Pre-Arrival Booklet
For Undergraduate Students
2011-2012

International Services for Students and Scholars
April 2011

Welcome to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute! Fellow students, professors, and staff at Rensselaer join in wishing you a pleasant and rewarding stay in the United States.

Through the International Services for Students and Scholars (ISSS) office, Rensselaer will help to prepare you for your trip and adjustment to the United States. This brochure provides important information regarding travel arrangements, housing, finances, family, health, and other personal matters.

The dates and costs listed in this brochure are based on the best information available as of April 2011 and may change. For updated information, please visit the ISSS website at: http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=11

Have a safe and pleasant journey to Troy. Remember, you MUST check in with our office upon arrival on campus during the specific Check-in times. Everyone should check-in by Wednesday, August 24, 2011. We look forward to meeting you then.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jane D. Havis
Assistant Dean of Students

International Services for Students and Scholars
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Academy Hall Suite 4600
110 8th Street
Troy, New York 12180-3590
Telephone: (518) 276-6561
Fax: (518) 276-4839
Email: havisj@rpi.edu

http://www.rpi.edu
ISSS website: http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=11
http://www.facebook.com/RPI.International.Services
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RPIinfo: Great page to bookmark, for helpful information on academic/support services
http://rpinfo.rpi.edu/
All foreign students, except Canadians (see page 6), must obtain a passport and visa stamp to enter the United States. Student visas are obtained in one of two categories: F-1 or J-1.

**Applying for a Visa Stamp**
Visa stamp application is made at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your home country. To determine how much time this procedure will take, please visit the website of your nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy: [http://usembassy.state.gov/](http://usembassy.state.gov/)

If you have been accepted by several institutions, **DO NOT** apply for a visa stamp until you decide which school you will attend.

**F-1 Students**
You have received a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) to apply for an F-1 visa. This document was created in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Please review your documents and make sure all the information is correct. If there is an error, please contact havisj@rpi.edu immediately so your document can be corrected and re-issued if needed. The name on the Form I-20 must match your name as it appears in your passport.

To obtain a visa, you must present to the U.S. Consulate or Embassy your:
- form I-20
- acceptance letter from Rensselaer
- valid passport
- proof of sufficient financial support for the *entire* course of study
- proof of payment for the SEVIS I-901 fee (see page 5).

**F-1 visa requires full-time study.** Spouses and dependents of F-1 students need an F-2 visa to enter the country. Each dependent must have their own Form I-20 to obtain a visa stamp. Spouses and dependents on F visas are not eligible for employment.

**J-1 Students**
You have received a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitors (DS-2019) to apply for a J-1 visa. This document was created in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Please review your documents and make sure all the information is correct. If there is an error, please contact havisj@rpi.edu immediately so your document can be corrected and re-issued if needed. The name on the Form DS-2019 must match your name as it appears in your passport.

To enter on a J-1 visa, you must be sponsored by an authorized Exchange Visitor program. J-1 holders from certain countries, or those receiving government funds from the United States or their home country, may be required to return home for two...
years at the end of their stay before being eligible to change their status to temporary worker status or permanent residence in the United States.

To obtain a J-1 visa you must present to a U.S. Consulate or Embassy your:
- form DS-2019 issued by Rensselaer or your program sponsor
- acceptance letter from Rensselaer
- valid passport
- proof of sufficient financial support
- proof of payment for the SEVIS I-901 fee (see below)

**J-1 visa requires full-time study.** Spouses and dependents of J-1 students need a J-2 visa to enter the country. Each dependent must have their own Form DS-2019 to obtain a visa stamp. Under this visa, J-2’s may apply to work after arrival in the U.S. See the ISSS staff after your arrival for more information on this.

**Transfer Students**
If you are a foreign student transferring directly to Rensselaer from another educational institution in U.S., consult your foreign student advisor at your current school for instructions on the transfer process. Transferring applies even if you are graduating from one school and continuing to another school.

- **SEVIS I-901 Fee**
  Payment of SEVIS Fee *must* be made **at least three business days** before your appointment with the U.S. Consulate or Embassy to apply for the visa stamp (for Canadians, before you enter the U.S.) You must bring proof of the SEVIS Fee payment with you to your appointment.

  For more information, please visit our website at [http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=11](http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=11) under the “New Students” section.

To pay the SEVIS fee online, please visit: [http://www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)

- **Visa Denials**
  If you or your spouse’s visa stamp application is denied, you should request a written reason for the denial. Denials are usually given because you the student cannot convince the visa officer you are going to return to your home country after finishing your studies.

  You can re-apply if denied, but you should have new or updated evidence that convinces the officer the first denial was wrong.
Special Notes

- You must attend the school whose form I-20 or DS-2019 you used to enter the U.S.

- If you’re I-20 or DS-2019 fails to arrive in time to secure an F-1 or J-1 visa stamp, you should obtain a B-2 “Prospective Student” visa stamp (not a B-2 visitor!) from the U.S. Consul in your country. Be sure that the Consul writes “prospective student to attend Rensselaer” in your passport. You will have to apply for a change when you arrive. If you have an assistantship, you will not be able to start it until you have obtained a change to F-1 or J-1.

- Applicants need to be aware that certain disciplines are considered “sensitive” by the State Department. The Technology Alert List (TAL) describes critical fields, which are considered sensitive, and outlines procedures Consuls must follow when they issue visas to perspective scholars whose areas of study or research coincide with fields on the list.

* Canadian Citizens

Although a passport is needed visa stamps are unnecessary for Canadian citizens coming directly from Canada to study in the U.S. Upon entry, Canadians need only present to the immigration inspector their form I-20 or DS-2019, along with evidence of financial support and proof of payment for the SEVIS I-901 fee.

Important Note:

- F-1 and J-1 students may enter the U.S. up to but no more than 30 days prior to the start date as noted on your form I-20 or DS-2019.

Arriving in the U.S.

- I-94 Card

You will be issued a white card to fill out on the airplane before you land, or at a land border in the United States if coming by car or train. This is called an I-94 card (Arrival and Departure record) and you will need to present this to the immigration officer upon arrival. After you meet with the immigration officer, the I-94 card will be stapled into your passport. Do not remove this document; you must keep it stapled in your passport. Do not lose the I-94 card; it is very important.
Completing the Form I-94 for nonimmigrant students

Use all CAPITAL letters. Use English. Use standard United States characters and print clearly. Letters like ñ, é, ü, ç are not recognized by U.S. data systems. (Instead, use n, e, u or c.)

Name (Blocks 1, 2, 14, and 15)
The Family name (Blocks 1 and 14) is also referred to as surname or last name. If you have only one name, enter it in the Family Name block.

Spacing is as important as spelling and must be consistent. For instance, systems will not read Mc Millan and McMillan as the same name.

Hyphens must also be used consistently.

Print your name exactly as it appears on your Form I-20 or DS-2019.

Date of Birth (Blocks 3 and 16) and Date Issued (Block 11)
Your date of birth must be given in Day/Month/Year order. This is not the same order that appears on your Form I-20 or DS-2019. For example, if you were born on the 9th day of January in the year 1986, you should write 090186 in the birth date block (Block 3 and 16). The same date format is used in block 11 for Date Issued.

Country of Citizenship (Blocks 4 and 17)
Country of citizenship is the country that issued your passport. You can find the U.S. spelling in block 1 of the Form I-20 under the "Country of citizenship." It is on the second line of the Form DS-2019 under "Citizenship Country."

Be sure you complete all required blocks (Blocks 1 to 17).

Upon being granted entry into the United States, the CBP Inspector will stamp the bottom section of the Form I-94 (the departure record) with your class of admission and the length of time that you can stay in the United States. This section is generally stapled into your passport. This is a critical document. Make a copy and put it in a safe place. Safeguard the original.

Source: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/faqs/data_integrity.htm
I-94 Arrival/Departure Record - Instructions
This form must be completed by all persons except U.S. citizens, returning resident aliens, aliens with immigrant visas, and Canadian citizens visiting or in transit.
Type or print legibly with pen in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. Do not write on the back of this form.
This form is in two parts. Please complete both the Arrival Record (Items 1 through 13) and the Departure Record (Items 14 through 17).
When all items are completed, present this form to the CBP Officer.
Item 7 - If you are entering the United States by land, enter LAND in this space.
If you are entering the United States by ship, enter SEA in this space.

Arrival Record

1. Family Name

2. First (Given) Name

3. Last Name

4. Country of Citizenship

5. Sex (Male or Female)

6. Passport Number

7. Airliner and Flight Number

8. Country Where You Live

9. City Where You Boarded

10. City Where You Were Issued

11. Date Issued (Day/Mo/Year)

12. Address While in the United States (Number and Street)

13. City and State

Departure Number

I-94 Departure Record

14. Family Name

15. First (Given) Name

16. Last Name

17. Country of Citizenship

See Other Side

STAPLE HERE
**Arrival**

Upon arrival at the U.S. port of entry (airport, etc.), immigration will ask you to present your I-94 card, I-20 or DS-2019, and your passport. You may also be asked to show your proof of financial support. **It is very important that you do not pack any of these items in your checked baggage.**

The immigration officer will then stamp your Form I-20 or DS-2019 and the I-94 card with the date of your arrival, port of entry and your nonimmigrant status and return them to you. They should be marked with D/S. D/S means Duration of Status. The I-94 card may be stapled to your passport. **Again, do not lose the I-94 card. This is a very important document.**

Review your documents (I-94, I-20 or DS-2019) carefully at the immigration inspection station to make sure the correct information was marked. If there are any errors, ask them to be corrected there. Corrections might not be possible once you leave the immigration inspection station.

**To Albany, New York**

The easiest way to get to campus is to fly into Albany International Airport, airport code ALB. Direct flights are available to Albany from New York City, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, and Washington, DC. Easy connecting flights are available from every other U.S. gateway airport. The airport is approximately 20 minutes from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute by taxi. Taxis are readily available outside of the airport terminal.

It is less expensive to book your flight to Albany along with your international flight rather than to buy a ticket to Albany after you reach the U.S. **Be sure to reconfirm all flights and reservations before leaving your home country.**

* If you are flying into New York City (JFK or LaGuardia Airports only), there is a shuttle bus service that will bring you to the Albany International Airport, from which you can take a taxi to campus. The company that operates this service is called **Premiere Express Shuttle Service.** **Advance reservations are required.** For more information or to make a reservation, please contact Premiere at: 1(800)515-6123 [http://www.premierelimo.com/index.php?option=com_reservations&Itemid=26](http://www.premierelimo.com/index.php?option=com_reservations&Itemid=26)

*If you are spending time in New York City before you come to Troy you could come on the “Megabus”. [MEGABUS.COM](http://www.megabus.com) departures are located adjacent to Penn Station, on the north side of West 31st Street at the northeast corner of 31st Street and 8th Avenue.

Megabus is a double decker motorcoach bus that has free wi-fi, and panoramic windows. Megabus provides a low-cost bus services serving 28 cities from two hubs
at New York and Chicago. It is recommended that you purchase your ticket as soon as possible. Megabus is very popular and can book-up very quickly.

The Megabus will bring you to the Rensselaer Train Station. From there you will get a taxi to the Rensselaer campus. Do not take a city bus to Rensselaer there is no direct bus and it could take over two hours.

- **To Rensselaer’s Campus**
  
  Unfortunately, we are unable to provide transportation to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute campus. Once you arrive in Albany, we recommend you take a taxi to campus. A taxi from the Albany International Airport or the Rensselaer Train Station to Rensselaer costs about $35, remember to carry a few extra dollars to tip the driver for your baggage. If you arrive after office hours and have not arranged with Residence Life to get into your room it is advisable to have your taxi take you to any of the nearby hotels for the night (see page 14).

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## CHECKING IN WITH ISSS

Checking in with ISSS staff begins on **August 15, 2011** and ends on **August 24, 2011**. You must check in during one of these days during the specific times.

- Location: Academy Hall, 4th Floor suite 4600
- Monday, 8/15/2011 – 9:00am – 3:00pm
- Tuesday, 8/16/2011 - Friday 08/19/2011 9:00am-11:00am
- Monday, 8/22/2011- Tuesday, 8/23/2011 9:00am-11:00am
- Wednesday, 8/24/2011 – 9:00am - 3:00pm
- *Closed on Saturday and Sunday*

***ISSS has a *special check-in for Freshman* students on **Sunday, August 21, 2011 from 4:00pm – 6:00pm**. It will be held in the Rensselaer Union on the 3rd floor in the Government Suite room 3120.***

Please bring your passport with valid visa stamp, I-20 or DS-2010 and your I-94 card.
Freshman

- Freshman & Transfer Student Orientation
  All new international freshman and transfer students must attend freshman or transfer orientation. You will be receiving information from the Office of the First Year Experience (FYE) regarding orientations. Please visit FYE’s website to learn more: http://www.fye.rpi.edu/

International Undergraduate, Graduate and Exchange Students

- International Undergraduate, Graduate and Exchange Student Orientation
  All new international undergraduate, graduate and exchange students must attend a Mandatory Orientation Program on the morning of Friday, August 26, 2011.

  You will receive more information on location when you check-in with the ISSS Office.

CLASS REGISTRATION

- You will be able to register for classes after you have checked in with the ISSS office. You will have a hold on your record that will prevent you from registering. Once you check-in with ISSS, the hold will be released.

- You will register for classes during Student orientation.

ACADEMICS at RENSSELAER

- Course Structure
  Please note that the terms “class” and “course” are used interchangeably and refer to an individual unit of study. Class format may be a lecture, discussion, group work or a combination. Assessment normally takes place throughout the semester by means of tests, quizzes and other assignments.

- Academic Calendar
  For more information on semester dates and holidays, see the “Academic Calendar” at http://www.rpi.edu/academics/calendar. The final exam schedule is not available until the semester is in session. If you plan to return home at the end of the semester, be careful not to book your flight without knowing when your last exam is.
• **Adding or Dropping a Course**
  You are able to add courses within the first two weeks of school. For the specific date, you will need to check the Academic Calendar.

  You are able to drop a course until the 8th week of school. For the specific date, you will need to check the Academic Calendar.

  Remember that you must remain a full-time student (a minimum of 12 credit hours) for the whole semester to stay in legal status with immigration.

• **Final Exam Schedule**
  The final exam schedule will not be available until after the semester has begun. It will be published in the school newspaper or can be found on the RPI Info page, [http://rpinfo.rpi.edu](http://rpinfo.rpi.edu).

• **Disability Services for Students at Rensselaer**
  As cultures differ from country to country, so does the perception of disability and accommodations. The most important quality for any exchange student coming to study at Rensselaer is flexibility and an open mind. As an exchange student, you are going to experience a different way of life, which may also include a different way of dealing with your disability. If you are a student who requires academic accommodations, you MUST communicate this to the Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS), which is located within the Dean of Students Office. The DSS Assistant Dean will then determine the type of accommodations available at Rensselaer and what documentation will be required by you to receive them. If possible, please contact the DSS office before your arrival to campus to get the process completed before classes begin by calling 518-276-8197. For additional information on the Disability Services for Students, office and services please visit: [http://dosr.rpi.edu](http://dosr.rpi.edu).

• **Grades and Transcripts**
  Grades will be made available through the S.I.S. after the final exam period has ended. If you need a transcript, you must fill out the Transcript Request Form and mail, fax, or submit it in person to the Office of the Registrar. For more information, visit [http://srf.rpi.edu/setup.do](http://srf.rpi.edu/setup.do).

• **RPI LMS**
  At RPI, some of your professors may use the Learning Management System (this is often called “LMS” or “Blackboard”). This website allows students to access course materials online, including the syllabus, assignments, notes, announcements, and grades. It also features a calendar, chat room, discussion board, and mail service that will help you to stay connected to your professors, teaching assistants, and classmates.
Your professor will inform you whether or not they will be using the LMS for their course. To enter the system, you need to visit \texttt{http://rpilms.rpi.edu} and enter your RCS User ID and password. Your courses will be displayed on the main page, and from there you can see the content that your professor has added. It is important to visit the LMS often, as the professor may use it to send messages or make announcements about the course.

If you have any problems with the LMS, you can contact or visit the Voorhees Computing Center (building #22 on the campus map) to get help.

- **Help Desk**

  If you have any problems with computers or technology on campus, you can ask for help from the Help Desk. They will answer questions about computers, networks, and RCS accounts. You can contact them by phone at (518) 276-777, visit their office on the main floor of the Voorhees Computing Center, or visit their website at \texttt{http://helpdesk.rpi.edu/setup/do} for more information.

- **Printing**

  If you do not have a printer and need to print on campus, you can visit the following website: \texttt{http://helpdesk.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=16} for more information on the locations and prices of printing services.

- English languages services are available to help students improve their oral skills. For more information go to the Advising and Learning Assistance Center located in Russell Sage Building room 2106 or their website: \texttt{http://alac.rpi.edu/}

**HOUSING**

**On campus**

On campus, housing is coordinated through the Residence Life Office at Rensselaer. You should have received information regarding on campus housing with your acceptance packet from the Office of Admissions. On campus, housing is assigned on a space-available basis to freshman students. Fall housing will be emailed to you at your RPI email in July.

Rensselaer Freshmen and Sophomores are required to live on campus.
Residence Halls are open for all students to move in on Wednesday, August 24, 2011. (The exception to this is Freshman who can move in on Sunday, August 21, 2011.) If you plan on arriving before August 24, 2011, you will have to contact Residence Life to see if any arrangements can be made for you to move into your Residence Hall early. Otherwise, you will need to make a reservation at a local hotel until you can move in.

For more information regarding on campus housing, please visit:
http://reslife.rpi.edu/setup.do

Temporary Accommodations

- **Hotel**
  Students, if your family is bring you to campus the following hotels are the closest to the Rensselaer campus. We recommend you book a hotel room early, as August can be a busy time of year and the hotels may be sold out.

  **Franklin Square Inn**
  1 4th Street
  Troy, NY 12180
  Phone: (518) 274-8800
  Fax: (518) 274-0427
  Average rate in August: $125.00+per night

  **Hilton Garden Inn**
  235 Hoosick Street
  Troy, NY 12180
  Phone: (518) 272-1700
  Fax: (518) 272-1701
  [http://www.troyhgi.com](http://www.troyhgi.com)
  Average rate in August: $134.00+per night. Ask for RPI friends & family rate.

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**PAYING BILLS**

- Bills are called “e-bills” and are sent to your RPI email address.
- An e-bill is not generated for you until you register for classes, so your first bill would be e-mailed to you the first week of September.
- The first bill will include health center, activity fee, and could include housing (if you are living on campus).
- If you want to pay your bill at the Bursars Office, you must pay by cash or check.
- If you are paying by credit card, you must pay on-line. Rensselaer does not accept Visa.
- Be aware that if you pay by credit card the credit card company will charge you a processing fee for this transaction.

- To find out how to access your Ebill go to:
Banking

If you want to open a bank account upon your arrival at Rensselaer, there are several U.S. banks in Troy. At the time of this printing, there is not a bank located in the Rensselaer Union but we hope to have one by August 2011. All banks in Troy have procedures for handling funds from overseas.

Also, check your home bank's procedures for transferring money to a U.S. bank. Keep in mind that a personal or bank checks from abroad may require up to four weeks to clear in your U.S. account.

The following address is for direct wire transfer of funds to Rensselaer:

Bank of America
Peter D. Kiernan Plaza
Albany, NY 12207

The account information is as follows:
Account#: 9429364051
ABA: 0260-0959-3
Swift Code: BOFAUS3N
Account Name: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Attn: Bursar

ALWAYS indicate the student’s name and student Rensselaer identification number with the transfer information to allow us to properly credit the account.

Mail: Shipping Items/Belongings to the U.S.

Ship any belongings with care. If you must ship unaccompanied baggage, contract with an agent who has a corresponding agent in the U.S. who will check the baggage through customs and ship it to Troy. Students have had unpleasant and costly experiences with lost baggage in New York City and other ports because they contracted with shipping companies in their countries that had no forwarding agents or customs representation in the U.S. Insure all your shipments for ‘all risk’ coverage.

To ensure that your packages go through customs without unnecessary expense or delay, obtain a copy of United States Customs Hints for Visitors from a U.S. Consular Office. This pamphlet clearly explains customs regulations.

The ISSS Office will accept your mail (letters only) until you establish a local address. Your mail should be addressed to:
• **U.S. Phone System**
  Familiarize yourself with the phone system in the U.S. so that you can use it soon after your arrival. The format for phone numbers in U.S.:

  (xxx) yyy-zzzz

  xxx is the area code for a region and yyy-zzzz is an individual phone number. When dialing a long distance number (from one area code to another) you have to dial ’1’ before the area code and number. For example, to place a call from Troy, N.Y. to Washington, D.C. the dialing sequence would be:

  1-202-555-1212

  When dialing a local number, you need only the individual phone number. For example: yyy-zzzz. Phone numbers with 800 or 888 in place of area code are toll free and cost nothing to the caller.

  To dial an overseas number from anywhere in the U.S., the sequence is:
  011- Country Code - City Code – Number

  You can find your country’s code at the following website: www.countrycodes.com

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**HEALTH SERVICES**

Rensselaer's Student Health Service is available seven days a week during the academic year in the Health Center, which is located in Academy Hall, 3rd floor. It is also open during scheduled hours in the summer and other vacations. Doctor’s hours are scheduled Monday through Saturday. The Student Health Center is affiliated with a local hospital and works with consulting specialists when necessary. Dependents of Rensselaer students are not eligible to use the Student Health Center.

• **Health Insurance**
  All F-1 international students must purchase Rensselaer’s health insurance unless you can prove that comparable health insurance coverage from your home country will cover you in the U.S. You should have received information about this directly from the Student Health Center. Rensselaer’s insurance coverage has been carefully designed, with a great deal of student input to reflect the needs of today’s
active students. If you have equivalent coverage, our insurance fee may be waived, but you will be required to pay the health service fee.

**Special information for J-1 Students only**
Current U.S. regulations require all individuals in J status (J-1 or J-2) to carry health insurance meeting certain minimum levels. These include:

- Medical benefits - $50,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation - $7,500
- Medical Evacuation - $10,000
- Deductibles - not to exceed $500 per accident or illness

If you do not have insurance, which meets these levels, you will be required to purchase Rensselaer’s insurance. Rensselaer's insurance policy does meet these requirements. **Failure to maintain adequate medical insurance for yourself and/or your dependents while in the U.S. will cause your program to be immediately terminated.**

**Health Forms**
All Rensselaer students pay a mandatory health service fee of approximately $265.00 per semester. The fee covers all visits to the Student Health Center, including the Counseling Center and health education, as well as lab tests performed on premises, such as throat cultures. However, there are additional charges for immunizations, splints, and copying medical records. All registered students are eligible to use the Student Health Center. The Health Service fee covers these visits.

**Health Forms**

1. You must submit your medical forms to the Student Health Center. First, you will need to register for our new online portal. Please go to our website at www.studenthealth.rpi.edu and click on the “Student Health Center Portal”. You will find the link under “Health Center News”. Once you register for the portal, you will be emailed a password to log into the portal directly. Please enter all the information requested.

2. You will still need to send in the “Immunization Verification” signed by your family physician. If you are playing a sport, you will also need to have your family physician fill out the physical form and mail or fax the documentation before you will be cleared to participate.

3. These forms can also be found on our website. You will need to click on “Student Health” (left top in the blue section), then “Forms” (listed to the right). This brings you to the following forms.
4. □ Physical Form (English) [PDF 108KB]
5. □ Immunization Verification Form(English) [PDF 108KB]
6. Print out the forms needed and use the information filled out by your family physician to enter in the Immunization fields required on the portal then send the signed documentation to the address below. The Physical information does not need to be entered on the portal but the form needs to be sent to us for the verification process. Please feel free to contact the Student Health Center if you have any questions.

Return all information to:
Student Health Center-RPI
110 8th Street
3200 Academy Hall
Troy, NY 12180
(518)276-6287 Fax: (518)276-8573
healthrecords@rpi.edu

- Immunizations
New York State law requires all students to provide the Student Health Center with physician certified evidence of immunity to various diseases. Rensselaer is required by the provisions of this law to refuse to allow you to continue in attendance if you have not supplied this evidence. For information on required immunizations, call the Student Health Center at (518) 276-6287 or visit: http://studenthealth.rpi.edu/.

Students please be sure to review the immunization form with your Doctor and make sure that all your shots are current. If they are not you will have to pay for the shot in the U.S. and they are expensive.

- Dentists
There is no dental service on campus. You should see your dentist before you come to Rensselaer. There are dentists in the area if you should need to see one, but it is very expensive.

- Transportation
On the RPI campus, the “Red Hawk Shuttle” is a free shuttle bus that operates when classes are in session. There are two routes that make stops at various locations throughout the campus. For more information, go to:
http://www.rpi.edu/dept/parking/shuttle.html.

In getting around town, you will find that transportation is very different from your home country. Troy is very hilly, so bikes are not a popular form of transportation. Most Americans use cars. If you have a car and wish to park on campus, you must purchase a parking permit from the Office of Parking, located in the Visitor
Information Center (VIC). You are responsible for knowing and observing both U.S. and Rensselaer traffic rules.

The public bus system, called CDTA, serves the entire Albany/Troy area. You will be able to ride some of the CDTA bus routes for free with your RPI student I.D. card. Please note that the routes are not always direct and may be inconvenient for reaching outlying areas. For more information, go to: http://www.rpi.edu/dept/parking/shuttle/cdta.html.

Taxis are another form of transportation, but they can be expensive. You should call the taxi company ahead of time to arrange for them to pick you up at a specific time and place.

- **Weather**
  The weather in Troy varies greatly from season to season. Temperatures in the summer range between 60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit (18 to 29 degrees Celsius). In the winter, temperatures range between 0 to 38 degrees Fahrenheit (-17 to 3 degrees Celsius).

  Troy generally receives a large amount of snow in the winter, which provides for excellent skiing close to campus. During the rest of the year, rain showers can occur unexpectedly, and the humidity level can be uncomfortably high, especially in the summer. Weather conditions are more moderate during the spring and fall.

- **Clothing**
  Students wear very casual clothing at Rensselaer. Jeans and casual shirts are most common for students; jackets and ties for men and dresses for women are rarely worn except on special occasions. Warm coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, and snow boots are necessary in the winter. Cotton clothing is appropriate for the summer. Shorts are popular wear for both men and women in the summer.

  There are many shopping areas close to campus where you can purchase new clothing. We do not advise students to purchase extensive wardrobes before coming; fashions may be different in your country. Most locally available clothes are ‘wash and wear’. Tailors and seamstresses are very expensive and hard to find, so we urge you not to bring any fabric for clothes, unless you can sew everything yourself.

- **Fitness and Athletics**
  There are three athletic facilities for students on the Rensselaer campus, each housing different sport possibilities: 87 Gym, Mueller Center and ECAV. For information about the Mueller Center go to: http://www.muellercenter.rpi.edu/

  When you arrive on campus and check-in with the ISSS Office you will get more information.
• **Clubs**
  There are many clubs you can join when school starts. During the first week of school an “Activity Fair” will be held for you to learn more about the clubs. You can check this link: [http://www.rpi.edu/student_life/clubs.html](http://www.rpi.edu/student_life/clubs.html) to learn more before you arrive.

• **Supermarkets**
  Most supermarkets are located along the bus routes. The biggest one is called Price Chopper, and it is open 7 days a week. Most supermarkets sell typical American foods, and may offer a small selection of international foods. They also sell toiletries and other household supplies. Most bottles and cans are recycled in the U.S. You pay a small deposit when you buy soda or beer, and when you bring the empty bottle back to the supermarket, you can put it into the bottle-recycling machine and receive a credit for your deposit. You would then take the receipt to the cashier to be reimbursed.

• Local malls and Shopping Center information can be obtained when you arrive in Troy.
The following international and multicultural clubs at Rensselaer are available for additional questions or assistance. To see a list of all official clubs on campus, please visit the Rensselaer Union’s website at: http://clubs.union.rpi.edu

**African and Caribbean Students Association**
Website: [http://acsa.union.rpi.edu](http://acsa.union.rpi.edu)

**Alianza Latina**
Website: [http://alianzalatina.union.rpi.edu](http://alianzalatina.union.rpi.edu)

**Bengali Community**
Website: [http://rbc.union.rpi.edu](http://rbc.union.rpi.edu)

**Chinese Students and Scholars Association**
Website: [http://csa.union.rpi.edu/cssa/Welcome.htm](http://csa.union.rpi.edu/cssa/Welcome.htm)

**Hong Kong Students Association**
Website: [http://hksa.union.rpi.edu](http://hksa.union.rpi.edu)

**Indian Students Association**
Website: [http://isa.union.rpi.edu](http://isa.union.rpi.edu)

**Graduate Indian Student Organization**
Website: [http://gradisa.union.rpi.edu](http://gradisa.union.rpi.edu)

**Iranian Students Association**
Website: [http://iransa.union.rpi.edu/](http://iransa.union.rpi.edu/)

**Japanese Students Association**
Website: [http://jsa.union.rpi.edu/](http://jsa.union.rpi.edu/)

**Korean Students Association**
Website: [http://www.rpi.edu/dept/union/ksa/homepage/](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/union/ksa/homepage/)

**Malaysian Students Association**
Website: [http://masa.union.rpi.edu/news.php](http://masa.union.rpi.edu/news.php)

**Muslim Women’s Association**
Website: None available

**Nigerian Students Association**
Website: [http://nsa.union.rpi.edu](http://nsa.union.rpi.edu)

**Pakistan Students Association**
Website: [http://paksa.union.rpi.edu](http://paksa.union.rpi.edu)

**Philippine American League**
Website: [http://pal.union.rpi.edu](http://pal.union.rpi.edu)

**Polish Cultural Club**
Website: [http://polish.union.rpi.edu](http://polish.union.rpi.edu)

**Russian Club**
Website: [http://russianclub.union.rpi.edu](http://russianclub.union.rpi.edu)

**Taiwanese Students Association**
Website: [http://tsa.union.rpi.edu/](http://tsa.union.rpi.edu/)

**Turkish Students Association**
Website: [http://turksa.union.rpi.edu/](http://turksa.union.rpi.edu/)
DO

- Seek advice from others who have visited the U.S. recently, or contact international students currently studying at Rensselaer, many of whom express their desire to help you as much as possible.

- Bring a number of small crafts or trinkets from home. These are ideal gifts for future friends.

- Bring pictures of your home and family; a great conversation starter with U.S. students or families.

- Bring music from home and traditional dress/costume for special events.

- Remember to bring most of your money for initial expenses in the form of traveler’s checks.

- Check in with the ISSS Office upon arrival

- Mark all your bags with your name and Rensselaer’s address

DO NOT

- Bring electrical appliances. U.S. domestic voltage levels and outlets may not be compatible with those at home.

- Bring food. Most foreign foods are available in specialty stores in this area or in New York City. Some foods cannot be brought into the U.S. legally.

- Bring household items or bed linens, which are easily and inexpensively available in the U.S.

Below is a list of phone or fax numbers you may find helpful.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Services for Students and Scholars</td>
<td>(518) 276-6561 / (518) 276-4839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate &amp; Undergraduate Admissions</td>
<td>(518) 276-6216 / (518) 276-4072</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Year Experience</td>
<td>(518) 276-6864 / (518) 276-4839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Life &amp; Dining</td>
<td>(518) 276-6284 / (518) 276-6223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bursar’s Office</td>
<td>(518) 276-6231 / (518) 276-6180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Health Services</td>
<td>(518) 276-6287 / (518) 276-4049</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rensselaer Public Safety</td>
<td>(518) 276-6611</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rensselaer (General)</td>
<td>(518) 276-6000 / (518) 276-6003</td>
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*We wish you a safe journey to Rensselaer and we look forward to meeting you!*