

## Welcome to Portland State University!

The staff in the Office of International Student and Scholar Services and the Office of International Admissions extend warm congratulations to you on your admission to Portland State University. We hope that your time at PSU will be fulfilling and exciting and that you will find your educational experience in Portland to be very rewarding.

What follows is an introduction to the information you will be able to find on our website at <http://www.oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions.php>. You should find answers to many, if not all, of your questions on the pages you can access from this site. If you would prefer to have your introductory information sent to you by e-mail or regular post, please e-mail us at [intladm@pdx.edu](mailto:intladm@pdx.edu).

### Visa Application

Before you can even consider your trip to Portland, you will need to apply for either an F1 or a J1 student visa. On our website you will find information about applying for your student visa ([www.oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions/apply.doc](http://www.oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions/apply.doc)) as well as 10 Points to Remember When Applying for Your Student Visa: [www.oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions/10points.doc](http://www.oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions/10points.doc).

### Portland, Oregon

You have chosen to study in a wonderful city! Whether you see Portland, Oregon as a small town with a big-city feel or a big city that feels like a small town, it is a cool place to live. Located on the banks of the Willamette River only 90 minutes from snow-capped peaks and the Pacific Ocean, you might not realize Portland's bustling downtown and waterfront are the heart of a metropolitan region with more than 2 million people. Throughout the metro area are thriving neighborhoods filled with restaurants, record shops, bars, funky clothing stores, antique malls and art galleries. Portland also has an abundance of movie theaters, new and used bookstores, coffee shops and pubs. During the summer, Portland weather is warm (80-90F/27-32C in the day, 55-65F/12-18C in the evenings) and dry (5-20% humidity). Winter tends to be wet (rain is frequent, often lasting several days) and cool, though not very cold (35-50 F/2-10 C). The area is hilly and many people use Portland's busses and trams or bicycles as their main form of transportation. Take a look at the Portland Visitor's Association site [www.travelportland.com](http://www.travelportland.com) and the City of Portland site: [www.portlandonline.com](http://www.portlandonline.com).

### Orientation

It is very important to us that we meet each of you in person as well, so at the beginning of each term, a **mandatory** orientation session is held. It is called International Student Information Day and all new international students are expected to attend; refreshments will be served. During our orientation, you will meet other students from Portland, around the United States and the world and will learn more about the academic, cultural, social, and campus environments at Portland State University. You will also learn about employment opportunities for international students both on and off campus. For more information about orientation and to sign up, please visit the following website: <http://www.pdx.edu/orientation/international.html>. We will also check your immigration documents to make sure everything is in order and copy them for our files. Please be sure to bring with you your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, and your I-94 card.

### Housing

If you are new to Portland, you will need to make arrangements for housing before you come to Portland. There are a variety of types of housing arrangements you may choose from. You can choose to live in a more traditional dorm setting on campus, or you may choose to find an apartment off campus or even rent a house with some friends. To find out more about the various housing options available to PSU students, please visit this website: <housing page>.

### Registration for classes

Did you know that you can register for your classes before you even leave home? It's true! For information about how to register for classes check this website: <http://oia.pdx.edu/iss/forms/admissions/WebRegistrationGuide.doc>. Be sure to check out when you may begin registering for classes – graduate students have first priority, then fourth-year undergraduates etc. You

can find this information here: [www.pdx.edu/registration/basics.html](http://www.pdx.edu/registration/basics.html). Remember, the earlier you register, the easier it will be to select the classes you want to take in your first term of study!

### **Arrival in Portland**

It's a good idea to plan to arrive in Portland such that you have enough time to get used to the city and climate and to secure housing before the university begins. Immigration regulations allow you to arrive no more than 30 days before the starting date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019. You may also wish to arrive early if you are planning to live on-campus, but should be aware that you will not be able to move into the residence halls until the move-in date indicated on your housing contract. It is possible to make arrangements to be picked up at the airport if you plan ahead or we have provided some information on alternate forms of transportation to get you from the airport to the PSU campus here: <transportation page>.

### **The Office of International Student and Scholar Services**

Our office is here to assist you with all matters pertaining to your immigration status once you arrive in Portland. Please take a look at our website before you come to PSU, though, as it contains a wealth of information about your life as an international student in the United States: <http://www.oia.pdx.edu/intStudents.php>. If you arrive in Portland before orientation, you may want to stop by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSS) where the staff may be able to answer questions you have about settling in. ISSS is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you arrive in Portland when ISSS is closed and have a true emergency that is not addressed on our website, please call the University Police at 503.725.4404. If necessary, they will contact an ISSS staff member to assist you.

### **Initial Financial Matters**

We do not recommend that you carry large amounts of cash when you come. Please choose instead to use traveler's checks (some in amounts under \$50.00 so that you can cash them easily). Bank drafts will not provide immediate cash, as Portland banks will hold them for at least two weeks to verify that funds are available. Visa and MasterCard credit cards are accepted in most places in Portland and the US. They can also be used at many local shops and stores and for payment of tuition and fees. Most locations do not charge a service fee for using credit cards. If you are a new graduate student who has been offered employment in your academic department, you will not receive your first paycheck until about five weeks after beginning work. Please note that all paychecks are subject to applicable tax deductions.

### **Health Insurance**

Oregon State law recommends that all international students have health insurance. To this end, Portland State automatically enrolls all of its international students in the university's extended coverage health insurance. If you choose to bring coverage from your home country, the PSU insurance cannot be waived. The PSU insurance policy is an excellent policy which has been designed with the needs of international students in mind. For more information about the policy, please see our website: <http://oia.pdx.edu/iss/insurance/>.

Please note! If you are a J1 student or an embassy- or government-sponsored F1 student and will have medical insurance from your home country, please bring proof of this coverage with you.

If you have any questions about any of the above information, just contact us! We are happy to help you be a successful student in the United States and at Portland State University!

Sincerely,

The Office of International Admissions  
The Office of International Student and Scholar Services