


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PRE-ARRIVAL HANDBOOK



SlipperyRockSM



■ What lies over the hill?

What lies over the hill?
Where does it lead to?
Where does it go?
If I don't go there
How will I know
Will there be laughing skies
A friendly face
A valley green and fair?
But most of all
Yet most of all
Will love be waiting there?
No ties bind me until
My heart will lead me
Where I must go.
What lies over the hill?
Soon I will be there
Soon I will know.

Anonymous

FALL ORIENTATION

Wednesday, August 18

JANUARY ORIENTATION

TBD

ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2021-2022

FALL SEMESTER – 2021

New Student Orientation.....	Aug. 18-22
First Day of Classes	Aug. 23
No Classes (Labor Day)	Sept. 6
Last Day to Enter and/or Drop Classes	Sept. 15
Fall Break.....	Oct. 10-12
Mid - Term Grades Due	Oct. 13
Last Day to Withdraw with Grade of "W"	Oct. 20
Spring Registration Dates	Nov. 8-19
Thanksgiving Recess.....	Nov. 24-28
Last Day of Classes	Dec. 6
Final Exams.....	Dec. 7- Dec 11
Commencement	Dec. 11

OPTIONAL WINTER SESSION – 2021

Winter Session (tentative).....	Dec. 15 - Jan. 6
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SPRING SEMESTER - 2022

New Student Orientation.....	TBD
First Day of Classes	Jan. 18
Last Day to Enter and/or Drop Classes	Jan. 25
Mid-Term Grades Due	Mar. 3
Mid-Term Recess	Mar. 13-20
Last Day to Withdraw with Grade of "W"	April. 4
Summer/Fall Registration Dates (tentative)	April 4 –15
Last Day of Classes.....	May 2
Final Exams.....	May 3 - 7
Commencement.....	May 6-7

OPTIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL - 2022

Pre-Session.....	May 11 - 26
Memorial Day - No Classes	May 30
Session I.....	June 1 - June 27
Session II/Post Session.....	June 28 - July 26
Independence Day - No Classes.....	July 4

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Dear International Student:

We are extremely happy that you will be coming to Slippery Rock University. At present, we have more than 70 international students from approximately 34 different countries attending "The Rock."

In order to assist you, we have put together this booklet. It contains important information that you will need to know before and after you arrive. We have also included information on special services and other important information for international students.

By referring to this guide and participating in our orientation program specifically designed for you as an international student, you should be able to become part of the Slippery Rock University community without much difficulty. We hope you will find many new friends and become involved in the University activities and organizations.

We look forward to personally meeting with you and hope you will keep in close contact with us while you are at Slippery Rock University.

Sincerely,

Noora Alie
Assistant Director,
International Student Services

■ BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

PASSPORT

Your passport is an identifying document issued by your government. IF YOU DO NOT YET HAVE ONE, BE SURE TO GET ONE IMMEDIATELY. Your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months into the future for your entire stay in the U.S. If you find it necessary to renew your passport while in the U.S., the Office for Global Engagement can help you contact your embassy/consulate to determine the proper procedure. Your passport and visa should be valid if you plan to leave and re-enter the U.S.

FORM I-20 or DS-2019

The form I-20 indicates that you have been accepted (or are enrolled) as a full-time student (F-1) at Slippery Rock University. The form DS-2019 will be issued to those accepted as exchange visitors (J-1). The form I-20 or DS-2019 is presented with your passport to the American Consulate to obtain a visa. The form I-20 or DS-2019 must also be presented at the port of entry each time you enter the U.S.

VISA

At the American Consulate, you will be issued an F-1 (student) or J-1 (exchange visitor) visa that will be placed in your passport. This shows your visa classification, the number of entries you may have into the U.S., an expiration date after which you cannot re-enter the U.S. and other data. Citizens of Canada traveling to the U.S. as F-1, J-1, do not require a nonimmigrant visa. Refer to instructions in admission packet.

Recent updates in U.S. visa policy have increased the amount of time needed to obtain a visa. These updates have been instituted to update security for both U.S. citizens and our visitors. While there are differences in operating procedures among various U.S. embassies and consulates around the world, there are still some things that are common to all and should be noted as you begin the visa application process.

Prior to applying for a student visa, students must also pay the SEVIS fee. Instructions and "Preparing for Your Visa Interview" sheets were included with your form I-20 or DS-2019.

The visa process includes application form(s), fees, and interview. You will also be required to submit your passport, a recent photograph, SRU admission letter, financial support documentation, and your form I-20 or DS-2019. If approved, your visa will be affixed into your passport and your form I-20 or DS-2019 will be returned to you. If your visa is denied, U.S. law requires that a written explanation be given. In the unfortunate event that this happens to you, please hold on to this information, as it will provide insight into the denial and explain requirements should you wish to apply again.

Because some operating procedures vary by country, it is strongly advised that you contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as possible to learn more. Some require appointments scheduled in advance, while others may accept visa applications on a walk-in basis. Processing times vary, as do the need for background checks, so it is in your best

interest to begin the process as soon as possible. Visas will not be issued more than 90 days in advance of your expected arrival, although if permissible by the U.S. embassy/consulate, they may accept visa applications more than 90 days in advance.

As policies and procedures are subject to change, it's also advisable that you refer to the official U.S. Department of State visa website at http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

I-94

Upon entry into the United States, visitors formally received an I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record). However, in order to increase efficiency, reduce operating costs and streamline the admission process, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has automated the Form I-94 at air and sea ports of entry. Should you require a copy of your I-94 (record of admission) for verification of alien registration, immigration status or employment authorization, it can be obtained from www.cbp.gov/I94.

WHAT TO PACK

Airlines generally have restrictions on the amount of allowable luggage for international travel. This can be limited by weight, size, and/or the number of pieces. Be sure to obtain these details well in advance so you can plan how much to bring with you. Remember, in addition to traveling across time zones, you will be trudging through airports, so the less you have to drag with you, the better you will feel.

The following are suggested items to pack:

- Clothing (note that SRU experiences four distinct seasons, so if you cannot pack for all of them, you may want to ship things for later arrival or buy things here).
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, deodorant, perfume, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.)
- Personal items to remind you of home (photos, decorations, etc.). These will also come in handy for Internations Week displays.
- Alarm clock
- Bed and bath linens (pillow, blanket, bed sheets and towels). The Office for Global Engagement has a small supply of sheets and blankets to loan. You may also pre-order linens through Residence Hall Linens and have them pre-shipped to the Office for Global Engagement, 002 Spotts World Culture Building, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pa. 16057, USA. Please refer to the Residence Hall Linens webpage for more information at www.rhl.org/sru.

If you are not able to bring these items with you, you should be able to purchase most of them here, shortly after your arrival. In fact, one of your orientation events is a shopping trip.

EXPENSES

You should bring with you at least \$400 in cash and a larger sum in the form of U.S. dollars check or travelers checks. Do not bring bank drafts, foreign currency, or checks drawn on a foreign bank, as it will take months to have them converted into U.S. dollars and available for your use.

The following are some expenses that you will incur when you first arrive:

- Residence Hall House Council Fee (\$20)
- Housing (approximately \$25 per day on campus if you arrive prior to the orientation arrival dates)
- Meals (approximately \$7 per meal prior to the start of your orientation program)
- Books and school supplies (approximately \$800/semester; \$30-\$100 per textbook)
- Miscellaneous or emergency expenses

Additional items and their approximate costs:

- Pillow (\$10)
- Blanket (\$20)
- Sheets (\$30)
- Soap (\$.75)
- Coffee (\$2.00/cup)
- Jeans (\$30)

EXTRA CLOTHING AND MONEY – Because there are sometimes luggage delays and problems with converting travelers checks, you are encouraged to carry extra clothing and money (U.S. dollars) with you on the airplane. Keep this with you, separate from your other luggage. The money will be needed for transportation, phone calls, meals or other urgent needs.

■ EARLY DAYS

TRANSPORTATION AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Also included in the mailing of this booklet is a letter and travel agent handout with instructions about travel to the U.S. and in particular to Slippery Rock University. Please review them carefully and be sure to complete the Arrival Information form linked in the email about arrival preparations. Remember to make Pittsburgh your final flight destination and to carry this booklet, the letter and travel instructions with you when traveling to SRU.

ARRIVAL PROBLEMS

If you encounter problems, please contact Noora Alie (724.738.4687) during office hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.). If you are unable to reach either at the office, please contact our on-call number that will be later e-mailed to you.

WELCOME TO SLIPPERY ROCK

When you arrive on campus, you will be met by one of our current international students and assisted with moving into your residence hall. They and others will be on hand to assist you throughout your orientation program.

ORIENTATION

Mandatory orientation sessions have been scheduled for Aug. 18 – 22, 2021. It is important that you arrange your arrival so you can attend these sessions. Please plan to arrive in Slippery Rock on either Aug. 16 or 17, 2021.

For students beginning in Spring 2022, orientation dates are TBD. Students should plan to arrive on TBD.

Every year without exception, new SRU international students report what a wonderful experience orientation is for them. Highlights include:

- Practical matters: housing, meals, transportation, banking, etc.
- U.S. academic system: structure, academic advisement, registration for classes, study skills, testing and grading, transfer credits, faculty expectations, etc.
- Adjustment to our culture: values, communication, cultural differences, homesickness, etc.
- Specific SRU matters: bill payment, ID cards, residence hall life, student activities, student health center, campus safety, etc.
- Making new friends with students, staff, and local community members, both international and American.
- Social events, shopping, etc.

Upon your arrival, you will receive your orientation folder containing a schedule of the orientation sessions and all sorts of other information to help you settle in to your new life as an SRU student.

If you arrive prior to the start of orientation, you will be responsible for your own lodging and meal costs.

REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES

Prior to your arrival, we will select your courses for the first semester. Minor schedule changes can be made after your arrival and during the first week of classes. Beginning with the second semester, you will be assigned an academic adviser from your specific academic department who will work with you to schedule future classes.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Books and supplies are purchased in the campus bookstore which is located in the Smith Student Center. You must pay for your books and supplies by cash, check or a major credit card such as Mastercard or VISA.

RESIDENCE HALLS

Undergraduate students will live in a campus residence hall. The room will contain beds, dressers, desks and closets. There are shower/bathroom facilities for each room or wing of the residence hall. There are laundry facilities in each residence hall where you may wash and dry your clothing. Most rooms house two students.

When possible, you will be assigned to room with an American roommate. We will try to send you the name and address of your roommate so you can contact him/her prior to your arrival.

Each residence hall has staff to assist you in your adjustment to residence hall and campus life. There are resident coordinators (professional staff members) assigned to each residence hall. There will be one or two students called community assistants (or CA for short) assigned to each floor or wing in the residence hall. If you have questions or problems with any aspects of campus living, you should talk with one of these individuals. Be sure to obtain and review all information they provide for you containing the rules and guidelines for living in residence halls.

ID (IDENTIFICATION) CARDS

ID cards (student identification cards) are your entry "ticket" to campus activities, the library, and the dining hall. During orientation, you will have your photograph taken at the old Student Union and obtain your ID card. Students should always carry this ID card for identification purposes.

HEALTH CARE AND INSURANCE

The University requires that all students pay a health service fee to cover the use of our campus health center. However, there will be occasions when a person must be referred to a hospital for treatment. Because of this, we also require that all students purchase health and accident insurance (or show proof of comparable coverage).

Please note that neither the U.S. government nor the University will be responsible for any medical expenses (hospital, doctor, etc.) incurred by you. Also note that health insurance does not cover dental or optical care, so you should arrange to have complete physical, dental and eye exams before you leave home.

If you have insurance coverage from your own country that will pay for hospital bills in the U.S., you should provide the Office for Global Engagement with the name and address of the insurance company and a copy of the policy/coverage prior to the first day of classes so we can determine if you can be exempt from a recommended policy.

BANKING

For convenience and safety reasons, we suggest you open an account at the local bank, PNC located on campus. If you need to withdraw money from the bank, you can do so by direct withdrawal from inside the bank building or by using an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) located outside the bank which is operational 24 hours a day. In addition, ATM's are also located on campus. More information on opening a bank account will be provided to you at orientation. Plan to have enough money in the bank to cover unexpected expenses, travel, meals and housing expenses during vacation periods.

MONEY TRANSFER

Once you have opened your own bank account in Slippery Rock, money may be transferred from your country.


1. By wire (see Flywire at www.flywire.com/pay/sru).
2. By bringing a CHECK with you to be deposited in your account (see below).

If you wish to deposit a check, the following apply:

1. You must have a CHECK, not bank draft.
2. The check must be in U.S. dollars.
3. The check must have computer-printed "routing" or "transit" numbers printed at the bottom, otherwise it is considered a bank draft.
4. The check must be drawn on a bank in the U.S.

Note: Local banks have difficulty converting foreign travelers checks and bank drafts. Be sure to bring your money in the form of AMERICAN Travelers Checks.

PAYING BILLS

You will pay your bills (tuition, room, meals and fees) in the Office of Student Accounts, 104 Old Main, after your arrival on campus. If you have difficulty meeting your financial obligations, contact the Office for Global Engagement. Bills may be paid by cash, check or wire directly using  .

You can pay your bills at one time, or by installment. Note that if you pay by installment, you will be charged an extra \$25. Note also that each time you are late with a payment, you will be charged a \$15 late fee.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER-You must obtain a U.S. government-issued social security number before you can be paid for hours worked on-campus. Your local Slippery Rock bank will also require you to provide a social security number. It usually takes a few weeks to receive your social security number. The process of applying for a social security number will be explained during the orientation program and the Office for Global Engagement will assist you.



■ AFTER SETTLING IN

TEMPORARY DEPARTURE FROM THE U.S.

Each time you leave the U.S. (e.g. Canada, Mexico, return home for vacation), you may need to obtain an updated or new form I-20 or DS-2019 to present at your port of entry when you return to the U.S. Your visa and passport must also be valid to re-enter the U.S. Students visiting Canada should check with the Office for Global Engagement to determine if they need to obtain a Canadian Visitors Visa.

VACATIONS (BREAKS)

You should be aware that campus residence halls and dining halls are closed during long vacation periods ("breaks"). For this academic year these periods are: fall break (Oct. 10-12), Thanksgiving (Nov. 24 – 28), Christmas (Dec. 13-Jan. 18) and midterm recess (Mar. 7- 14).

It is anticipated that campus residence hall housing will be available for all or part of breaks. International students may stay in a residence hall if arrangements are made in advance and a charge of approximately \$25/day is paid in advance. Students must purchase meals off-campus as dining halls will be closed.

INTERNATIONAL CLUB AND WEEK

The International Club sponsors International Week each November. Events include International Sports Night, International Fashion Show, International Coffeehouse, International Showcase and International Roundtable. The grand finale is the annual International Dinner when 300 members of the community are entertained and sample foods prepared by our international students. During these events, items such as clothing, photographs, costumes, flags, etc. are displayed. Students are encouraged to bring native articles of clothing to wear at the dinner as well as articles which can be displayed during International Education Week.

ADDRESS

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires you to keep us informed of your local (campus) address and current home address. We may also need to send you important information or contact you in case of emergency.

ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

Applications for campus employment may be obtained at the Career Education and Development Office, 124 Bailey Library. Submit one application for each job in which you are interested. Students may work 20 hours per week when classes are in session, at a rate of \$7.25/hour. Permission from Immigration is not needed to work on campus. U.S. and Pennsylvania taxes will automatically be withheld from your paycheck.

LOAN FUND

A small loan fund has been established for international students. The maximum amount that can be borrowed is \$300. A one percent interest charge is levied if not paid back within 60 days. Apply through the Office for Global Engagement.

MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

All international students must abide by immigration law. This includes, but is not limited to, earning a minimum of 12 credits undergraduate or nine graduate each semester and refraining from off-campus employment without prior USCIS authorization. These, as well as other immigration regulations, will be explained at orientation.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

If you are having problems with a class:

1. Talk with the professor, explain your problem(s), try to find a solution.
2. Consider obtaining a tutor. The Tutorial Center is located in Bailey Library, services are free.
3. You should also speak with your academic adviser who can help you explore alternatives.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

Contact the Student Health Center (Rhoads Hall) if you become ill or are injured. The Health Center will determine if you need medical assistance, tests, treatment or hospitalization and may then refer you to a doctor. All international students are required to have health insurance coverage.





WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Within the first few weeks on campus, you will receive a campus directory with staff and office contact details. In the meantime, here are some numbers that might be of assistance to you as you settle in to your new student life. Note when calling from an on-campus phone, you only need to dial the last four digits:

- **Office for Global Engagement**

Anything related to your arrival and stay
002 Spotts World Culture Building
724.738.2057

- **Counseling Center**

Support services for personal matters
118 Rhoads Hall
724.738.2034

- **Career Education and Development**

124 Bailey Library
724.738.2028

- **Student Payroll**

203 Old Main
724.738.2069

- **Student Health Center**

For medical and insurance assistance
Rhoads Hall
724.738.2052

- **Residence Life**

Roommates, room assignments, etc.
105 Watson Hall
724.738.2082

- **Student Accounts**

Paying University bills
103 Old Main
724.738.2088

- **Academic Records and Summer School**

Registration, transcripts, grade reports, etc.
107 Old Main
724.738.2010

- **Student Involvement and Leadership**

Activities, organizations, leadership activities, etc.
234 Robert M. Smith Student Center
724.738.2092

- **University Police**

Lost and found, parking, police and safety issues
145 Kiester Road
724.738.3333



Slippery Rock University is committed to a policy of affirmative action. Slippery Rock University assures an equal opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, gender or veteran's status in accordance with the state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Experience the Difference

Slippery Rock
UniversitySM
of Pennsylvania

• Office for Global Engagement
• 002 Spotts World Culture Building
• 1 Morrow Way
• Slippery Rock, PA 16057
•