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**International Students**

**Handbook**

## **Welcome to SUNY Canton**

### **Letter from the Director**

We are happy to know you have been offered admission to the State University of New York, College of Technology at Canton. It is challenging to begin life in a new and unfamiliar community in a culture other than your own. This brochure is intended to help you understand and plan for the most significant issues you will face during this period of transition. We hope you will read it carefully and use it to plan ahead.

The Office of International Programs is the primary contact office for all international students at SUNY Canton. Our staff has experience in the issues international students face and are prepared to help you with issues both big and small. We invite you to contact us at any time we can be of assistance to you. Our website provides comprehensive information that will be useful to you throughout your stay on campus. We urge you to refer to it often at:

<http://www.canton.edu/international/>

Best wishes for a safe trip to Canton,

*Marela Fiacco* Director

Office of International Programs

34 Cornell Dr

Canton, NY 13617

Phone: (315) 386-7608

fiacom@canton.edu

[www.canton.edu/international](http://www.canton.edu/international)

# Preparing for Travel

## Required Documents

Entry to the United States requires a valid passport, a certificate of eligibility, and a valid United States visa stamp. Upon entry, you will also be given an I-94 card.

**Passport:** Your passport, issued by your country of citizenship, should be kept valid at least six months into the future. To obtain or renew your passport, contact your home government authorities.

**Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019):** This immigration document corresponds to the immigration status you will use to enter the US. An I-20 is used to apply for an F-1 visa. A DS-2019 is used to apply for a J-1 exchange visitor visa. If you have dependents (spouse or children) traveling with you, they should also have an I-20 or DS-2019 to apply for an F-2 or J-2 visa stamp.

**U.S. Visa Stamp and SEVIS Fee:** If you are coming to SUNY Canton from outside the United States, you will need to obtain a visa stamp from a U.S. consulate or embassy in order to be admitted to the United States. Students and exchange visitors seeking an F-1 or J-1 visa will need to pay a SEVIS fee of \$200 prior to visa issuance. For more information on how to pay the fee, please consult the consulate or embassy or visit: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). Once your SEVIS fee has been paid, take your passport and apply for your visa (F-1 student visa if you have an I-20 or a J-1 exchange visitor visa if you have a DS-2019) at the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. In addition to your passport and either the I-20 or DS-2019, the visa officer will ask for documents verifying your financial resources, your letter of acceptance from the Office of Admissions at SUNY Canton, and passport-type photographs. It is best to check the website of the U.S. consulate nearest to you to verify what is required for a visa stamp: <http://usembassy.state.gov>.

Canadian citizens are exempt from the U.S. visa stamp requirements. At the port of entry, Canadian citizens will need to present their I-20 or DS-2019 along with proof of payment of the SEVIS fee and adequate financial support to study in the U.S. If you are a Canadian landed immigrant entering the United States, you are required to obtain a U.S. visa stamp. Please contact the U.S. consulate in your area for more information.

The visa is the most commonly misunderstood immigration document. It is a stamp that the United States consulate or embassy gives foreign nationals in their passports and which they must have to enter the United States in the particular classification requested (J-1 or F-1). The validity of a visa stamp pertains only to the period during which it may be used for entry into the United States. It does not indicate how long you may stay in the United States. F and J visitors may remain in the United States with an expired visa stamp as long as their certificate of eligibility is valid and the proper immigration status is indicated on the I-94 card and while in the US they maintain their status. On the visa stamp, there is also an indication of the number of entries permitted, usually one, two, or M (for multiple).

If a student or scholar uses up his or her entries and wishes to enter the United States again during the same validity period, he or she must obtain a new visa.

**Entry to the United States:** According to United States immigration regulations, F-1 and J-1 international students are **not** allowed to enter the United States earlier than **30 days** prior to the program start date listed on the I-20 or DS-2019.

**Form I-94:** You will obtain an I-94 card at the time of your entry into the United States. You should keep this card in your passport during your stay here. This is a very important document as it indicates the visa classification you are given upon entry to the United States and the length of time you may stay. It is your proof of legal entry into the United States. You will need to show the document at the SEVIS check in over at SUNY Canton. Please make sure you fill out the form I-94 correctly at the port of entry.

**Foreign Embassies:** If you need information on how to contact your country's embassy or consulate in the United States, please visit: <http://www.embassy.org/embassies/>

**Transfer Students:** If you are now attending a school in the United States and plan to transfer your visa status to SUNY Canton, you should check with the International Office at your current institution for the proper transfer procedure for notifying the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of your change in schools.

**What to Wear:** The weather in Canton is quite variable. From September to May, temperatures range from -15° F to 80° F (-26° C to 26° C) with both rain and snow. In the summer, temperatures range from 70° F to 90° F (21° C to 32° C). It is mostly warm (often hot and humid), with generally clear skies. You will need both lightweight clothing and warm winter clothes in addition to an umbrella and raincoat. Of course, clothing for all types of weather is available in Canton stores, but you may find it expensive.

**What to Pack:** As you prepare for your trip, keep in mind that rooms in the residence halls are generally small. In order not to crowd your room (and possibly your roommate) and to avoid excess baggage charges, bring only essentials with you. Our current international students say they consider the following items most important:

- Frequently used and favorite books
- Educational instruments and supplies (calculators, paint brushes, etc.)
- Spare eye glasses or contact lenses
- Adequate clothing (including national dress for special occasions)
- Pictures, artifacts, and other items typical of your country.

**How to Ship Your Belongings:** If you want to ship items from overseas, you should know that all shipped items must be cleared through U.S. customs at a U.S. port of entry. You can arrange to have a freight-forwarding company or customs broker take your baggage through the customs inspection and forward them to Canton, or you can take them through inspection yourself at the airport.

**Canceling Your Plans:** If your plans change and you cannot attend SUNY Canton or if you have to defer your enrollment to a different semester, please contact the Office of Admissions at (315) 386-7123 or [admissions@canton.edu](mailto:admissions@canton.edu)

## **Your Arrival in Canton**

### **Making your Travel Plans to SUNY Canton**

Inform us of your travel plans. Please e-mail [fiacom@canton.edu](mailto:fiacom@canton.edu) with your travel arrangements. Feel free to contact us if you need any clarification or travel suggestions.

### **When should I arrive & what should I do when I reach the SUNY Canton campus?**

To get specific dates of when you should arrive on campus for the spring and fall semester of next year & the procedure to follow for your arrival on campus, visit the page:

**[http://www.canton.edu/international/pdf/Orientation\\_Fall09.pdf](http://www.canton.edu/international/pdf/Orientation_Fall09.pdf)**

Please note: If you arrive earlier than we suggest for orientation, you will be responsible for arranging your own housing and meals until the residence halls open.

### **Getting to SUNY Canton**

Currently we provide airport pick up only on the day before the start of the orientation. If you do not arrive on day of pick up, there is no airport pickup. Students must travel by car, bus, or taxi to Canton, NY. Taxi service is not recommended. Please see recommended bus information below.

The best way to reach Canton, New York is to fly to Syracuse, New York, which has good connections from New York City, and then take a bus to Canton (see schedules & pricing below). New York City is approximately a 7 hour drive to Canton, while Syracuse is only about 3 hours. While Montreal and Ottawa are somewhat closer, there is no public transportation across the border, and you might also have visa difficulties entering Canada.

### **Traveling by Bus to SUNY Canton**

If you have asked to be met at the bus station, stay on the bus until it reaches the bus station.

The Trailways Bus service runs two buses each day from Syracuse airport to Canton. The boarding location is in front of the main entrance to Syracuse Airport. The schedule is seven days a week. There is no Trailways bus agent in the airport, but you can buy your ticket when you board the bus.

## **The Village of Canton**

Canton, New York is as diverse as its four seasons. Along the picturesque Grasse River, Canton is situated between the Adirondack foothills and the St. Lawrence River Valley. Its rural environment and temperate climate offers a great range of outdoor settings from the colorful blossoms of spring, to gloriously warm summer days, some of the world's most colorful autumn foliage, and crisp cold winters. Located in central St. Lawrence County, Canton is home to the county seat, St. Lawrence University, Canton Technical College, Corning Glass, Kraft Foods, Victorian architecture, and numerous shops and small businesses. Within the town of Canton are the villages of Canton and Rensselaer Falls and the hamlets of Morley and Pyrites. While pronounced differently, Canton (Can'-tun) was named for Canton, China. The town's name was designated by New York State land commissioners at a meeting in New York City in 1787 and is believed to be related to the Colonial trade routes that were opened to the Orient. Among Canton's most notable and historic citizens are former New York Governor Silas Wright and renowned sculptor-artist Frederic Remington. Visit Canton homepage at: [www.canton.ny.us](http://www.canton.ny.us)

## **Orientation**

The international student orientation is a special program for you. It takes place before the fall and spring semester. International students have found the orientation program to be valuable for making new friends as well as understanding the academic requirements and support services available at SUNY Canton. Students will also receive important immigration information that will help them maintain legal status while they are in the United States. We urge you to participate in the orientation. Many current SUNY Canton students serve as orientation volunteers and assist with introductions to the campus and community. The orientation program also gives you a good opportunity to become acquainted with some of the students and staff with whom you will associate during your stay here. If you will be living in University housing, we recommend that you bring a sheet, pillow case, pillow, blanket and towel with you for your first few days. Additional bedding may be purchased after your arrival.

## **Reporting to Office of International Programs**

After you arrive in Canton, you must check in with OII. This process usually takes place during orientation. If you fail to attend orientation, make sure you check in at the OII within 15 days of your arrival. Bring the following documents with you:

- Passport
- I-94 Card
- I-20 (for F-1 visa-holders)
- DS-2019 (for J-1 visa-holders)

SUNY Canton is required to check those documents to confirm your status in the United States. Failure to do so could result in loss of your legal status in the United States.

## **Advising and Registration**

Advising on course selection, graduation requirements, and registration is done by academic advisors. Students and with declared majors will have an academic advisor assigned to them. Students who have not declared a major can obtain academic advising from staff in the Student Academic Advising Office [www.canton.edu/advising\\_center](http://www.canton.edu/advising_center)

## Driving in New York

If you plan to drive a car in New York, you should possess a valid NY State driver's license. The NYS Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) provides eligible persons in NYS with documents necessary to legally drive a car in New York State, and identity documents.

International students are allowed to drive in New York State using their home country driver's license and an International Driving Permit if your home country license is not in English. You may also wish to apply at the NYS DMV for a NYS Learner's Permit or a NYS Driver's License. To apply for a NYS ID Card you need to bring the following documents with you to the NYS DMV:

- A Letter of Certification prepared for you by the Office of International Programs. This letter will confirm your valid visa status and enrollment in full-time study at SUNY Canton.
- Your immigration documents , I-20 (you will need the one with the most recent entry stamp, if you have a document issued after your most recent entry, you need both documents) visa and passport, and I-94 card.

**Please note:** At the time of your application, your I-20 must be issued for a minimum of 1 academic year, and 6 months must remain before the program completion date

- Your name must be presented in the same way on all of your identifying documents. The name on your immigration papers, Social Security card, and other documents must match.
- US Social Security card or a Letter of Ineligibility from the Social Security Administration.
- Additional proof of identity to meet the 6 points of identity required by NYS DMV (see the information available on the NYS DMV website to learn more about acceptable proofs of identity).
- NYS DMV application for the NYS Learner's Permit or NYS Driver's License.

If you have applied for OPT, you need to have received your EAD card to apply for a new driver's license. Your OPT I-20 must also have a minimum of 6 months left before the end of your OPT authorization.

All persons in F visa status must go to the Canton office of the NYS DMV. The office is located in Canton at 80 State Highway 310 - Suite 3. You can check on office hours by calling 315-386-1408 or 315-386-1409. Remember office hours may change so be sure to check for the hours during the week you plan to visit the DMV office. It is against the law to drive a motor vehicle that is not registered, or not covered by auto insurance to the NYS DMV office. The NYS DMV has the legal authority to seize your vehicle and impound it (keep it). You will be ticketed for a violation of the law and you may also be fined.

For more information visit: [www.nydmv.state.ny.us](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us)

## **Financial Information**

It is very important that you carefully plan your budget to meet all your anticipated educational and living expenses. The first few weeks in a new community can be the most expensive period of your stay in the United States. A number of items must be purchased and several one-time deposits are due at the start of the academic year. We recommend that you bring sufficient funds for immediate expenses. For your own protection, do not bring cash. Bring traveler's checks in U.S. dollars as they can be purchased at most banks around the world. If you bring a bank draft from your country to open an account in a local bank, you may not withdraw funds from the account until the check has been approved for collection. Since this process generally takes about 10 to 15 days, do not rely upon a bank draft for immediate cash. If you have money wired directly from your home bank to a Canton bank, you may draw upon it immediately after establishing an account. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are located on campus and throughout the community. You may be able to use your own bank card in these ATMs but we recommend that you check with your home bank, including the possibility of additional charges.

## **Housing**

Students admitted to SUNY Canton are eligible to live in university residence halls. To pursue housing at SUNY you must submit the appropriate application along with the application fee. Housing and food service information was sent to you with the admissions package.

### **What are the Housing Options?**

At SUNY Canton, we do our best to make your "home away from home" experience a pleasant one. We have many different lifestyle and housing options to choose from.

#### **On-Campus Housing Options:**

Traditional Wing-The three floors of students housed in these wings are of the same gender. Note: this is one wing of a residence hall; the residence hall as a whole will house both males and females.

Traditional Floor-These floors will house students of the same gender; however, other floors in the wing will probably be co-ed or some other lifestyle.

Co-Ed Wing/Floor-A co-ed wing features alternating floors of male/female rooms. Co-ed floors feature alternating male/female rooms with single sex bathrooms. Co-ed is not synonymous with cohabitation. The latter is prohibited by College policy.

Intensive Quiet Atmosphere-Quiet hours are continually in effect Sunday through Thursday with a break from 4-8 PM; Friday and Saturday break from 4 PM- midnight. Stereos and TVs may be utilized at reasonable levels of volume. Students are asked to keep their doors closed when using stereos and TVs so as not to disturb others.

Suites-Private -- apartment-like living with a living room, bathroom and two bedrooms. Four students share these suites at an additional cost per semester and they will have to care for their own bathrooms. Suite space is very limited.

Rooms With Enclosed Bath-These rooms will offer students additional privacy with external doors on the hallway, giving you a shared private bathroom (three rooms will share a bathroom). Students living in these rooms will have to care for their own bathroom.

If you are an International student who wishes to learn from and interact with students from other counties, choose this living arrangement. This community is designed to celebrate the differences of our diverse campus community.

Community Wing-This wing is designated for those who wish to live in an atmosphere that encourages "independent living." Students who live in this wing will have no direct supervision from professional staff members, but will have a self-governing body that will develop rules and regulations for the wing. This wing is part of a residence hall, but only the members of the wing (as well as staff personnel) will have card access to enter it. Only students who are 21 years of age or older or who have lived in the residence halls at SUNY Canton for three semesters or more are permitted to live in this wing. Alcohol Free-Living facilities are provided which have a total ban of alcohol use. Every effort will be made to provide an alcohol-free environment for those students that request it. In this area, students who are over 21 will not be allowed to possess alcohol. In other areas residents who are legal age can have limited amounts of alcohol in their room if their roommate is also legal age and it is mutually acceptable.

The "Go Green! Environmental Awareness" Floor-This floor will be a place for those students who want to congregate with fellow students interested in environmental issues in both the campus community and beyond. Students on this floor will become involved in efforts to help create a more "green" campus. They will work together to discuss topics at large concerning environmental issues and ways we can work together at SUNY Canton to promote an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

We begin assigning housing to students in June, at which point we begin with the cards which were received the earliest (some cards arrive as early as November!).

Housing assignments are given out at summer orientation. For those who do not attend orientation, you will receive your housing assignment in the mail in August.

We suggest you contact your roommate(s) before the start of school, not only to get to know one another, but also to figure out what to bring with you!

## **What If I Am Not Planning To Live On Campus?**

At SUNY Canton, we have a mandatory housing policy. This means that unless you meet specific criteria, you will be required to live on campus. The following are exemptions from the mandatory housing policy:

1. You are married
2. You are a single parent
3. You are living with a parent/guardian during the academic year
4. You are residing in SUNY Canton College approved Greek Housing for the academic year
5. You are a part time student (plan to enroll for less than 12 credit hours)
6. You are a Junior or Senior enrolled in a Bachelor's Degree program

Even if you meet one of these exemptions, you still must fill out a Housing Release Request Card, which can be found on the back of the Housing Card located in the Housing Options/Meal Plan Guide booklet in your Admissions packet. The Director of Housing reviews all release requests and will notify you whether or not you are released.

This means that you will not be automatically released for the above reasons once you sign a housing license, as it is a binding agreement. Your release will be considered by the Director of Housing, and you will be notified as to the decision. For more information contact SUNY Canton Residence Life Office at: (315)-386-7513 or e-mail: [reslife@canton.edu](mailto:reslife@canton.edu) or visit: [www.canton.edu/residence\\_life/options.html](http://www.canton.edu/residence_life/options.html)

## **Temporary Accommodations for Early Arrivals**

Temporary accommodation may be available if you arrive on campus before the residence halls open. For more information, please contact the Residence Life Office at: (315)-386-7513

## **Roo Express Account**

A Roo Express account is also designed with the commuting student, faculty or staff member in mind. You choose your opening balance, and add-on additional amounts as needed. It's your on-campus 'debit' card. It can be used at any food service location, the Campus Store, or vending machines. Add money to your Roo Express Account at the College Association, Inc. Office, Rm 224, Miller Campus Center between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Cash, checks, credit cards and debit cards carrying a credit card logo accepted. Simplify your credit card add-on's by calling 315-386-7624....no need to come to the office! Make checks payable to College Association, Inc. and mail to College Association, attn: Bette Orologio, Rm 224 Miller Campus Center, SUNY Canton, 34 Cornell Dr., Canton, NY 13617.

The Roo Express credit received with a meal plan is not refundable. We encourage you to add additional amounts to your Roo Express account for your convenience. Additional amounts (non-meal plan related) can be transferred from semester to semester and are available for refund at the end of the academic year or upon your withdrawal from college. However, balances under \$10 will not be refunded.

## **Residence Life Meal Plans**

As a residential campus, the College requires that all students living in a residence hall participate in a meal plan. College Association's Dining Services offers three meal plan options. All three of the plans include a Roo Express declining balance account, which can be used at the Campus Store, eateries, and vending machines.

## **Employment**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has strict regulations about the employment of international students. Students holding F-1 visas are allowed to work on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the school year and more than 20 hours a week during vacation periods. Current U.S. immigration rules require prior authorization by OII for off-campus employment in your field of study. Students on J-1 visas must also have authorization from OII to work either on or off campus. Family dependents of students holding F-1 visas are not allowed to work under any circumstances. Family dependents of students who hold J-1 visas may apply to the DHS for permission to work. Please consult with OII with any questions.

## **Health Care and Insurance**

A complete overview of health care and insurance information may be found at: [www.canton.edu/health\\_center/insurance.html](http://www.canton.edu/health_center/insurance.html)

**Health Care** SUNY Canton Davis Health Center provides health care and education utilizing the leading health indicators outlined in American College Health's Healthy Campus 2010. Promote healthy lifestyle choices that will enhance students' well-being during their lifetimes. Provide education and support to students as to available services and how to access and utilize health care services on campus and beyond. Demonstrate our commitment to quality health care by achieving national accreditation by the Accreditation association for Ambulatory Health Care.

Health services are available during the academic year to all currently registered students who pay the student health fee. All information in the student's medical record is confidential and access to these records is restricted to Health Center personnel only. Medical information is released only upon a student's written request or upon court-ordered subpoena.

**Students with Disabilities** SUNY Canton provides accommodation to students with documented disabilities for access to university programs, activities, and services. If you have a disability and need accommodations, contact the Office of Accommodative Services at (315) 386-7392 or email the Accommodative Services Director at: [leev@canton.edu](mailto:leev@canton.edu) Regardless of the instructional delivery system, SUNY Canton is committed to providing reasonable accommodative services.

## **Information for Families**

**Public School Information** All children in New York State between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school by law. Children may begin attending public Kindergarten at age 5. Public schools are free of cost and books and supplies are provided. Children younger than age 5 may attend preschool. To enroll your child in public school, you must provide information about your child's health, including immunization records. By law, the school must have an immunization record in English for each student. If such a record does not exist for your child or is inadequate,

you will be asked to have the child immunized before he or she attends school. The school may also request that your child have a physical exam prior to enrollment. In addition, please be prepared to show your child's birth certificate, prior school records (if any) and/or passport. Each school district is required by law to provide free and appropriate education for all children. If you have a child who is handicapped or who needs special consideration, contact the Canton Central School District at (315) 386-8561 x264 or: [www.ccsdk12.org](http://www.ccsdk12.org) Special Education office will find the right program for your child and provide whatever help he or she needs. Education is the right of every child.

## **Useful Web Resources**

### **SUNY Canton CONTACTS**

#### **Academic Advising**

[www.canton.edu/advising\\_center](http://www.canton.edu/advising_center)

#### **Admissions & Scholarships**

[www.canton.edu/admissions](http://www.canton.edu/admissions)

#### **Disability Services**

[www.canton.edu/accommodative\\_services](http://www.canton.edu/accommodative_services)

#### **International Initiatives**

[www.canton.edu/international](http://www.canton.edu/international)

#### **Office of the Registrar**

[www.canton.edu/registrar](http://www.canton.edu/registrar)

#### **Davis Health Center**

[www.canton.edu/health\\_center](http://www.canton.edu/health_center)

#### **Student Services**

[www.canton.edu/fin\\_aid](http://www.canton.edu/fin_aid)

#### **University Housing**

[www.canton.edu/residence\\_life](http://www.canton.edu/residence_life)

### **LODGING**

#### **Comfort Suites Canton**

[www.comfortsuites.com](http://www.comfortsuites.com)

#### **Best Western University Inn**

[www.bestwestern.com](http://www.bestwestern.com)

### **TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Adirondack Trailways Bus Services**

[www.trailwaysny.com](http://www.trailwaysny.com)

## **Are You Ready?**

We hope this brochure has helped you plan your trip to the United States. If you have additional questions, you can email or call us at the International Students and Scholars office. We will be glad to answer any further questions when you arrive. Have a safe and pleasant trip and we look forward to meeting you.

## **Departure Checklist**

- Valid passport
- Valid travel visa (Canadian citizens exempt)
- Certificate of eligibility (form I-20 or DS-2019)
- Proof of financial support for course of study
- Sufficient funds in U.S. dollars to cover tuition, expenses, and settling-in costs for the first semester for you and family members accompanying you
- Medical records including record of immunizations (in English); evidence of adequate insurance coverage (if you or your dependents are already insured)
- Valid driver's license and certified English translation (if you plan to drive in the U.S.)
- Housing arrangements, including a place to stay the night of your arrival if on-campus housing is not open
- Transportation from airport to campus
- Setup your MSU email account
- Review dates for the international student orientation and make plans to attend