 44 miles away (approximately 70 km) from Alvernia main campus

Philadelphia international airport (PHL) (preferred airport)

It is 67 miles away (approximately 110 km) from Alvernia main campus

John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK)

It is 159 miles away (approximately 255 km) from Alvernia main campus

Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR)

It is 119 miles away (approximately 192 km) from Alvernia main campus

Campus Arrival via Bus

The Bus Option (When arriving from an airport)

Students can travel to Reading via [OurBus](#) or [Flixbus](#).

OurBus offers pick up at the Philadelphia International Airport at Terminal D (Zone 8) and drops off a block from Alvernia's John R. Post Center (401 Penn St, Reading, PA) in downtown Reading.

OurBus also offers pick up at Hudson Yards in New York City - 11th Avenue between W. 35th and W. 36th Streets, across from Javits Convention Center and drops off a block from Alvernia's John R. Post Center in downtown Reading.

Flixbus offers pick up at NYC Midtown (31st St & 8th Ave) and drop off at the Reading BARTA Transportation Center which is located approximately 10 mins (on foot) & 4 mins (by car) from our John R. Post Center in downtown Reading.

Transportation from Reading:

Bus: OurBus, +1(844) 800-6828 <https://www.ourbus.com>

Locations:

- Reading: 5th & Penn, Bus Shelter #2 520 Penn Street, Reading PA 19602
- New York: Hudson Yards - 11th Avenue between W. 35th and W. 36th Streets, across from Javits Convention Center

Other options from various airports:

Airport	Taxi	Uber & Lyft	Andrews Transportation
ABE (~1hr away)	Allentown Taxi and Airport Limo Service: (610) 904-8400 Allentown Transportation: (610) 432-2000	Fares range between \$100 to \$130 depending on time of day.	Will pick you up at the airport with a sign and bring you directly to Alvernia (610) 374-7955 www.andrewstransportation.net . Contact Andrews Transportation directly for fares.
EWR (~2hrs away)		Fares starting at \$200 depending on time of day.	
JFK (~3.5hrs away)		Fares starting from \$368.	
PHL (~1hr away)	Phila Taxi Service: (267) 309-2675 PHL Airport Transportation and Car Service: (610) 457-6600 Minimum cost is \$200 without tolls.	Fares range between \$90 to \$250 depending on time of day.	

Departure Process

All international students must arrange their own transportation to exit campus at the end of the academic year.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

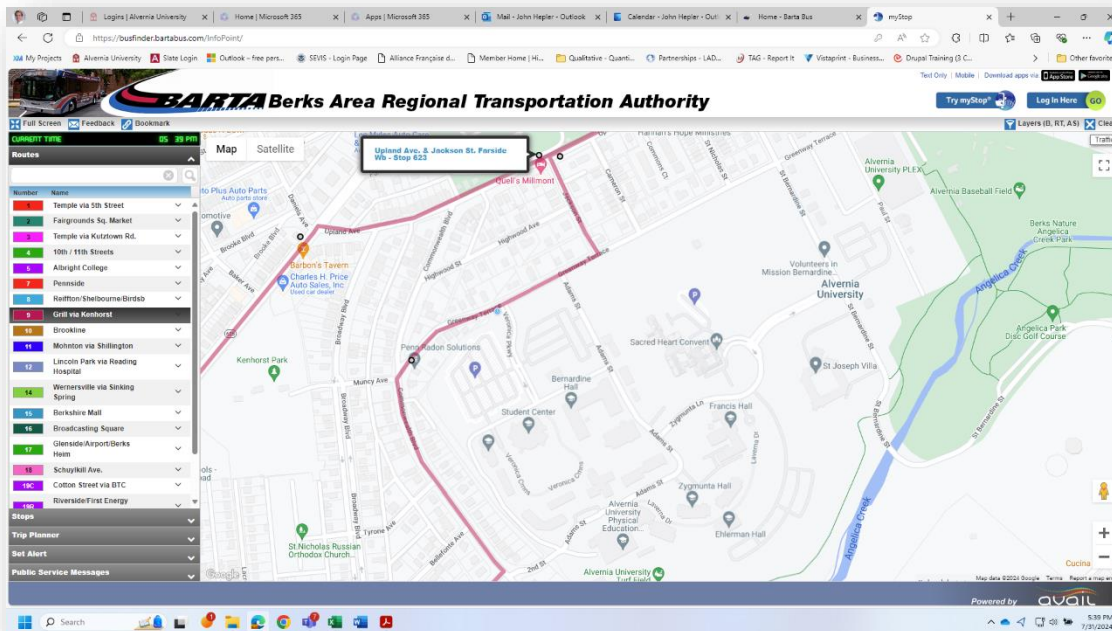
Local transportation services are available through the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority (BARTA). BARTA has a regional network of bus routes in Reading and Berks County. Taking the BARTA bus is an economical way for students to travel to local stores, restaurants, museums, etc. One-way travel costs \$1.60 if purchased on the bus and transfers between bus routes are free. Travels must pay with exact change.

The BARTA website has an interactive live map (<https://busfinder.bartabus.com/>) of the bus routes plus *myStop*, a free App to download to track bus progress on the routes and reduce waiting times.

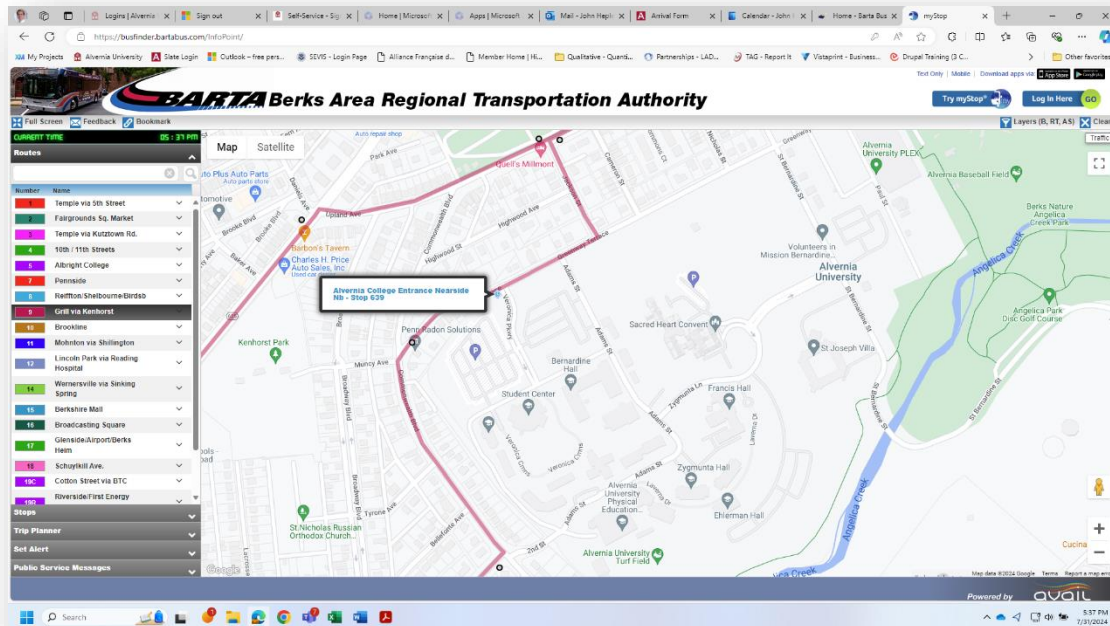
Example BARTA Bus Travel to Kenhorst Plaza

Kenhorst Plaza (Route 9) is a local shopping plaza with a large grocery store, a U.S. post office, a bank, Chinese, Italian, and fast-food restaurants, a fitness center, etc. It is approximately a 25-minute walk but only approximately 5 to 10 minutes by bus.

To travel to Kenhorst Plaza by bus, students take the Route 9 – Grill via Kenhorst (Outbound), boarding at stop 623 (Upland Ave. & Jackson St. – Far side westbound), descending at stop 229 in front of the Redner's Supermarket in Kenhorst Plaza. See the *Busfinder* map below.



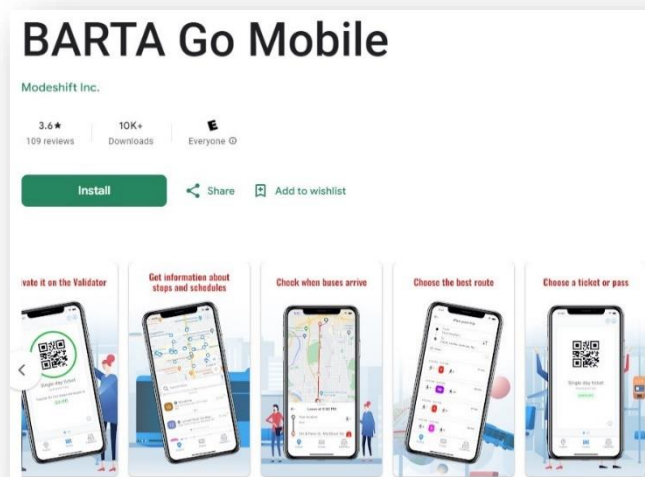
When ready to return to campus, students board the bus at stop 229 and descend at stop 639 at the university entrance on Greenway Terrace. See the *Busfinder* map below.



Buses run hourly from early morning until early evening, Monday through Saturday. For the live bus schedules on Busfinder, plus downloadable maps, go to <https://busfinder.bartabus.com/>

BARTA Go Mobile App

BARTA also offers *BARTA Go Mobile*, an App that includes real-time bus routes and scheduling, plus online ticket and day-pass purchases. It is available on [GooglePlay](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.barta) for free.



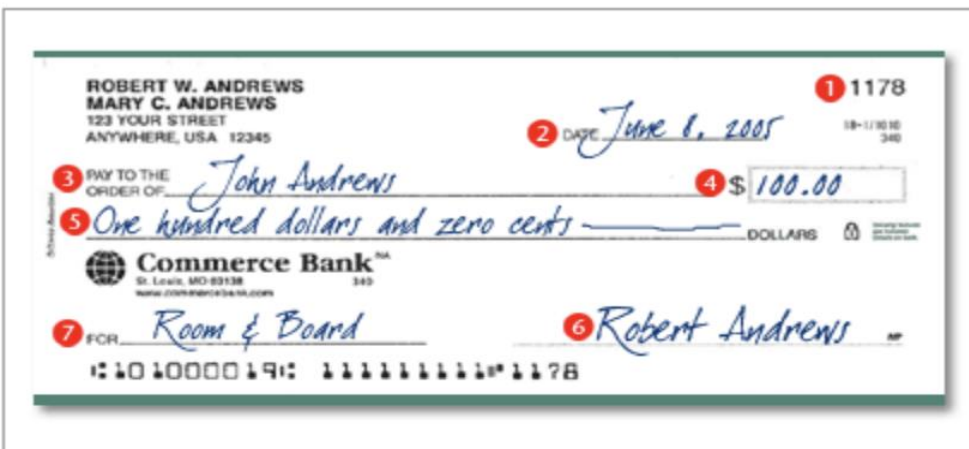
OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT IN THE UNITED STATES

Banks may have different requirements for opening an account. However, generally international students need to provide two forms of identification: one of them is their passport; and the second document can be a student identification card.

In addition, students must present their I-20s and some form of proof of address, such as a bank statement or a utility bill, sent to their mailing address. They may also need a letter from the International Student Engagement Office at Alvernia University.

Most banks require the account holder to be 18 years old or older.

How to Write a Check



1. Check number- Record this in your check register.
2. Date - Write the date the check is written in this spot.
3. "Pay to the order of" - Write in blue or black ink the person or company that you want to pay.
4. \$ Amount - Write the amount to be paid in numbers, dollars and cents.
 - ▶ Always write the numbers close to the dollar sign, so that additional numbers cannot be added by someone else.
5. Amount - Write the amount of the check in words. Start at the left edge of the line, right under "Pay To The Order Of." Once you've written the amount, draw a line from the end of the amount to the word "Dollars."
6. Signature - Sign your name to promise that the funds are available and may be taken from your checking account.
7. "For" line - Write yourself a note to help remember the purpose of the check.
8. Be sure to record the check in your check register.

STUDENT TRAVEL

Students on F-1 visas are required to attend all classes during the normal academic year (i.e. fall and spring semesters). During the summer and winter breaks, the U.S. government and Alvernia University encourage international students to explore the United States and enhance their educational experiences through direct interaction with the local population. With that in mind, students on F-1 visas must follow the guidelines below.

Travel Within the United States

Students may travel inside the United States during their studies as long as they carry their valid passports and their I-20 documents at all times.

Travel Outside the United States

If students want to travel outside the United States, their I-20's must be signed by a DSO before they leave the country. All students are required to obtain a travel signature that allows them to return to the United States.

Travel with a Travel Signature

All travel signatures are valid for one year after the signature date. Travel signatures can be used for more than one entry, which means students can travel to multiple countries with the same travel signature, as long as it is less than a year (12 months) old.

Travel with No Travel Signature

If students exited the United States without the DSO signature, then they must request a reprinted I-20 with a signature to email to their official Alvernia email address. The DSO can reissue the current I-20 three to five business days after receipt of the student email. If students require paper copies, they must provide accurate address information, phone number, and payment of mailing fees to receive the I-20 with a valid signature. The DSO is not responsible for mailing expenses and problems.

Travel within the United States After Graduation

After students complete their studies, they have a 60-day grace period to travel within the U.S. and prepare for their departure. After graduation, students cannot reenter the U.S. with their I-20's if they leave the country.

Special Travel Requirements for Students on Post-Completion OPT

After completing their academic programs, if the students hold an Optional Practical Practice (OPT) I-20, they must obtain a travel signature every 6 months. All post-completion OPT students must discuss their international travel plans with a DSO before they travel.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

During the fall and spring orientation sessions, the SSN application process is covered. Therefore, the student has knowledge of the steps.

What is a Social Security Number (SSN)?

- An SSN is used by employers and employees for the purpose of reporting individual employee earnings for tax purposes only.
- The SSN is valid for life, so students only need to apply once.

Who is eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN)?

F-1 students who have on-campus employment, or are receiving fellowships which require employment or Resident Assistantship, Teaching Assistantship, or working off-campus on OPT or CPT.

Steps to Apply for a Social Security Number

1. The student will need to secure an on-campus job. Designated School Officials will only authorize students to work on-campus jobs.
2. Once a job offer is made and accepted, the student must do the following:
 - a. Have their employer fill out the “On-Campus Work Authorization Form”
 - b. Receive the signature from DSO
3. Complete the required documents to apply an SSN, the student will need
 - A completed Form SS-5: Application for a social security card
 - Passport, copy of current electronic I-94 arrival record, and current I-20
 - Evidence of SSN eligibility, which must be one of the following:
 - For on campus employment letter (A letter from the on-campus employer addressed to the Social Security Administration)
 - I-20 showing unexpired CPT or OPT endorsement
 - EAD card (if on OPT)
4. A letter from the register office which verifies your attendance as a full-time student.

Location of Social Security Offices

The Social Security office closest to Alvernia University is in Downtown Reading.

Office Address: 201 Penn St #200, Reading, PA 19601

Phone Number: (866) 274-5960

Hours of Operation: You should call the Reading Social Security office ahead of time to verify their hours of operation. Generally, most federal offices are open:

Monday: 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM

Tuesday: 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM

Wednesday: 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM

Thursday: 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM

Friday: 09:00 AM – 04:00 PM

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

PENNSYLVANIA STATE DRIVER'S LICENSES

During the fall and spring orientation sessions, the DMV application process is covered. Therefore, the student has knowledge of the steps. Please note: these pages contain information for international students who want to obtain a Pennsylvania driver's license. For more detailed information about the licensing process itself, refer to the [PennDOT Driver & Vehicle Services website](#).

Pennsylvania Driver's License

If you were issued a driver's license in your home country, or if you have an international driver's license, you may use these for a limited time. However, local authorities may question the credentials if written in a language other than English.

Students classified as F, M, or J non-immigrants with active status in the SEVIS program are permitted to obtain a Pennsylvania driver's license or identification card. Please note the following conditions:

- Individuals who possess a valid foreign driver's license from their country are authorized to drive in Pennsylvania **for up to one year from their dates of entry into the United States, or upon expiration of their foreign licenses**, whichever comes first.
- International driving permits are strongly recommended but not required.
- Reciprocity agreements exist with the countries of France, Germany, Korea, and Taiwan allowing for the transfer of a valid non-commercial driver's license without road or knowledge testing; however, a vision test will be administered. (Transfer of a driver's license from Puerto Rico, France, or Germany cannot be completed the same day.)

When can international students apply for a Pennsylvania driver's license or ID card?

International students must wait:

- Ten (10) days after arrival in the U.S. to permit time for data processing through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program. The Pennsylvania Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) accesses this system to verify your status for services such as driver's licenses and state identification cards.
- At least two weeks after verifying *active status* in the SEVIS program.

How to Apply for a Driver's License

Step 1: Obtain a Pennsylvania Driver's Manual and [Form DL-180: Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application](#) from the [Pennsylvania DMV site](#). Driver's manuals are available in multiple languages.

Step 2: Apply for a Social Security number at the local Social Security Administration office in Reading. The address is: 201 Penn St., Suite 200, Reading, PA 19601.

You will be denied (if not employed on campus) for a Social Security card and will instead receive a Form SSA-L676 "Refusal to Process SSN Application."

Step 3: Go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office in the Shillington Shopping Center. The address is: 530 E. Lancaster Ave., Suite 5, Shillington, PA 19607.

The cost is on the [PennDOT website](#). When you arrive, present the following documentation:

*Items with an * are required*

- The completed [Form DL-180 Application](#)*
- 2 documents that provide **proof of residence** in Pennsylvania See [PennDOT's Proof of Identity and Residency page](#) for a list of acceptable documents. This information is available in multiple languages.*
- **Valid passport** with visa (if applicable) *
- **Form I-94**, “Arrival/Departure Record” *
- **Form I-20***
- **Form I-20** with OPT (for an F student authorized to work off-campus) *
- **Form I-766** “Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card (for an F student authorized to work off-campus)
- **Social Security number (SSN)** on a Social Security card **/OR/** a Social Security Administration (SSA) **Form SSA-L676**, “Refusal to Process SSN Application” for students without an SSN*
- A letter from the Registrar’s Office which verifies your attendance as a full-time student.

Step 4: At this point you will make an appointment to take your driving exam. Upon completion of the exam, you will receive your driver’s license.

Learner’s Permit

If you were not issued a driver’s license in your home country, you must begin with a Learner's Permit. To receive a Learner’s Permit, you must pass a written exam. The Learner's Permit is valid for 120 days. If you pass the written exam, you may schedule an appointment to take the driving test.

Driver Training

Alvernia University does not offer driving training classes. Students interested in obtaining driver training may do so at their own expense.

SEVP Contact Information

International students with further questions about driver’s licenses should contact the SEVP at dmvssa.sevp@ice.dhs.gov.

For general SEVP policy questions, contact the SEVP Response Center at 1-800-892-4829 or sevp@ice.dhs.gov. For further information, visit [SEVP’s official website](#).

Forms & Links

- [Form DL-180: Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application](#)
- [PennDOT Fact Sheet](#)

TAX INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The U.S. federal government requires all international students to submit tax statements every year they are attending institutions of higher learning in the United States, even if they do not earn an income. These tax statements are commonly referred to as “tax returns.”

Who Must File Tax Forms?

There are several determinations as to which forms you complete for U.S. federal taxes:

- Whether you are a resident or non-resident for tax purposes.
- Whether you received U.S. source income in the previous tax year. All international students and scholars need to file state tax forms if their income in 2022 was more than a certain amount. For more information, see Tax Guide for Aliens, available at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p519.pdf>.
- If you arrived in the U.S. after December 31st, you do not have to file any tax forms for the previous year.

1. Am I a Resident or Non-Resident for Tax Purposes?

Although most international students and scholars are non-resident for tax purposes, it is important to confirm your tax status in order to know which forms to complete. Your status as a resident or non-resident for tax purposes is different from your immigration status. It is calculated based on how many days you have been in the U.S. during the previous few years and determines which tax forms you need to file.

- To determine whether you are resident or non-resident for tax purposes, use the Substantial Presence Test found on the IRS web site: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Substantial-Presence-Test>
- More information on determining your status for tax purposes can also be found at the site: <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/ch01.html>

If you are a resident for tax purposes (very few students are a resident), you will fill out the same forms as an American citizen.

2. Did I Receive U.S. Source Income in the Previous Year?

If you are a non-resident for tax purposes, then the next step is to determine whether you received U.S. source income during the previous year. This will determine which forms to submit. A detailed summary of what is considered U.S. source income for the purpose of tax returns can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/nonresident-aliens>

After you have determined your tax residence status and whether or not you have U.S. source income, you may now determine:

- What is U.S. source income? Which tax forms will you need to complete?
- Which documents will you need to complete your tax forms?

Filing Federal and State Taxes

Non-immigrant students on F-1 or J-1 visas must file Federal tax returns if they earn money in the United States. International students are liable for Federal and State taxes, but not for Social Security (FICA) taxes. FICA taxes should not be withheld from international student pay unless the students are considered to be “residents for tax purposes” by the IRS (usually if they’ve lived in the U.S. for 5 calendar years or more).

If international students are working on campus and FICA taxes are being withheld, they should notify Alvernia University’s [Human Resources](#) office to stop this withholding. Some money, however, must be withheld from their paychecks to cover possible Federal and State tax obligations that they might have. Even though money will be withheld from their pay, they may still be exempt from taxes and get back some of the money withheld.

In some cases, students may be covered by a tax treaty between the United States and their countries and therefore they are exempt from paying U.S. taxes. For more details, visit the Internal Revenue Service website at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/claiming-tax-treaty-benefits>

U.S. Federal Income Tax:

- **ALL F-1 STUDENTS** must file [Form 8843](#) — *even if they are not working*
- If they are working and Social Security taxes were withheld from their paychecks, they must file [Form 1040NR](#) (Long Form) or [Form 1040NR-EZ](#) (“Easy” or Short Form) *plus* [Form 8843](#)
- The deadline to file taxes is **April 15th** each year

On [Form 8843](#), students should complete Part I and Part III.

- Matriculating Students (F-1) - under question 10, students should use the department of their academic major and list the Chair of that department as the Director

More information is available for international students who have complicated federal tax reporting requirements at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/foreign-students-scholars-teachers-researchers-and-exchange-visitors>

If students did not file taxes/[Form 8843](#) for previous years, they should call the Federal toll-free number (800) 829-1040 to request forms from past years. They may also access tax forms and instructions at www.irs.gov and search for forms by number at “[Forms and Publications](#).”

More Information About Completing Federal Tax Forms

To obtain detailed information about Federal tax regulations, international students can check the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) web site: www.irs.gov/privacy-disclosure/tax-code-regulations-and-official-guidance

If students have problems completing [Form 8843](#), they may call (800) 829-1040 to ask for help.

Pennsylvania State Tax:

If international students did not earn income in Pennsylvania, they do not have to file any forms.

If they did earn income, most online tax programs such as [Glacier Tax Prep](#) and [Sprintax](#) will complete the state tax return along with the federal forms. If students choose to complete their state tax returns individually, they can submit them electronically on Pennsylvania's free [e-File](#) online system.

Students wishing to file on paper should use the Pennsylvania Income Tax Return (PA-40) available for download at <https://www.revenue.pa.gov/FormsandPublications/FormsforIndividuals/PIT/Pages/default.aspx>

Filing Guidance & Tax Preparation Assistance

It is **each student's responsibility** to file federal taxes and [Form 8843](#). Employees of Alvernia University do not prepare U.S. income tax forms; however, there are many online tax programs, including [Glacier Tax Prep](#) and [Sprintax](#).

PLEASE NOTE – The IRS does not allow electronic filing (efile) for nonresident aliens, so all international students need to send in their tax returns by U.S. mail.

If students do not owe money, they must send their forms to:

*Internal Revenue Service Center,
Austin, TX 73301-0215, U.S.A.*

If they need to pay taxes, the forms and payment must be mailed to:

*Internal Revenue Service
P.O. Box 1303
Charlotte, NC 28201-1303*

Federal & State Tax Preparation Assistance:

Employees of Alvernia University are **not allowed by law** to assist students with completing their tax returns. If students need help, they should contact a tax professional. They should *ask to speak with a certified public accountant (CPA). They should not go to a "tax preparer" who is not a CPA.*

There are online tax programs available to help international students with their tax returns.

- [Glacier Tax Prep](#)
- [Sprintax](#)

There are fees for most online tax preparation software. Getting assistance from a local tax professional will also cost money. Students should call to make an appointment and ask for rates. They should only need tax professionals if there are issues with their taxes. Most students should be able to complete the forms themselves or with the help of the tax software.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING & OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Each semester, the Office of Multilingual Success partners with the Career Development Center to host an information session for all international students who are interested in interning or working off-campus through Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT) F-1 visa programs.

The session provides guidelines on how to apply for “Curricular Practical Training” (interning) and “Optional Practical Training” (Pre-OPT – working while still a student and Post-OPT – after graduation hands-on experience) offer advice on finding career opportunities in the United States. Questions about CPT and OPT should be directed to Dr. John Carl Hepler.

Employment for International Students

On-Campus Employment: Every academic year, some offices on campus, including the Admissions Office and International Student Engagement Office, hire international student-workers to support and engage with current students or prospective international students.

Off-Campus Employment: F-1 students may not work off-campus during the first academic year but may accept on-campus employment subject to certain conditions and restrictions. There are various programs available for F-1 students to seek off-campus employment after the first academic year.

F-1 students may engage in three types of off-campus employment:

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- STEM Optional Practical Training Extension (OPT)

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) INFORMATION FOR FACULTY

Curriculum Practical Training (CPT) provides F-1 (matriculating) international students who have completed one academic year of full-time study in the U.S. an internship opportunity, which can be off-campus. The main requirement for the CPT is that it be part of the student curriculum:

1. A letter from the faculty member who is issuing the Alvernia credit which describes the connection between course work and the job duties and provides details about timeline of the training and course credits. It is acceptable for the academic advisor to be that faculty member.
2. If the department chair needs to approve a certain student's internship because ordinarily an internship is not part of the curriculum for the major – an additional letter from the department chair that briefly describes how the CPT experience would be considered part of the student's field of study would be required. This could simply be a one-sentence letter that states: "As a X department chair, I approve that the internship of X student is the part of his/her curriculum."

CPT is authorized by the DSO with a new endorsed CPT I-20. The CPT site information appears on page 2 of the I-20, and indicates the location, number of hours, and duration of the curricular practical training.

CPT Application Process

International students need to work with four departments to complete their applications:

1. **Career Development Center:** The student should seek internship opportunities
2. **Academic Departments:** The academic advisors should review both documents from the student before they sign the CPT authorization form
 - The Career Development Center form
 - An offer letter from the internship employer on the employer's letterhead, showing the employer's name and address, along with the employment start/end dates, work hours, and job duties.

PLEASE NOTE: Each CPT authorization should be for an internship that is substantially different from any previous CPT internship, and it cannot be for a continuation of the same internship with the same employer.

3. **The Registrar's Office:** The start and end date of the CPT should be approved by the Registrar's Office. The semester credit must be earned in the same semester for which CPT is authorized, but an exception might apply for the summer term.
4. **DSO:** Students must plan in advance to be sure that they have completed all of the steps above before having an appointment with the DSO to receive their CPT endorsed I-20.

Students cannot start their CPT internship until they have received the new I-20 with CPT endorsement from the DSO.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Applying for your internship involves four steps which may take several weeks to complete. Please read the following carefully and plan accordingly. If you have questions about the process, ask the relevant offices for help along the way: DSO, the Career Center, your academic advisor, and the Registrar.

STEP 1: Determine your eligibility for CPT

- Have you been enrolled at Alvernia University for the previous academic year, carrying 12 or more academic credits each semester?
- Have you declared a major and are you in good academic standing? Academic or continuing probation students are NOT authorized for CPT.
- Have you found an internship in your field of study? You must already have secured an internship to apply for CPT.
- Understand that if you work more than 20 hours a week during your CPT, and the total accumulation of time on CPT is greater than 12 months, you CANNOT apply later for OPT. *This limitation does not apply to part-time CPT.*

STEP 2: Find an Internship and Obtain and Complete the Necessary Documents and Forms

- Investigate and identify internship options for your major.
 - The Career Development Center offers advice career.development@alvernia.edu
 - Your academic advisor and/or department chair may also have suggestions
 - Also consider: www.internships.com
- Apply for internships and get an “offer letter” on the organization’s letterhead that shows the employer’s name and address, along with the employment start/end dates, work hours, and job duties.
- Complete the “internship form” available from the Career Development Center:

Note: This form must check the box “for credit” and must include specified “learning goals” and/or include an internship syllabus developed by an Alvernia faculty member.
- Complete the CPT authorization form available in APPENDIX V

STEP 3: Submit all necessary forms to the DSO

- Your passport and previous I-20s
- Your internship offer letter printed on company letterhead, showing the employer’s name, address, employment dates and hours, and job duties.
- Letter from the faculty member who is issuing the Alvernia credit that states the connection between course work and job duties, including details about timeline of the internship and related course plus the number of credits.
- Completed CPT form with your academic adviser’s signature.

STEP 4: Meet with Dr. Hepler in the Office of Multilingual Success to receive the CPT-endorsed I-20. Students must plan in advance to be sure that they meet all of the above steps before making an appointment to receive their CPT endorsed I-20.

*****Students cannot start their CPT internship until they have received the new I-20 with CPT endorsement on the second page of their I-20 documents.*****

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) INFORMATION

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a period of 12 months during which a student holding F-1 status may work in the United States. Students have the option to apply for OPT before completing their studies (pre-completion OPT) or after graduation (post-completion OPT). Time spent under pre-completion OPT reduces the time available on a post-graduation OPT experience. Therefore, most students wait until they finish their studies to participate in a post-completion OPT experience.

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Students apply during the final semester of their studies, requesting full-time OPT to begin upon the completion of their academic program. They must apply before the program end date reported on their Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) and it may take three (3) or more months to receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Students should indicate interest in OPT when checking in at the Office of Multilingual Success at the beginning of the semester in which they want to apply.

How Do I Apply for OPT?

1: Establish eligibility for OPT. Meet with director of the Office of Multilingual Success to determine that you:

- Have been enrolled at Alvernia University the previous semester, carrying 12 or more academic credits, and will continue until completion of the current semester (semesters spent studying abroad are permissible).
- Have not worked off-campus without permission.
- Already have a Social Security number.
- Are completing classes with passing grades and will graduate Alvernia University by the program end date indicated on your Form I-20.
- Have supplied the Office of Multilingual Success with contact information.
- Are aware that it is better not to travel out of the United States until you receive a reply regarding your OPT application from the USCIS.
- Know that you will lose your OPT if you violate F-1 status.
- Will work in your field of study.

2: Schedule an appointment with the director of the Office of Multilingual Success to assemble your application. Please bring:

- Valid passport and I-94 card
- Form I-20s past and present
- Academic Record or Transcript
- Academic Status Letter (PDF) from your Academic Advisor
- OPT Form I-20 (will be issued/completed during your appointment with the director)
- Payment to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security via [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov). Review official documentation for the current form and fee (See [I-765 Application for Employment](#) for latest information).

3: Make two copies of your application (you can do this during your appointment)

- Give one copy to the director of the Office of Multilingual Success and keep the other copy for your personal files.
- Submit your OPT application via mail to the designated USCIS Office identified at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses> or submit it online at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>

What Happens After I Submit My OPT Application?

- After you submit your application, you will receive a receipt from the USCIS. It is very important that you keep that receipt as you will need it to check the status of your application online at [Case Status](#).
- Please be aware that after you receive your EAD card, if you relocate, it is your responsibility to notify the director of the Office of Multilingual Success of changes in your contact information. You have 10 days in which to report any change of address.
- Once employment has been secured, you must notify the director of the Office of Multilingual Success of your new employment within 10 days. Should you change employment or become unemployed, you must also notify the director of the Office of Multilingual Success within 10 days.
- Although you will no longer be at Alvernia University, you must still have your contact information confirmed by the director of the Office of Multilingual Success periodically to maintain your OPT status.

Important Notes:

- Although the USCIS will notify you by email when your OPT application has been approved, you cannot start working until you receive the EAD card, which may delay your start date by up to several weeks.
- The DSO travel signature on page 2 of the Form I-20 is only valid for six (6) months for F-1 students on post-completion OPT.
- F-1 Students approved for OPT by USCIS have ninety (90) days to secure employment. If they are unable to find a job, their OPT is cancelled and they must leave the United States. Therefore, it is best to start applying for jobs as early as possible during the OPT application period.
- If USCIS approves you for full-time employment, working part-time is acceptable. Students can work more than one part-time job as long as they do not exceed 40 hours per week.
- Similarly, F-1 students can change jobs at any time during their post-completion OPT but must notify the USCIS and their Alvernia University DSO of any changes to their employment status.



CERTIFICATION OF FINANCES

Please note: In order for your application to be considered complete, the Department of Homeland Security of the United States government requires the College to verify the financial resources of all international applicants. I-20 Forms cannot be issued until this form is completed and we have received all supporting bank documents (unless your bank has certified this form).

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY. THIS FORM IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR STUDENT VISA PROCESS.

Alvernia University awards ONLY merit-based academic scholarships (up to \$20,000) to the international applicants. Students can also use loans, grants, scholarships from their home countries in order to demonstrate available funding.

Students must provide a bank statement from a bank in their home country, dated within 6 months of the date of application, showing the required deposit. This form will be used to enter the student's information into the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) SEVIS system. Please print clearly in block letters or type your responses. The Certification of Finances and supporting

- Bank statements, letters of confirmation of funds must
- Contain original signatures and a bank stamp or seal
- Bank documents must be issued 6 months or less from the date we receive them
- Express all monetary amounts in U.S. dollars or submit the exchange amount from any online currency exchange website

PART I – APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full Name: _____
(as it appears on your passport)

Email: _____

Number and Street: _____
Full Residential Address: _____

City or Town: _____

State or Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Please note that, according to current ICE regulations, students must retain an address in their country of residence. Addresses may not be mailed boxes. Additionally, courier services will not deliver to a post office box.

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Month / Day / Year Place of Birth: _____ City/Country: _____ Citizenship: _____ Country: _____

Country Issuing your passport: _____ Passport Number: _____ Expiration Date: ____/____/____ Month / Day / Year

Person in the United States
in only in case of emergency Full Name: _____ Area Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

+1 () _____

If you are currently in the United States, Visa Type: _____ I-94 Number: _____ SEVIS ID Number: _____

APPENDICES

Appendix I: International Student Certification of Finances

Name of school or institution that issued your last I-20: _____ Phone Number: ____-____-____ Country code: ____ Area: ____ Number: ____

Signature of Parent if Student is under age 18: _____ Name of Person Signing: _____
I certify that all statements made on this form are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if my financial circumstances or the information above changes, I am to respond to inform Alvernia University Admissions immediately.

Signature of Student: _____ Date signed: ____/____/____ Month / Day / Year

ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL EXPENSES (2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR) *

- Tuition and Fees: \$ 43,470
- Books, Supplies, Insurance, Personal: \$ 15,000
- Academic Scholarship and Residency Award: \$ 6,000
- Academic Scholarship and Residency Award: \$ 28,000

TOTAL FOR 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR: \$ 36,560
*Additional figures are given for informational purposes only to assist applicants with budget planning. All figures are estimates and are subject to change.

PART II – STUDENT'S SOURCE OF FUNDS (Please complete table below using U.S. Dollars for all amounts)

SOURCE OF FUNDS	ASSURED FOR FIRST YEAR	PROJECTED FOR YEARS 2, 3 AND 4
Personal Funds		
Parent, Guardian or Family Funds		
Private Sponsor		
Organization or Government Sponsor		

PART III – PARENT/SPONSOR CERTIFICATION

Name: _____ First: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____ Relationship to Applicant: _____

Address: _____ Number and Street: _____ City or Town: _____ State & Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: ____/____/____ Month / Day / Year
I hereby certify that I have read the information on this form as provided by the applicant, and I agree to provide the financial resources for the student's education expenses of Alvernia University per year, payable in U.S. dollars, for education expenses of Alvernia University.

PART IV – BANK CERTIFICATION

Name: _____ Title: _____
First Middle Last

Bank/Institution Name: _____

Address: _____
Number and Street City or Town State & Postal Code Country

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____ / ____ / ____
Month / Day / Year

I certify that the person listed on this form as a sponsor has been a client of this bank/ financial institution since _____ and, to the best of my knowledge, has the resources to provide the funds specified in this form. These funds are available for transfer to the United States to be used to meet educational expenses at Alvernia University. I understand that this certification does not constitute a statement of responsibility on my part or that of the firm or on the part of the institution I represent.

Place/affix official band stamp or seal below here: _____

Appendix II: Shopping List Ideas

Bedroom:

- Sheets/Blankets/Mattress Pad (TWIN XL)
Recommendation: You should buy a mattress pad you can wash and reuse
- Pillows/Pillowcases
- Storage Units

Electrical:

- Power Strip
Recommendation: You should buy one with a long (2m) cord so it will reach your desktop also consider a “smart strip” that will let you leave your power on while turning off non-essential items
- Lamp
- Light Bulbs
Recommendation: Purchase LED lamps and bulbs to help save energy and cut costs

Laundry:

- Laundry Bag
- Laundry Detergent
- Dryer Sheets
Recommendation: You should look for dryer balls instead of dryer sheets because you can use them many times.
- Fabric Softener

Kitchen:

- Plates, Bowls, Forks, Spoons, Knives, Cups,
Recommendation: You should buy reusable items instead of disposable ones.
- Dish Soap
- Sponge

Shower Supplies:

- Shampoo, conditioner, body wash
- Loofah, shower caddy (organizer for your shower items)
- Razors nail clippers
- Face wash
- Shaving cream
- Towels
- Hair dryer/straightener/curler

School Supplies:

- Paper, pens, pencils, highlighters
- Notebooks, folders, binders
- Backpack
- Pencil case
- Whiteout, ruler, calculator
- Agenda

Others:

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent spray

Appendix III: Things to See and Do in the Reading Area

Parks

- **Gring's Mill Recreation Area:** 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA 19610
- **Museum Park:** 1218 Parkside Dr S, Reading, PA 19611
- **Antietam Lake Park:** 232 Angora Rd, Reading, PA 19606

Museums

- **Reading Public Museum:** 500 Museum Rd, Reading, PA 19611
- **Mid Atlantic Air Museum:** 1054 Arnold Rd, Reading, PA 19605
- **Reading Area Firefighters Museum:** 501 S 5th St, Reading, PA 19602
- **Franklin Institute:** 222 N 20th St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Other Attractions

- **The Pagoda:** 98 Duryea Dr, Reading, PA 19602
- **Crystal Cave:** 963 Crystal Cave Rd, Kutztown, PA 19530
- **GoggleWorks Center for the Arts:** 201 Washington St, Reading, PA 19601
- **Encrypted Escape Room West Reading:** 600 Penn Avenue Basement, Reading, PA 19611
- **Reading Rocks:** 550 George St, Reading, PA 19605
- **Slick Willy's Karts & Eats:** 1109 Bern Rd, Wyomissing, PA 19610
- **Santander Arena (All types of Events & Performances):** [Santander Arena Tickets](#) | [Santander Arena \(centerreading.org\)](#) 700 Penn St, Reading, PA 19602

Not too far from Alvernia (websites to check out)

- [Berks County](#)
- [Lancaster County](#)
- [Philadelphia](#)
- [New York City](#)
- [Washington DC](#)
- [Baltimore](#)

Appendix IV: Maintaining Appropriate Visa Status

From the time your visa is granted, and you enter the United States, you must follow a set of requirements to maintain legal status. Those who follow the requirements “maintain status” and ensure their ability to remain in the United States. Those who do not follow the requirements violate their status and are considered “out of status.” If you do not maintain your visa status, you may be required to leave the United States and may not be readmitted to the country.

Key Steps to Maintain Your Visa Status

- Make sure to check in with the Designated Student Officials when you first arrive on campus.
- Check your email for the important reminders, updates, and immigration information to your Alvernia University email address.
- Let the Designated Student Officials know before you leave, change or finish your academic program.
- Inform the Designated Student Officials when you move to ensure that your address and other information in the SEVIS database are accurate and up to date.
- Notify the Designated Student Officials if you plan to travel out of the United States; to sign your I-20 form before you leave the country.
- Notify the Designated Student Officials if you will transfer to a new program or school.
- Report any dependents (spouse or children) to the Designated Student Officials.
- Work with the Designated Student Officials to extend your I-20 if you need additional time to complete your program of study.

Maintain a Valid Passport at All Times. Take a Full-Time Course Load

- Undergraduate: 12 credit hours minimum per semester
- Graduate: Nine credit hours minimum per semester

Follow the Rules for Employment. Pay State and Federal Taxes (If You Are Employed). Obey State and Federal Laws.

I-94 Information

When you enter the United States, your entry information and approval for your length of stay is recorded in your Arrival/Departure Record, or I-94 number. In the past, you were given a small, white card at the airport with your I-94 information. However, this information is now recorded and stored electronically. After you enter the U.S., you will access your I-94 information at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection I-94 Retrieval page. It is important that you access and print your I-94 information soon after you arrive in the U.S.

Passport Validity

You are required to keep your passport valid at all times. Renew it up to six months before it expires at your country's nearest consulate.

Travel

All international students and scholars must have their I-20 signed by Designated Student Officials prior to traveling. Students should bring their I-20 to the Designated Student Officials at least seven days before traveling.

Obtaining A Visa

You Cannot Obtain a Visa in the United States

You must always obtain a visa outside the United States at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. The embassy is the main office, located in that country's capital. Other major cities have a "consulate." Most international students are encouraged to obtain the U.S. visa at the consulate located in their home country. International students usually obtain an F-1 student visa to study. Once you obtain the visa, you will use your visa, I-20, and passport (other documents may be required) to enter the United States.

In most cases, F-1 student visas can expire after you enter the U.S. as it is like your ticket to enter the country. If you leave the U.S. and your visa has already expired, then you must renew the visa to return. Some exceptions to the valid visa rule to re-enter the U.S. apply when you travel to Canada, Mexico, and certain adjacent islands. Check with your Designated Student Officials to learn more about these exceptions before you travel.

Appendix V: Application for Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training – Authorization Form

Student Information

SEVIS #: N _____ Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Number Street Apt. City State Postal Code

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Current I-20 Expiration Date ____/____/____

Internship Information

Name of Organization _____

Address of
Organization _____

Proposed Position Title _____

Name of Student's
Supervisor _____

Phone/email of Supervisor _____

Employment start date: ____/____/____ Employment end date: ____/____/____

Please check one: ____ Full-time (more than 20 hrs/week) ____ Part-time (20 hrs/week or less)

I understand the following: CPT is authorized to fulfill an academic requirement and is for a finite period of employment needed to meet the academic course requirement to obtain the grade for that class.

I understand that I cannot begin employment until I have the work permission in the form of the CPT I-20. This employment is employer specific for the dates listed on the I-20 form only.

Student signature _____

Date _____

Advisor and Department Chair Approval:

Department/program of study:

Course Title & Number: _____ Semester student will take course:

How is the proposed employment related to the student's field of study?

As the student's Academic Advisor, I approve of the amount of time requested as necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training. Therefore, I recommend that you authorize this student to participate in the academic training program described above.

Academic Advisor Name and Signature

_____ Date _____

Department Chair Name and Signature

_____ Date _____

Designated School Official Notes:

.....

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONTRACT

I understand that while I am in the United States, I must follow the laws of the United States and any state and local laws and ordinances. As a student studying at Alvernia University, I agree to follow the rules and expectations in the Alvernia University Student Handbook. I also agree to the following:

- ☐ **Communication:** I will read, review (and respond to when appropriate) all information sent out by the Admissions Office via Sibel Ahi's email account (sibel.ahi@alvernia.edu) or by an Alvernia University staff member.
- ☐ **Maintaining Visa Status:** I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain my F-1 status. I promise to report any information that may affect my F status in a timely manner to a DSO. Specifically, I will:
 - Come to the Office of International Admissions to check-in during the first week of the beginning of every semester.
 - Provide the Office of International Admissions with the following:
 - An accurate phone number where I can be reached within the United States
 - Changes in my name, address and/or phone number
 - Significant changes in my financial information including my scholarship information
 - New passport and/or new visa information
 - Any other changes that I feel would cause records held by the Office of International Admissions to reflect inaccurate information.
- ☐ **Registration:** I cannot claim credits previously earned from a foreign institution on a date later than your first semester start date. You will come to a DSO PRIOR to taking any of the following actions regarding your academic program:
 - Dropping below 12 credit hours in my semester course load
 - Changing of major
 - Transferring request to another institution
 - Taking courses at another institution during the Alvernia University academic year.
- ☐ **Employment:** I must inform a DSO
 - PRIOR TO applying for OR accepting any form of employment/internship on or off-campus
 - During check-in at the start of my last semester to announce my intent to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) OR to leave the United States within 60 days of the completion of my Alvernia University degree program.
- ☐ **Travel:** I understand the necessary steps I need to take before traveling while I am on my F status.
 - I must have a valid passport that will remain valid for at least 6 months.
 - I must get a travel signature prior to leaving the U.S. (F students need a PDSO/DSO signature every year)
 - If my visa has expired, then I must get a new visa prior to re-entry into the U.S. *(You should apply for a new visa in your country of citizenship. It is more difficult to get a U.S. visa in a country where you are not a citizen. Please contact the U.S. consulate you wish to visit to ask for advice. If you are denied a visa, then you will not be able to re-enter the U.S.)*

I understand that it is my responsibility to understand how to maintain my immigration status. I will make an appointment with the Admissions Office prior to any actions that may affect my immigration status.

I have read the contract above and agree to follow the rules of this contract

Signature _____ First and Last Name _____ Date ____/____/____
mm/dd/yyyy

Appendix VIII: Setting Up Payment Plans in myAlvernia Portal



How to Set up a Payment Plan in myAlvernia Portal

Step 1- Go to **Alvernia Logins Page** <https://www.alvernia.edu/logins>.

Step 2- Click **MyAlvernia** and Login

Step 3- On the top of the page click on the **Finance Tab** at the top. Then click on the **Student Account Tab**.

Logins

Home / Logins

Email - Office 365 Email

Login | Login Instructions

Blackboard

Login | Login Instructions | Faculty Resources | Student Resource

myAlvernia

Login | Login Instructions | Parent Access | Self-Service

Step 4- Click on the **Green PAY Button** at the top of the page.” It will bring you to an overview payment page.

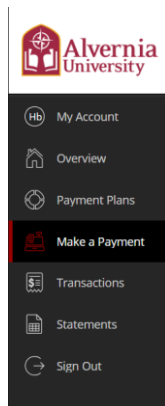
Step 5 – Click on the **Payment Plan** and click on View Payment Plan Options



Need to enroll in a payment plan?

Enrolling in a payment plan takes just a few minutes and can help you spread out payments on your education expenses.

[View payment plan options](#)



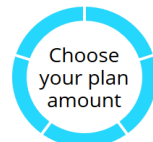
Step 7- The spring 2021 payment plan is 5-month plan from January to May, with each monthly payment due by the 15th of the month. Payment plans may be set up as auto pay or paid voluntarily each month by logging into your account and making the payment.

Step 8- Enter your plan amount – this will be defaulted to your current spring 2021 balance, so if you will be paying a different amount – more or less, you **MUST** update the budgeted payment plan amount in box below.

Payment Plans

Payment Plans

Spring 2021
SPRING 2021 ONLY 5 Payment Plan



5 payments | \$30 enrollment fee

* Plan amount

\$0.00

Minimum \$100 | Maximum \$75,000

Appendix IX: Making Payments on myAlvernia Portal

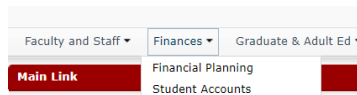


Making a Payment on myAlvernia Portal

Step 1- Go to **Alvernia Logins Page** <https://www.alvernia.edu/logins>.

Step 2- Click **MyAlvernia** and Login

Step 3- On the top of the page click on the **Finance Tab** at the top. Then click on the **Student Account Tab**.



Logins

[Home](#) / [Logins](#)

Email - Office 365 Email

[Login](#) | [Login Instructions](#)

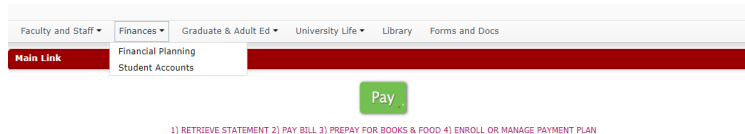
Blackboard

[Login](#) | [Login Instructions](#) | [Faculty Resources](#) | [Student Resources](#)

myAlvernia

[Login](#) | [Login Instructions](#) | [Parent Access](#) | [Self-Service](#)

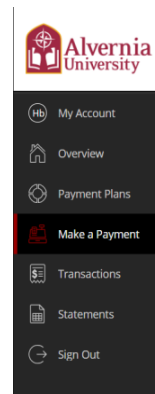
Step 4- Click on the **Green PAY Button** at the top of the page.” It will bring you to an overview payment page.



1) RETRIEVE STATEMENT 2) PAY BILL 3) PREPAY FOR BOOKS & FOOD 4) ENROLL OR MANAGE PAYMENT PLAN

Step 5 – Click on the **Make a Payment**

Step 6- Enter the amount you would like to pay or select the blue balance option to pay entire balance.

A screenshot of the "How much would you like to pay?" form. It shows a section titled "Student Account Balance" with a sub-section "Amount". There is a text input field containing "\$0.00" and a button labeled "Balance \$100".

Step 7- After you type in your amount or select the entire balance scroll down to the bottom of the page and select continue.

Step 8- Select your payment type and check off you agree to Terms and Conditions. Hit continue and confirm payment!

Appendix X: Alvernia University ACH/Wire Instructions

Receiving Bank: Fulton Bank
One Penn Square
Lancaster, PA 17602

ABA Routing #: 031301422

Receiving Bank Swift #: FLBKUS33

Beneficiary Account: Checking, 0010306139

Customer Account Title: Alvernia University
400 St. Bernardine St.
Reading, PA 19607

Appendix XI: International Student Scholarship Opportunities

- [A. Patrick Charnon Memorial Scholarship](#)

Full-time undergraduate students enrolled in a four-year college in the United States. Each scholarship carries a stipend of \$1,500 per academic year. Recipients may re-apply each year for up to four years, provided they continue to meet the requirements of the award. Applications accepted January 15 - August 1.

- [Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship](#)

Individuals interested in artistic and technical production, arts administration and community engagement. Fellowship provides a modest stipend.

- [Amelia Earhart Fellowships \(Zonta International Foundation\)](#)

Women of any nationality with a superior academic record and a bachelor's degree in science or engineering. Fellowships carry a stipend of \$10,000; approximately 30 are awarded annually. Application opens in July.

- [American Association for University Women - International Fellowships](#)

Full-time study or research to women who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Both graduate and postgraduate study at accredited institutions are supported. Deadline: December 1.

- [American Scandinavian Foundation](#)

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway or Sweden citizens for study or research programs (usually at the graduate level) in the United States for up to one year. Awards are made in all fields.

- [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\) - Japan Scholarship Program](#)

Citizens of ADB's developing member countries to pursue postgraduate studies in economics, management, science and technology, and other development-related fields at participating academic institutions in the Asian and Pacific Region. The ADB-JSP provides full scholarships for one to two years.

- [Asian Cultural Council](#)

Individual fellowship grants to artists, scholars, students, and specialists from Asia for study, research, travel and creative work in the United States. Deadlines vary.

- [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Junior Fellow Program](#)

Year-long paid internship for graduating seniors interested in careers in international affairs. Internship is at the Carnegie Endowment for World Peace in Washington, DC. Swarthmore Deadline: November

- [Canon Collins Educational Trust](#)
Full scholarship for nationals from Southern African countries (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola and Mozambique) who wish to pursue a postgraduate degree (normally a one-year master's degree) in either the United Kingdom or southern Africa. Application Deadlines: for the United Kingdom: March 15th each year; for Southern Africa, August 12th each year.
- [Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program](#)
Designed to engage graduate science, engineering, medical, veterinary, business, and law students in the analysis that informs the creation of science and technology policy and to familiarize them with the interactions of science, technology, and government.
- [Davis-Putter Scholarships](#)
Need-based grants (up to \$6,000) to undergraduate or graduate students actively working for peace and justice on campus and/or in the community.
- [Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics](#)
Essay contest for full-time juniors or seniors. Prizes range from \$500 - \$5,000. Deadline: December.
- [Environmental Research and Education Foundation](#)
This scholarship recognizes excellence in Ph.D. or post-doctoral environmental research and education. Deadline: August 1.
- [Exploration Fund of the Explorers Club](#)
\$1,200 grants in support of exploration and field research. Funds are given primarily to graduate students.
- [Fulbright Foreign Student Program](#)
Educational exchanges that strengthen understanding and communication between the United States and over students from 140 countries. Students interested in applying for the Fulbright Student Program must apply through the Fulbright Program Office in their home country.
- [Goldman Sachs Internship Program](#)
Discover opportunities in Asset Management, FICC and Equities (Sales and Trading), Firmwide Strategy and Investor Relations, Global Investment Research, Investment Banking, and Wealth Management.
- [Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellowships](#)
Internship opportunity for college graduates to serve 6 - 9 months with a participating organization of their choice in Washington DC. Deadlines vary.
- [Humane Studies Fellowships](#)
For undergraduate and graduate students interested in the classical liberal/libertarian tradition of individual rights and market economies. More than 100 fellowships up to \$12,000 are awarded annually. Deadline: late December.

- [International Dissertation Field Research Fellowships](#)
Up to 50 fellowships to support social scientists and humanists conducting dissertation field research in all areas and regions of the world.
- [ISA Educational Foundation Scholarships](#)
Various scholarships for students in the fields of automation and control. Deadline: February.
- [Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Advanced Studies](#)
Nationals of IMF Asian member countries interested in studying for their doctorates in economics in order to work in an international financial institution (such as the IMF or the World Bank) or in their home administrations. Deadline: December 31.
- [John Bayliss Radio Scholarship](#)
15 Scholarships for juniors, seniors and graduate level students majoring in Broadcast Communications. Deadline: March.
- [Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Regular Program](#)
For individuals from World Bank member countries to undertake graduate studies at any university located in a World Bank member country except their own. Suggested fields of study: economics, public administration, finance, planning, health, population, agriculture, infrastructure, information systems and aquatic resources (provided that the focus of study is on public policy aspects of these fields), environment and natural resource management, education, and other development-related subjects. Deadline: March 31.
- [Josephine de Karman Scholarships](#)
\$16,000 scholarship to support either the final year of study for juniors or for PhD candidates with ABD status. Deadline: late January.
- [King Faisal Foundation Scholarship](#)
Funding opportunity for Muslim students in Medicine, Engineering, and sciences (Physics, Chemistry, and Geology) to study at an accredited European or North American university.
- [Microsoft Internships](#)
Four types of scholarships for undergraduate students interested in computer science and related technical disciplines. One-year award for students attending institutions in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. All recipients of a scholarship will be required to complete a salaried summer internship of 12 weeks or more at Microsoft Corporation in Redmond, Washington. Deadline: mid-January.
- [Olive W. Garvey Fellowships](#)
Biennial award to outstanding college students around the world through a competitive essay contest on the meaning and significance of economic and personal liberty. Awards range from \$1,000 - \$2,500. Deadline: May.
- [Organization of American States \(OAS\) Fellowships](#)
For graduate study or research in any field except medical sciences or introductory language study. Deadlines vary.

- [Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowship](#)
- Supports doctoral dissertations that explore the sources and nature of international conflict, and strategies to prevent or end conflict and to sustain peace. Citizens of all countries are eligible but must be enrolled in an accredited college or university in the United States. Deadline: January.
- [The Roothbert Fund Scholarship Program](#)
Approximately 20 (\$2,000-\$3,000) awards are offered to students in the U.S. in need of financial aid to further their education at the undergraduate or graduate level. Deadline: early February.
- [Rotary Peace Scholarships](#)
Funding to support two-year master's-level degree program at one of the Rotary Centers for International Studies. Seventy scholarships are offered worldwide. Deadlines vary by Rotary district.
- [Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarships](#)
One-year study abroad opportunity in any discipline in over 160 countries worldwide. Deadlines vary by district.
- [Samuel Huntington Public Service Fellowship Award](#)
Annual stipend of \$15,000 for a graduating college senior to pursue public service anywhere in the world. Deadline: mid-January.
- [Society of Women Engineers](#)
Various awards for women pursuing baccalaureate or graduate degrees in engineering or computer science, as well as engineering and computer science students enrolled in ABET-accredited engineering programs. Deadlines vary.
- [South Pacific and East Timor Scholarship Programs](#)
Two special degree study programs for citizens of South Pacific nations and East Timor. Scholarships are awarded for undergraduate degree study. Priority is given to applicants seeking degrees that address national development needs.
- [Smithsonian Internships](#)
Unless noted otherwise, all Smithsonian fellowships (graduate, pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, senior) opportunities are open to non-US citizens. Deadlines vary.
- [Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship](#)
Candidates for the doctoral degree at a graduate school within the United States are eligible. Deadline: November 1.
- [Student Academy Awards](#)
Awards and cash grants offered for student films. Deadline: April.
- [Swiss Benevolent Society of New York Scholarships](#)
Merit based awards for study at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels both in the U.S. and abroad. Deadline: March.

- [UNESCO/Keizo Obuchi fellowships](#)

Young researchers with advanced degrees (M.A., M.Sc. or equivalent) from developing countries majoring in one of four areas: environment, intercultural dialogue, information and communication technologies, and peaceful conflict resolution.

- **Winston Foundation for World Peace Fellowships**

Support undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in cooperative security, conflict resolution, and disarmament. Fellows design their own projects, usually involving public education, media outreach, grassroots organizing, or another active approach to issues of cooperative security, nuclear arms control, conventional arms transfers, demilitarization, democracy building, conflict resolution, and the like. Applicants are expected to work full-time with a non-profit organization. A \$300/week stipend is provided for the duration of the project, which lasts from 2-4 months. Information and application materials, contact: winstonfoun@igc.apc.org or write: Winston Foundation Fellowships, 2040 S Street NW, Suite 201 Washington, DC 20009-1157. Phone: 202-483-4215.

- [Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships](#)

Undergraduate or graduate students pursuing degrees in the fine or commercial arts, design or architecture. Deadline: March.

Scholarship Databases

International Education Financial Aid: <http://www.iefaf.org/>

International Scholarship Search: <http://www.internationalscholarships.com/index.php>

Scholarships for Development: <http://www.scholars4dev.com/>

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