

# Coming to Cornell

*2008-2009*



**Information for  
International  
Graduate Students**

# The International Students and Scholars Office

*The ISSO is dedicated to serving international students, academic staff, and their families. Please contact us if you have questions. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 9:00 AM-4:30 PM, and Wednesday, 1:00-4:30 PM.*

**Cornell University**  
**B50 Caldwell Hall**  
**Ithaca, New York 14853-2602**  
**Telephone: (607) 255-5243, Fax: (607) 255-2778**  
**Web: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu>**  
**Email: [isso@cornell.edu](mailto:isso@cornell.edu)**

## ISSO Staff

Brendan P. O'Brien, Director  
*[bpo1@cornell.edu](mailto:bpo1@cornell.edu)*

Laura B. Taylor, Associate Director  
*[lbt1@cornell.edu](mailto:lbt1@cornell.edu)*

Steve Shumway, Administrative Manager  
*[ss105@cornell.edu](mailto:ss105@cornell.edu)*

Sarah Hilsman, Assistant Director for Immigration Services  
*[sw57@cornell.edu](mailto:sw57@cornell.edu)*

Adriana P. Rovers, Assistant Director for Programming Services  
*[apr6@cornell.edu](mailto:apr6@cornell.edu)*

Mariah J. Sawyer, Immigration Advisor & Program Coordinator  
*[mjs51@cornell.edu](mailto:mjs51@cornell.edu)*

Bill Webster, Immigration Data Specialist  
*[wrw1@cornell.edu](mailto:wrw1@cornell.edu)*

Cindy Austic, Immigration & Program Assistant  
*[ca46@cornell.edu](mailto:ca46@cornell.edu)*

Mary Wheaton, Immigration Assistant  
*[mjw4@cornell.edu](mailto:mjw4@cornell.edu)*

Scott Beemer, Immigration & Accounts Assistant  
*[slb36@cornell.edu](mailto:slb36@cornell.edu)*

Elizabeth Shedd, Administrative Assistant & Receptionist  
*[ers82@cornell.edu](mailto:ers82@cornell.edu)*

**You MUST check in at the ISSO after arrival.**

*See more information on page 9.*

**Plan to come directly to the office after checking into your campus housing, apartment, or other temporary accommodations.**

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## **Welcome to Cornell University!**



*This year you will be among more than 4,200 international students and academic staff from over 120 countries who make up Cornell's international community.*

*This brochure will give you important information to help you plan your trip to the United States. **The information, dates and costs given here are based on the best information available in early 2008. For the most up to date information check our Web site at <http://www.isso.cornell.edu>.***

*Have a safe and pleasant trip. We look forward to meeting you soon!*

## **Preparing for Travel**

### **Obtaining a Visa Stamp\***

Once you are admitted to Cornell University, you will need a student visa stamp in your passport to enter the United States (not required of Canadian citizens\*). To apply for the visa stamp at a U.S. embassy or consulate, you need to have:

- 1. a valid passport**
- 2. I-20 Form** (for F-1 visa) **or DS-2019 Form** (for J-1 visa) prepared by Cornell or your sponsoring agency
- 3. your admission letter to Cornell**
- 4. a copy of your financial documents**
- 5. passport-type photographs**
- 6. SEVIS fee payment receipt\*\***

**Note** ➡ *If you have been accepted by several institutions, **do not** apply for a visa until you decide which you will attend.*

**Note** ➡ *You can enter the U.S. no more than thirty days before the beginning date noted on the I-20 (item #5) or DS-2019 (item #3).*

- 7. visa application forms** (DS-156, etc. Contact the specific consulate for required forms & fees.)

**Apply for your visa stamp as soon as you receive your I-20 or DS-2019.** Recently there has been a dramatic increase in the number of visa applications for which additional security clearances are required before a visa can be issued. These security clearances are generally required for students or researchers involved in certain fields of science and for male applicants from certain countries. The security clearance process may delay your visa application by

anywhere from one to three months, or even more in rare cases. For more information on security clearances, check out our Web site: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/visas/visaapplications.php>.

Please call the U.S. embassy or nearest consulate for further information regarding obtaining a student visa in your country. People who have Internet access can obtain information from the U.S. Department of State Web page: <http://www.usembassy.gov>.

If your application for a student visa is approved, the consular officer will place a visa stamp in your passport. You may then use it to enter the United States with your I-20 or DS-2019 Form.

**\*\*PAYING YOUR SEVIS FEE:** Please find detailed instructions on how to pay the SEVIS fee attached to your I-20 or DS-2019. This information is also available on our Web site at: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/visas/sevisfee.php> or on the Web site of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>. Frequently asked questions about paying the fee are available at: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq.htm>. If you are paying the SEVIS fee online, please be sure to print a copy of the receipt **AS SOON AS** you complete the payment procedure.

*\*Canadian citizens: you do not need a visa stamp to enter the United States to study but you do need to present your I-20 or DS-2019 form and financial support documents at the U.S. border, along with evidence of Canadian citizenship and the SEVIS fee payment receipt. It is important that you make sure you are processed at the border and get an I-94 card with the proper student designation. **DO NOT COME IN AS A TOURIST! Canadian landed immigrants, however, must obtain a visa stamp before attempting to enter the U.S. Contact the U.S. embassy/consulate in Canada if you are uncertain.***

## The Difference Between F-1 & J-1 Visa

The F-1 visa is granted to a student whose sole purpose is to pursue education in the United States and who intends to return to his/her home country after completion of studies. The dependents of an F-1 student are granted an F-2 visa if they would like to come with the F-1 student. If your spouse comes on an F-2 visa, s/he is not permitted to work or earn money in any capacity.

The J-1 is an exchange visitor visa. Those who are eligible for Cornell's J-1 program must be funded by one of the following: Cornell University, an organization, a government, an agency, a foundation, an employer, or an international organization. Students supported solely by family or personal funds are not qualified for Cornell's J-1 program. The dependents of a J-1 student are granted a J-2 visa and may apply for work authorization once they have entered the U.S.

J-1 students from certain countries and those receiving funds either from U.S. government or from their own government may be required to return home for two years after completion of studies ("two year home residence requirement") before being able to return as, or change to, a temporary worker (H-1B) or an immigrant visa (Green Card).

If you think you are qualified and would like to obtain a J-1 visa, you must submit your request to the Graduate Admissions Office or

your professional degree admissions office (JGSM, Law).

## **If you are already a student in the U.S. holding F-1 or J-1 status**

For those who are currently in the United States in F-1 or J-1 student status, you **MUST** complete the process of transferring your immigration status from your previous institution to Cornell no more than 30 days after the start date of your I-20 or DS-2019. The process is completed by reporting to the ISSO with your immigration documents (passport, I-20 or DS-2019, I-94 card). **Failure to do so will result in the loss of your F-1 or J-1 student status.**

**Note** ➔ *If you are planning on transferring to Cornell, or have completed a degree at one school and will begin a new degree program at Cornell, you **MUST** notify your current institution of your intent to attend Cornell University. Your current school needs to release your immigration status to Cornell before Cornell can produce a new immigration document for you. Also, if you are traveling out of the country before the intended transfer, **DO NOT** enter the country on the other school's form. You **MUST** enter the U.S. on Cornell's I-20 or DS-2019.*

## **If you are currently in the U.S. in another immigration status**

If you are currently in the U.S. but hold another immigration status, such as H-1B or F-2, you must contact the ISSO to be sure you complete the proper procedures to change your status to F-1 in order to attend school. There are rare cases in which a student can remain in another immigration status to attend school, but it is important to check with the ISSO before making this decision. Information is available on our Web site at <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/fl/cos.php>. Or you can e-mail [isso@cornell.edu](mailto:isso@cornell.edu) or call (607) 255-5243.

## **U.S. Customs Service**

Ask at a U.S. consulate in your home country for a copy of United States Customs Hints for Visitors, which explains import tax regulations and may prevent unnecessary customs duty expense. You can also obtain U.S. Customs information at <http://www.customs.ustreas.gov>.

## **Baggage**

The ISSO cannot accept or store baggage. Please do not send any baggage to this office.

Packages under a certain weight (varies by country) can be mailed by international parcel post. Doing so may be less expensive than

using a shipping company. Consult your local parcel post regulations for details. The Ithaca Post Office will hold parcels without charge for thirty days if they are addressed to: your name, General Delivery, Post Office, 757 Warren Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-9998, USA.

If you must ship unaccompanied baggage, you should deal with an agent in your country who can handle shipment to Ithaca and has a corresponding agent in the U.S. to help check baggage through customs. Be sure to find out the name of that individual or of the U.S. brokerage firm with which the U.S. agent deals. Students have had many unpleasant and costly experiences with lost shipments in New York City and at other ports because they contracted with shipping companies that had no forwarding agents or customs representation in the U.S. To protect yourself against loss, insure your shipments for "all risk" coverage. Be sure that all shipments will arrive after you are on campus.

**Note** ➔ *Just in case the baggage you "check in" at the beginning of your airline flight gets lost or delayed, carry a few personal items in the luggage you carry on the plane. **Keep your passport, visa documents and money on your person at all times.** For a list of items permitted and prohibited in your luggage, visit <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.*

## Registration Dates\*

### FALL TERM:

New Student Registration-Monday, August 25  
Instruction begins Thursday, August 28

### SPRING TERM:

New Student Registration-Thursday, January 15  
Instruction begins Monday, January 19

*(\*For students enrolled at the Graduate School only. Johnson Graduate School of Management & Law School students can find registration dates by contacting your college Registrar, using the contact information found at <http://www.registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Student/crdirectory.html>)*

## Planning Your Arrival Date

You should plan to arrive in Ithaca in time to get settled before Registration and attend the various orientation sessions offered by your field, the Graduate School, and the ISSO. Information about these programs should be available on the Web by late May. Law, MMH, and JGSM students should check with their schools regarding the best arrival date for their particular academic programs.

See the Housing section on page 13 of this booklet for information about move-in dates for Cornell Graduate and Professional Housing.

If you plan to live off campus, it is best to arrive by early August (fall term) or by early January (spring term). Because of the high

cost of temporary housing for families, married students may want to come alone to Ithaca to find accommodations before bringing their families.

## **Cancelling your plans**

We hope nothing will happen to prevent you from attending Cornell, but if your plans change and you cannot enroll, notify the ISSO immediately. If you do not register for the semester for which you have been accepted, your application will automatically be withdrawn.

## **Traveling to Ithaca**

*Note: there is no train service directly to Ithaca. The closest stop is in Syracuse. For additional information about traveling to Ithaca, including information about train service, visit <http://www.cornell.edu/visiting/ithaca/visiting.cfm>.*

### ***To Ithaca, New York by air:***

Because there is no direct service to Ithaca from either J.F. Kennedy (JFK) or Newark Airports, they should be avoided as a point of entry en route to Ithaca. If you *do* arrive at either of these airports you will need to transfer to LaGuardia Airport (New York City) via ground transportation in order to travel to Ithaca by air.

USAir, United Airlines, Northwest, and Air West provide limited air service to Ithaca. If you plan to fly to Ithaca, we suggest that you ask your travel agent to make reservations that allow you to enter the United States via one of the following cities: New York City (LaGuardia Airport); Boston, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; or Cincinnati, Ohio.

### ***To Ithaca Via Syracuse, New York by air or bus:***

It is possible to fly into Syracuse, New York from J.F. Kennedy Airport, New York City and other U.S. cities. Syracuse is located around 60 miles (95 kilometers) north of Ithaca. Transportation from Hancock Airport, Syracuse to Ithaca is provided by Airport Limousine. The cost is \$70/person for a one-way trip at one of the 8 daily scheduled pickup times, or \$105 round trip. 48 hour advanced reservations are required! For reservations or information call: 1-800-273-9197 (toll-free if calling within the U.S.) or (607) 273-3030, or check online at <http://www.ithacaairlinelimo.org>.

### ***To Ithaca, New York by bus:***

If you arrive in New York City (J.F. Kennedy or LaGuardia Airports) or New Jersey (Newark Airport) and wish to travel to Ithaca by bus, you will first need to take ground transportation from the airport to the New York City Port Authority Bus Terminal (41st Street and 8th Avenue). From there it will take around 6 hours to reach Ithaca by bus. Both *Greyhound* and *Short Line* Bus Companies service Ithaca. Visit [http://www.ny.com/transportation/port\\_authority.html](http://www.ny.com/transportation/port_authority.html) for information.

### ***Getting to Campus:***

Taxi cabs are available to transport you from the airport or bus station to Cornell campus or your place of residence. Local taxi companies include: Yellow Cab, Cayuga Taxi, and University Taxi. All three may be reached by calling Ithaca Dispatch at 277-7777, or toll free within the U.S. at 1-888-321-1149. Taxi service costs approximately \$8-\$15 per person, depending on your place of departure and arrival. Rates may vary for two or more people.

## **IMPORTANT!** **Reporting to the ISSO**

After you arrive in Ithaca, you **MUST** come to the International Students and Scholars Office **no more than 30 days** after the start date of your I-20 or DS-2019 (please see ISSO office hours on page 2). When you come to the ISSO, bring your:

- *passport & I-94 card (issued at the U.S. port of entry).*
- *I-20 or DS-2019, OR documentation of the visa status you possess if other than F-1 or J-1.*

We are **REQUIRED** to check those documents to confirm your status in the United States. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your legal ability to stay in the U.S.

At that time we will also give you important orientation materials and, if applicable, a certificate to apply for a social security number.

### **In Case of an Emergency**

Call the ISSO (607-255-5243), or after office hours call:

- ISSO Director, Brendan O'Brien (607-272-2259)
- The Cornell Police (607-255-1111)

Collect calls cannot be accepted.

## **Financial Matters**

### **Transfer of Funds**

To avoid delays and cash-flow problems, you may want to open a bank account before you come to the U.S. There are four banks in Ithaca to which you can write to set up a checking account:

- **M&T Bank**, Box 11, Willard Straight Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853  
*<http://www.mandtbank.com>*
- **HSBC**, 302 Pine Tree Road, Ithaca, NY 14850  
*<http://www.hsbcusa.com>*
- **Bank of America**, 202 E. State Street, Ithaca, NY 14850  
*<http://www.bankofamerica.com>*
- **Tompkins Trust Company**, The Cornell Store, Ithaca, NY 14853  
*<http://www.tompkinstrust.com>*

Ask the bank in your country if one of these Ithaca banks is more convenient than the others for the transference of funds. Foreign checks or drafts require several weeks for collection. Drawing checks

in U.S. dollars on corresponding banks in New York City will prevent delays. Direct foreign currency exchange is available on a limited basis through the Tompkins Trust Company. When initiating a transfer of money from overseas, be sure to request receipts, and allow one month for processing. The university and all local businesses accept checks or drafts only in U.S. dollars.

## Billing Address

The Office of the Bursar provides monthly **electronic billing** statements of tuition, fees, and other charges incurred by the students including housing, dining, other Campus Life expenses; parking services; health services; etc. All students will receive monthly bursar bills electronically through Cornell Net.Pay, our online billing and payment service. **Paper bills will not be sent.** Once you receive and activate your NETID, you will be able to enroll in our electronic billing service called Cornell Net.Pay, which allows you to receive your bursar statement online and make payments from a U.S. checking or savings account. For more information visit <http://www.bursar.cornell.edu/>. “Just The Facts” allows you to view your up-to-date account information as well. Forms and additional information can be located on the Office of the Bursar Web page at <http://www.bursar.cornell.edu>. You can also contact the Office of the Bursar via phone at (607)255-2336 or via e-mail at [ucobursar@cornell.edu](mailto:ucobursar@cornell.edu).

## University Payments

Before registering, each student must pay:

- the acceptance deposit, if required by your program
- the current semester’s tuition
- room and board charges (if living and eating on campus).

In July and December, the Office of the Bursar will bill provide an electronic bursar bill listing the amount you need to pay before registration and the date by which it must be paid (usually five to ten working days before registration). The statement may include charges for on-campus housing, accident and sickness insurance, and the on-campus dining plan.

If you will be paying for your university expenses out of your own funds, arrange to bring enough money in U.S. dollars to pay all university expenses. Do not bring excessive amounts of cash; instead, purchase travelers checks or a bank draft or money order which is drawn on a U.S. bank from a local bank in your country.

You can arrange to transfer payment by wiring funds to the Cornell University bank account directly from overseas. Such a transfer should include your name and your Cornell identification number (if you have one). To transfer funds, please give the following information to your bank:

***Wire to: Tompkins County Trust Company  
ROUTING # 0213-02648  
Credit to Cornell University Account #01-101-000065  
Attention: Cash Management Office  
Include student’s name and Cornell ID number***

Any charges not paid by the due date specified on the monthly Bursar bill will be assessed a finance charge of 1.25% monthly (15% annually) on the unpaid balance. Students' university expenses are generally paid either from personal resources, by Cornell, or by sponsors.

If your expenses will be paid by Cornell (for example, by a Teaching or Research Assistantship or Fellowship), payment for your tuition should automatically be credited to your Bursar's account. Do not become alarmed if payment for your tuition does not appear on your July bill, as these tuition awards often are not processed until August or September. If you have received notice from Cornell that your tuition will be paid for you, deduct the tuition amount from the amount shown as due on your bill and send the difference to the Bursar so it will be received by the bill due date.

If you are sponsored by an organization, a business, or your home government, you'll need to mail or present a letter to the Office of the Bursar, 260 Day Hall, authorizing the Bursar to bill your sponsor. The letter should contain the following information: Name of student, Student's Cornell ID number, beginning and ending date of the sponsorship, type of fees covered, and Sponsor's billing address. The Office of the Bursar will prepare a separate statement for each sponsor. Items not paid for by the sponsors will appear on your monthly bursar's statement. If your sponsor does not pay the invoices, you are still responsible for those charges.

After you arrive, you should contact the Office of the Bursar to receive information about the process of billing sponsors. If you anticipate difficulty making payments, contact Brendan O'Brien at the ISSO.

## **Expenses**

### **Initial Expenses**

New students have settling-in expenses such as cold-weather clothing, temporary housing upon arrival, taxi and bus fares, and some room furnishings. These expenses may amount to approximately \$1,100 for a single student or \$2,300 for families living on campus.

A student living off campus may have total initial expenses as high as \$2,800. This figure covers the \$1,100-\$1,400 of settling-in expenses plus three months' rent, since landlords require immediate payment of the first and last month's rent, plus a deposit equal to one month's rent.

Families living off campus will need to bring at least \$3,000 with them for settling-in expenses to cover initial housing payments and other possible initial costs, such as, the purchase of furniture, kitchen utensils, bedding, and other household items, plus installation charges for telephone and television service. Winter clothing expenses vary but can be considerable for a family.

### **Living Expenses**

Depending on your life-style, living expenses range between \$1,750-\$2,100 per month. Out of this money the following must be paid:

housing (and sometimes utilities), food, telephone, television, laundry, entertainment, bus transportation, clothing, renter's insurance, health insurance, and other miscellaneous or emergency items. Actual expenses vary widely, owing to individual life-style and cost of housing. For 2008-2009, books and supplies are estimated to cost around \$700. Health insurance costs are not currently known, but are estimated to be around \$1,650 for individual students.

Before deciding to bring dependents, carefully consider the cost of living in the U.S. A married couple without children needs at least \$2,350 a month. Families with children should add \$275/month for each child. **Besides having enough funds to meet basic living costs such as housing and food, a spouse and children must also have health insurance. Health insurance can be very expensive but is absolutely a necessity. Without it, emergency medical care can cost *thousands* of dollars. It should also be noted that immigration regulations REQUIRE J-2 dependents to carry insurance that meets certain standard requirements.**

## Planning First Year's Expenses

### One year's tuition

(amount varies depending on program) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Books and supplies** \$ 700.00

**Health insurance (estimated for '08-'09\*)** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,650 for a student

\$3,621 for a spouse

\$2,234 for all children

**Living expenses (twelve months)** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$19,500 - 23,500 for a student

\$6,600 for a spouse

\$3,300 for each child

**Settling-in expenses** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,100 for single students living on campus

\$2,800 for single students living off campus

\$2,800 for families living on campus

\$3,000 for families living off campus

**Total estimate for first year** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*The Student Health Insurance Plan premium for 2008-09 will be established in the next few months. New students in Jan. '09 should inquire about pro-rated insurance fees. Coverage dates are on pg 18.*

## Assistantships, Fellowships and Taxes

If you will receive assistantship support from Cornell, approximately 20% of your salary or monthly stipend will be deducted for federal and state income taxes. If you receive fellowship support, approximately 15% of your stipend will be deducted for taxes. If your country's government has a tax treaty with the U.S. the percentage deducted may be less. Students on assistantship through the Cornell

University payroll are requested to enroll in direct deposit and will receive a salary check deposited to their bank account twice a month, usually the first and fifteenth day of the month. Students receiving Cornell graduate fellowships typically receive their stipend in a lump sum on the first day of the semester. For questions about fellowships contact the Graduate School Student Services Office, Cornell University, 143 Caldwell Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, [grad\\_fellowships@cornell.edu](mailto:grad_fellowships@cornell.edu) or <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/>.

## Student Employment

The employment of foreign students is closely regulated by United States immigration laws. Students with J-1 exchange visitor status may work only with the written permission of their program sponsor. Students with F-1 status may seek employment on campus. See the ISSO for more details. Students should not plan on employment to significantly supplement their income while in the U.S.

# Housing

## On-Campus

### Housing for Single Graduate Students

Single graduate and professional students may choose to live in a one-person apartment or studio (in Hasbrouck, Maplewood, or Thurston Court), have their own bedroom within a shared multi-bedroom apartment or suite (in Maplewood, Thurston Court, or Hughes Hall), or have a single room in a corridor-style residence hall with shared facilities (in Schuyler House). Some apartments are furnished and some are not. All residences include a kitchen and bathroom (*Schuyler House has shared kitchens and same-sex shared bathrooms on each floor*), a common area for the shared apartments, and on-site laundry facilities, plus Internet access, basic campus phone service, and optional cable television (with an additional charge). Most residences for graduate students stay open year-round, including through the summer, although academic-year contracts are available for some residences.

For more information about housing options and contract periods, visit <http://campuslife.cornell.edu/campuslife/housing/gradhousing.cfm>.

If you have applied for housing and received written confirmation of your housing assignment from the Department of Campus Life's Housing and Dining Office, you may move into your residence on the following date:

- Academic-year contract: Maplewood, Schuyler House, or Hughes – August 22, 2008
- 12-month contract: Maplewood non-shared, non-studio apartment, or Hasbrouck – August 1, 2008
- 12-month contract: Maplewood studio or shared apartment, or Thurston Court – August 15, 2008

Most graduate students choose to cook at home, but some students

also decide to purchase a Cornell meal plan to eat in Cornell's dining facilities. For more information about meal plans, visit <http://dining.cornell.edu>, call (607)255-4722 or e-mail [dining@cornell.edu](mailto:dining@cornell.edu).

## Family/Partner Housing

There are two apartment areas for students coming to Cornell as a couple or as a family. The **Hasbrouck Apartment Complex** offers 336 studio, one- and two-bedroom furnished or unfurnished apartments. **Maplewood Park Apartments** house 90 couples or families in furnished apartments. Both apartment areas are dynamic and richly diverse internationally. They offer a wide array of social, educational, and cultural activities and programs for students, their spouses or partners, and children. Community centers are located in each apartment area. This is where you receive mail and where you can participate in many community activities and programs. For more information about Hasbrouck and Maplewood, visit <http://housing.cornell.edu>.

You are eligible for an apartment in Cornell's family/partner housing if you are accompanied by another adult and/or up to three legally dependent children (total occupancy may not exceed four people). All utilities (gas, heat, electricity, water, and sewer), as well as the university's high speed Internet access, are included in the rent. Telephone and cable for television reception (available in most locations) are available by subscription for an extra fee.

If you have applied for housing and received written confirmation of your assignment in family/partner housing in Hasbrouck or Maplewood, you may move into your residence on August 1, 2008.

Most graduate students choose to cook at home, but some students also decide to purchase a Cornell meal plan to eat in Cornell's dining facilities. For more information about meal plans, visit <http://dining.cornell.edu>, call (607)255-4722 or e-mail [dining@cornell.edu](mailto:dining@cornell.edu).

## Early Arrival

Early accommodations for all graduate and professional residence areas may be available. Instructions about how to apply for early arrival will be included in the letter accompanying your contract. If you have any questions, contact the Housing and Dining Office at 607-255-5368 or [housing@cornell.edu](mailto:housing@cornell.edu).

## Off-Campus Housing

Over one-half of Cornell students live off campus, usually in single rooms or shared apartments. Many apartments are within walking distance of campus or on a bus line. Students who can afford to buy a car on arrival will have more options. Listings of off-campus accommodations are kept by the Off-Campus Housing Office and can be accessed at <http://campuslife.cornell.edu/campuslife/housing/off-campus-housing.cfm>.

Rent for single rooms in group households ranges from \$400-\$600 **per** month. Double rooms are slightly less per person. Rooms may or may not be furnished. Bathrooms and cooking facilities are usually shared.

Apartments are usually equipped with one or more bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room. Including utilities, one-

bedroom apartments cost on average \$600-\$900 **per** month, and two-bedroom apartments cost on average \$700-\$1,300 **monthly**.

Arrangements for off-campus housing can be difficult to make from outside Ithaca or by a third party, and those who arrive late will have fewer options. For optimal results, arrive in early or mid-August.

## Temporary Accommodations

A limited number of beds may be available for temporary housing, from **August 1-22, 2008**, for a daily fee payable upon arrival. Contact the Housing and Dining Office at 607-255-5368 or [housing@cornell.edu](mailto:housing@cornell.edu) to make arrangements. Temporary housing is available for registered students *only*, and friends, parents, or relatives cannot be accommodated. Temporary housing will be barracks-style, and reservations are required. Temporary housing will *not* be available for the spring semester.

If on-campus temporary housing for graduate students is full, you should be prepared to pay for hotel accommodations until you can move into your room or apartment. A list of overnight accommodations may be obtained from the Off-Campus Housing Office, Cornell University. For more information, check the Web site <http://campuslife.cornell.edu/campuslife/housing/off-campus-housing.cfm>. Room costs range from \$50-150 per night. There is no youth hostel in Ithaca.

Please be advised that lodging availability is extremely limited from August 1 to the beginning of the fall semester, so make your arrangements as soon as possible.

## A Word of Advice

Not all housing options mentioned here will be affordable for every graduate student. The cost of university housing can be spread out over the year, is usually closer to campus, and provides support services and programming. A group living situation off campus will usually be cheaper, but you must arrive early in order to have choices.

If finances are a concern, we recommend that you do not sign a housing contract (lease) until you are aware of all your housing options. Calculate carefully what you can realistically afford before making your decision. Heating costs may not be included in your rent and may be an added expense. Due to the climate this can be expensive. Remember that in the U.S., once signed, **a lease cannot be broken and the terms cannot be changed** for any reason. This is true of housing contracts with Cornell as well.

For more advice on housing, please see ISSO's Housing Guide at <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/ithacalife/housing.php>.

## Health Matters

Gannett Health Services is an accredited health-care facility right on campus that provides medical services, counseling, and health promotion services for all Cornell students. Student spouses, same sex

partners, and children over the age of fourteen also are eligible for medical care at Gannett.

Gannett health care providers (doctors, nurses, counselors, and others) understand how important your health and well-being are to your overall adjustment to life at Cornell and your academic pursuits. The staff is committed to treating each individual with respect, compassion, and sensitivity to your experience, values, and choices, so that the care you receive is well-suited to your needs.

They also recognize that getting used to a new environment, and learning about a health care system that is quite different from what you are accustomed to, may present challenges. Gannett provides special assistance to international students and others who are learning about accessing health care, paying for services, using health insurance, meeting requirements, and accessing specialty care. Gannett provides a free language translation service (with over 170 languages) to make communication during appointments easier for patients who desire it. Visit the Gannett Web site for a more complete introduction to Gannett. Be sure to look for the information developed specifically for international students and their families. You can find it at <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu>.

## Requirements

Every new student is required to satisfy a series of health requirements, including the provision of information about your personal and family health history and documentation of necessary immunizations. All of this information is gathered via Cornell's Health History Form, which can be completed online at <http://newstudents.cornell.edu>. The Health History Form is confidential. It provides Gannett with health information necessary to comply with state and federal laws, and to assure quality care for you while you are at Cornell. Your graduate or professional school at Cornell will mail you specific instructions for completing the Form, and information about your other health requirements soon after accepting their offer of admission.

Experience tells us it will take you some time to gather all of the information needed to complete this process, so start planning now. Immunization requirements include the following: getting vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella, and tetanus reviewing information about meningococcal disease in order to make an informed decision about whether or not to receive vaccination

Its likely you have already received most of the required vaccines, so you can ask your health care provider or your school to supply a copy of your official immunization records. If you do not have one or more of the required vaccinations, you need to get them. We encourage you to make an appointment with a health care provider in your home country to receive vaccinations before the due date (see below). If you wait until coming to campus, you will not be registered, and you will have to pay the (possibly more expensive) U.S. cost of the vaccines as well as a \$100 late fee.

Finally, Cornell requires that all international students, except those from Canada, be screened for TB at Gannett Health Services, or elsewhere in the U.S. within three weeks of arrival at Cornell. Be sure to make a plan to satisfy this requirement as you are settling in on

campus. Consider the trip to Gannett a good opportunity to learn more about health services at Cornell.

If you have questions about the Health History Form, immunizations and related costs, TB screening, deadlines, or services available at Gannett, please contact the Gannett Health Services Requirements Office (607) 255-4364 or (607) 255-6951, by e-mail at [immunization@cornell.edu](mailto:immunization@cornell.edu), or on the Web at <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu> (search: requirements).

## Health Records

Plan to bring copies of your health records (and the health records of any family members who are accompanying you). It is important that you keep these records with other important papers so they will be available if health needs arise. All records should be in English. If necessary, please have them translated before you come to Cornell.

### Postmark Deadlines for the Cornell Health History Form

- **Fall first-year students:**      **June 13, 2008**
- **Fall transfer students:**      **August 1, 2008**
- **Spring entrants:**      **December 19, 2008**

Upon receipt of the printed form, Gannett Health Services will review your Health History Form to make sure you have met all requirements. **If your form does not demonstrate full compliance with all requirements by August 15, 2008 (January 16, 2009 for spring entrants), you will not be registered and you will be charged a \$100 late fee.**

**Be sure to bring a copy** of your completed Health History Form with you when you come to Cornell. This way, if there has been a problem with international mail, you will be able to submit your copy with all the required signatures and fulfill your requirements before you register.

## Spouses, Partners, and Children

Gannett offers a wide range of services to students spouses, partners (of the same or different gender), and children over the age of 14. You will need to identify a pediatrician in the Ithaca area for any children under the age of 14. Our staff can help you locate a pediatrician. Be sure to plan for health insurance coverage for your dependents (see health insurance coverage below).

## Immunization Requirements for Children

If you are bringing children with you to Ithaca, please be aware that New York State has immunization requirements that must be met before a child may enter school or day care programs. Parents must bring written proof (in English) of a child's immunizations from a

health care provider or clinic at the time of school registration. Learn more about New York State's requirements at: <http://www.health.state.ny.us> (search school entry).

## Health Insurance Coverage

Due to the high cost of medical care, Cornell University policy requires every full-time registered student to have health insurance. Health care services are much more expensive in the U.S. than in most countries, and individuals are responsible for all of their own health care expenses. Parents are responsible for their child(ren)s medical expenses, including newborn hospital expenses, immunizations, and well child exams. It is essential that you have insurance that will provide adequate protection for you and your dependents in the event of illness or accident.

All graduate and professional students will be enrolled automatically in Cornell's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). This plan has been developed especially for Cornell University students, and provides access to convenient, high-quality health care that complements services offered on campus. Cornell's SHIP is an accident and sickness policy designed to:

- provide extensive coverage at a reasonable cost for most on- or off-campus medical care.
- guard against catastrophic expenses.
- cover pre-existing medical conditions.
- provide coverage 24 hours a day 365 days a year anywhere in the world from August 17, 2008 through August 16, 2009
- provide medical evacuation and repatriation coverage.
- provide optional dental and vision plans.
- provide convenient insurance assistance adjacent to the campus.
- meet or exceed all F-1 and J-1 visa requirements.

The Graduate School will pay the premium for all graduate students registered with the Graduate School who are receiving full tuition and a full stipend from or through Cornell.

All students registered with the Graduate School who are not receiving full tuition and a full stipend, and all students in the Law School, Johnson School of Management, and the College of Veterinary Medicine will be automatically enrolled in the SHIP. The charge for the SHIP premium (annual fee) will appear on your July bursar bill.

If you believe you have other insurance that meets all of Cornell's criteria for adequate health insurance, you may appeal the SHIP requirement. To meet Cornell's criteria another health insurance plan must:

1. be provided by a company licensed to do business in the United States, with a U.S. claim payment office and U.S. phone number
2. provide coverage in the Ithaca area for outpatient and inpatient medical care. (A policy that provides coverage in

the Ithaca area on an emergency care only basis does not meet this requirement.)

3. provide coverage in the Ithaca area for outpatient and inpatient mental health care.
4. have a maximum benefit of at least \$500,000 per year
5. remain in force as long as you are a registered student at Cornell
6. cover pre-existing conditions

We strongly encourage you to purchase Cornell's Student Health Insurance Plan for yourself, as well as for your eligible dependents (i.e., spouse/partner and child/ren).

This plan is considered an excellent value in the U.S. The SHIP premiums for 2008-09 are expected to be 5 to 10% higher than the following 2007-08 rates:

Student:	\$1,434
Spouse/same sex partner:	\$3,149
One or more children:	\$1,943
Optional Dental (student):	\$ 248
Optional Vision (student):	\$ 140

In early July, you will receive a mailing with detailed information about coverage, fees, dependent enrollment, deadlines, and the appeal process. This information will also be on the Web site of the Cornell University Office of Student Health Insurance: <http://www.studentinsurance.cornell.edu>. For more information, contact the office by e-mail at [sicu@cornell.edu](mailto:sicu@cornell.edu), or by phone at (607) 255-6363.

To understand more about health insurance in the United States, see <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu> (search: U.S. Health Care).

Students who are responsible for the premium have until September 30 to choose to pay in monthly installments (with a small service charge).

## Health Care Costs at Gannett

Many Gannett visits involve only a \$10 charge for enrolled students. Fees are charged for x-rays, lab analyses, medications, routine physicals, and other services, but many of these are covered by the Student Health Insurance Plan. Fees that are not covered by insurance can be paid for with cash, personal check, or credit card (VISA, MasterCard or Discovery); during the academic year, students can apply any charges to their bursar bills. If you are considering other insurance, be sure it provides the coverage you need for services at Gannett and those incurred at other health care facilities. If you have concerns about expenses related to medical or mental-health care, you can discuss them with a Gannett Billing Office staff member before or during a visit to Gannett.

## Dental Care

Dental and vision care in the U.S. can be costly, so we recommend that you access services (if they are available) before leaving your home country. Dental and vision care are not included in most health insurance plans, including the SHIP. However, those enrolled in the

Student Health Insurance Plan can purchase *optional* dental and/or vision plans.)

## **Dining**

Cornell Dining offers a number of meal plans designed to provide flexibility, variety, and plenty of healthy and satisfying dining options. From 7:00 AM to 1:00 AM, there will always be a place open on campus to grab a quick snack or hot meal. You don't have to be on a meal plan to enjoy the exceptional food from Cornell Dining. Cash, credit card, and the Cornell Card are accepted at all campus dining facilities. However, if you're seeking extra value and savings, enrolling in a meal plan is well worth it. Meal plan purchases are exempt from the New York sales tax. And, don't forget to check out City Bucks - a debit account that allows you to purchase meals at participating off-campus restaurants using your Cornell ID. The fee is charged to your bursar bill. Call Cornell Housing and Dining at 607-255-5368 or stop by Robert Purcell Community Center for more information and to enroll in a meal plan at <http://www.dining.cornell.edu>.

## **Adjusting to Life at Cornell**

### **Orientation Events**

At the beginning of each semester the University plans events to help acquaint new graduate students with Cornell and Ithaca. You should expect to attend orientation or welcome events sponsored by your specific graduate field or department, The Graduate School, and the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO).

The ISSO's fall orientation program for international graduate and professional students will take place the afternoon of Saturday, August 23. A detailed schedule of events will be available at the ISSO, and at the office of your graduate field coordinator, when you arrive at Cornell.

New international students starting in the Spring are invited to join our January 14, 2009 orientation program. Details will be provided when you check in at the International Students and Scholars Office.

### **Driving in the U.S.**

Many married students, especially those with children, have found owning a car helpful, but it can be quite expensive. Prices for used cars start at around \$2,000, depending on the type and age of the car. Additional yearly expenses include required accident insurance, safety inspection, and registration fees; parking fees for university family-housing tenants; and all operating and repair costs, which vary with the use and condition of the vehicle.

Because parking on campus is limited and expensive,

students are encouraged to walk, bicycle, or use the bus transit system when commuting to campus. For information about parking and transportation services at Cornell, please visit [http://www.parking.cornell.edu/tms3\\_gradoption.html](http://www.parking.cornell.edu/tms3_gradoption.html).

New York State honors all valid foreign licenses. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) recommends that you not apply for a New York State license unless you become a resident of New York.

If you plan to drive using your valid home country license, you MUST carry it with you when driving. If your license is not in English, you must also carry a certified English translation of your license when you drive. The ISSO can refer you to a certified translator for your language.

Despite the DMV's recommendation against applying for a NYS license, if you plan to purchase a car you may find it more practical to do so. For more information on applying for a NY State driver's license, please visit <http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/license.htm>.

## **Weather and Clothing**

Ithaca's summers are warm, and its winters are long and cold. There is frequent and abundant snowfall from November to mid-April. Winter (November through March) temperatures range from about 0° F to 38° F (-17° C to 3° C). Summer (June through September) temperatures average 68° F to 85° F (20° C to 29° C). A heavy winter coat, a raincoat, and a pair of comfortable waterproof walking shoes are necessities. Dress on campus is generally informal, though students in some programs may be required to dress in a more business-like manner. For more information on dressing warmly for winter weather, see <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/ithacalife/winter.php>.

## **English Language Courses**

For information on full-time programs in English as a Second Language, contact Cornell's School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions at 607 255-7259, or via e-mail at [culp@cornell.edu](mailto:culp@cornell.edu). Information can also be found at <http://www.sce.cornell.edu/exec/eiss/summer/index.php>. Non-intensive ESL courses are available for full-time degree students whose scores on the English Placement test, which is given every fall and spring, indicate a need for additional study. Spouses can take classes in English conversation from volunteers. For further details visit <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/ithacalife/english.php> or inquire at the ISSO once you arrive.

## International Student Organizations

Cornell University has many international and cultural groups that help incoming students. You can directly contact student organizations by visiting: <http://www.sao.cornell.edu/so/>.

## Spouse Employment

A person with F-2 status (a dependent of an F-1 student) is **not** permitted to earn money in any capacity. After arriving in the United States, people with J-2 status (dependents of a J-1 student) may apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work if they meet the requirements. Spouses with J-2 status who want to work while in the U.S. should consult the ISSO after their arrival. Employment opportunities in Ithaca are limited, so even if a spouse receives permission to work, he or she might not be able to find a satisfactory job.

## Child Care and Schooling

Public education is free of charge for children enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 12. The school year starts in early September and ends in late June. Children must be five, or turn five no later than December 1, to be able to enroll at the start of the school year. For information about enrolling your child in an Ithaca public school visit <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/parents/>. If you will live outside of the Ithaca City School District, you can find contact information for other area schools at <http://ithacanet.org/Education/>.

The law requires that young children not be left home alone or unattended. For child care options, including information about after school programs for children enrolled in public school, visit <http://www.daycarecouncil.org>.

The cost of full-day child care depends on the age of the child and ranges from \$100 to \$300 a week per child. Though parents are expected to pay for the costs of child care, some assistance may be available. Cornell University's Child Care Grant Subsidy Program for students, faculty and staff is designed to assist with covering the costs of eligible child care, including infant and toddler day care, pre-school/pre-k programs, school holidays, summer camps and programs, and before/after school care. For more information visit [www.ohr.cornell.edu/benefits/childcareGrant/index.html](http://www.ohr.cornell.edu/benefits/childcareGrant/index.html).

You can find a wealth of information for families on a variety of topics including child care, schooling and immunizations, counselling and support services, and much more, at <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/ithacalife/family.php> and <http://www.ohr.cornell.edu/workLife/childCare/index.html>.



## Useful Web Resources

ISSO:	<a href="http://www.isso.cornell.edu">http://www.isso.cornell.edu</a>
Cornell New Student site:	<a href="http://www.newstudents.cornell.edu/">http://www.newstudents.cornell.edu/</a>
Campus Life:	<a href="http://www.campuslife.cornell.edu">http://www.campuslife.cornell.edu</a>
University Health Services:	<a href="http://www.gannett.cornell.edu">http://www.gannett.cornell.edu</a>
Ithaca Info:	<a href="http://www.ci.ithaca.ny.us">http://www.ci.ithaca.ny.us</a>
Tompkins County Info:	<a href="http://www.co.tompkins.ny.us">http://www.co.tompkins.ny.us</a>
U.S. Embassies & Consulates:	<a href="http://usembassy.gov">http://usembassy.gov</a>
U.S. Department of State:	<a href="http://travel.state.gov">http://travel.state.gov</a>
U.S. Customs:	<a href="http://www.customs.ustreas.gov">http://www.customs.ustreas.gov</a>

### A Quick Guide to Making Phone Calls in the U.S.:

All U.S. telephone numbers have 10 digits: a 3-digit long distance area code, plus a 7-digit local telephone number. Each state has at least one area code; some states, including New York, have more than one. You can always Dial "0" to receive assistance from a telephone operator.

**Public pay phones** are located in many places. To make a phone call using a pay phone, you will need coins, a pre-paid calling card, or a calling card provided by a phone company. If you are using a calling card, follow the instructions on the card. If using coins: to make a **local call** insert the indicated amount of money and dial the 7-digit local number. To make a **long distance call**, dial 1 plus the 3-digit area code plus the 7-digit number. An automated operator will tell you how much money to insert. To place an overseas call, first dial "011" then the country code and number you are calling.

Continuous short buzzes (busy signal) indicate that the telephone that you are calling is engaged.

## Pre-Departure Checklist

**Make sure to have these documents in your carry-on luggage before departing for the U.S.**

- Passport with appropriate travel visa (except Canadians)
- Student visa certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Proof of financial support for entire course of study
- Sufficient funds in U.S. dollars to cover tuition, expenses, settling-in costs for the first semester.
- Medical records including a record of immunizations (in English); evidence of adequate insurance coverage (if you are already insured.)
- Valid home country driver's license *and* a current International Driving Permit (if you plan to drive in the U.S.)

**Remember, you MUST check in at the ISSO with your visa documents no more than 30 days after the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019!**