Cuyahoga Community College

Welcome

International Student

Welcome to Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®).
Tri-C is an innovative and inclusive learning community dedicated to your success and completion. We are delighted that you have selected our college as the place to continue your education and career development. Our faculty, staff and administrators are proud to offer "one door with many options" to assist you in reaching your educational goals.

Tri-C is one of the largest colleges in Ohio, and the largest in northeast Ohio. Tri-C has four campuses in downtown Cleveland, Parma, Highland Hills and Westlake, as well as two Corporate College® sites in Westlake and Warrensville Heights. Other facilities include Brunswick University Center in Brunswick and the Unified Technologies Center, adjacent to the Metropolitan Campus.

MAP NOT TO SCALE

LAKE ERIE

NORTH

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT CENTER AT PUBLIC SQUARE

METROPOLITAN CAMPUS

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CENTER

UNIFIED TECHNOLOGIES CENTER

JERRY SUE THORNTON CENTER

WESTSHORE CAMPUS

CORPORATE COLLEGE® WEST

EASTERN CAMPUS

CORPORATE COLLEGE® EAST

WESTERN CAMPUS

BRUNSWICK UNIVERSITY CENTER
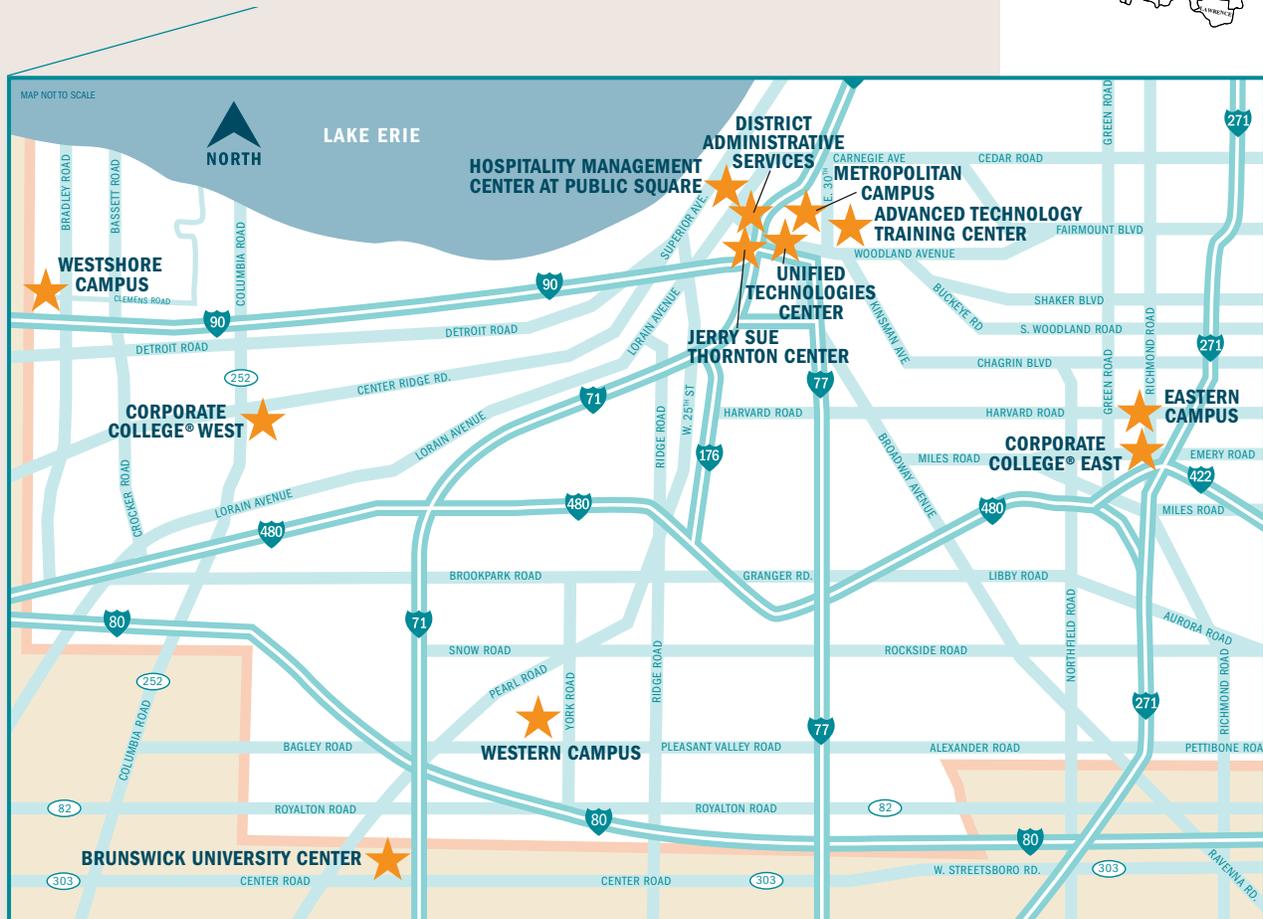
PREPARING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL AS AN F1 STUDENT

Once admitted to Cuyahoga Community College, you will receive a Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status (Form I-20 for F-1 students). Make sure to read page 3 of the form before signing at the bottom of the first page. By signing the I-20, you are agreeing to follow the guidelines, so it is important that you read and understand them.

Follow your U.S. embassy/consulate's instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. A list of U.S. consulates is available at **usembassy.state.gov**. You may apply for your visa up to 120 days prior to your start date. Please check the U.S. embassy website for information on how to schedule your appointment.

PAYING THE SEVIS I-901 FEE

All F-1 visa/status applicants are required to pay a one-time fee to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The fee covers the administration and maintenance costs of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). You can pay the SEVIS fee online at **www.fmjfee.com** and receive a printable confirmation receipt.

The SEVIS fee must be paid after your I-20 is issued and at least three business days prior to applying for your visa. We recommend paying online, as it is the quickest way to process SEVIS fee payments.

Bring the following documentation to your visa interview:

- Form I-20
- The confirmation page of the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-160)
- Passport valid for at least six months after you plan to enter the United States
- One two-by-two-inch photo of yourself
- Receipt for your $160 visa application fee payment
- Receipt for your SEVIS fee payment
- Admissions letter from Cuyahoga Community College
- Financial documents

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR VISA INTERVIEW

Ties to Your Home Country

Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States.

Know the Academic Program and How it Fits Your Career Plans

If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular academic program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U. S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

Be Brief

Consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview.

Consequently, the initial impression you create and what you say first are critical to your success. It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be read quickly or evaluated. Remember that the interview time is typically less than ten minutes.

Eligibility for Employment

Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not to find employment. While a number of students do work over the course of their studies, such employment requires authorization and is incidental to the main purpose of completing their U.S. education.

Maintain a Positive Attitude

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, request an explanation in writing and ask the officer for a list of documents to bring in order to overcome the denial.

Websites for Additional Information

U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs: **www.travel.state.gov**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Study in the States: **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students**

Education USA: Your Guide to Higher Education in the United States: **https://educationusa.state.gov**

Student Process Steps: How to Navigate the U.S. Immigration System: **www.ice.gov/sevis/students**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – General Immigration Services: **www.uscis.gov**

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT TRI-C

All students who are new to F-1 visa status are required to attend a student orientation program. During this session, you will receive information about beginning your studies at Tri-C. Check with the special student services coordinator at your campus of choice about the date and time of the mandatory orientation.

When you meet with your special student services coordinator, bring your passport, Form I-20 and I-94 documentation, available at **https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/**.

Be prepared to provide the College with updated personal information, such as local address, phone, email, emergency contact and academic major.

Placement Testing

You will be required to take placement testing in the Assessment and Testing Center at the college before registering for classes.

Students beginning language training

If you are enrolling in the Language Training program to begin your studies in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, you will need to take the ACCUPLACER placement exam. This will determine the level of ESL classes appropriate to your skill level. Four levels of college-credit ESL courses are offered: basic, high beginning, intermediate and advanced – in grammar, reading and writing, and speaking and listening comprehension.

Students beginning an Associate degree program

If you have provided English proficiency scores that satisfy the requirement to enroll in the academic program, you will be required to take additional testing at the college for placement purposes. These tests are designed to assess your level in Math and English. For more information regarding the placement tests, visit **www.tri-c.edu/placementtesting**.

Registering for Classes

After you take the appropriate Tri-C placement exams and meet with an academic advisor if applicable, you will be ready to register for classes. You may register online through my Tri-C space or in person at your campus enrollment center.

My Tri-C space is a secure portal that provides a point of access to resources students use on a regular basis. It includes links to registration, grades, announcements, campus news, group activities and much more.

You will also be assigned a Tri-C email account, accessible through *my Tri-C space*. Your Tri-C student email account is the official and primary communication method between the College and its students.

Instructions to log into *my Tri-C space*:

1. Go to **https://my.tri-c.edu**
2. Click on **"Change Your Password"**
3. Enter Tri-C ID number than click **"continue"**
4. Enter your **birth date (mm/dd/yyyy)** as your old password
5. Create a **new password** (at least 8 characters) containing a combination of letters and numbers
6. Re-enter **new password** then click **"Change"**
7. You will be redirected to *my Tri-C space*, secure access log in
8. Login to *my Tri-C space* using you **Tri-C ID number** and **new password**

Housing

Because Tri-C is a commuter school, it does not offer on-campus housing. If you are interested in seeing what is available for rent in the Cleveland area, you can access local rental listings online at **http://realestate.cleveland.com/for-rent**.

Expect to spend a minimum of $500-800 per month for rent if you live by yourself. Landlords generally require a security deposit, equivalent to one month's rent. They will also require you to sign a lease. A lease is a legally binding agreement set for a specific amount of time; if you move in the middle of the lease agreement, you will be obligated to pay the rent for the rest of the lease term unless otherwise specified.

Transportation

The public transportation system in Cleveland is the Regional Transit Authority (RTA). Cuyahoga Community College is pleased to support the RTA Student U-Pass program. U-Pass, which is short for "Universal Pass," allows students to ride free of charge on all Greater Cleveland RTA buses and rapid trains during specific academic semesters. All eligible students enrolled for the fall or spring semesters will receive their U-Pass via U.S. Mail to the address on file with the College registrar's office once enrollment is confirmed.

Enrolled students will receive a new U-Pass each semester. Once received, place the U-Pass sticker on your student ID card (My Tri-C Card) in the middle of the card underneath your student number. Visit **http://www.riderta.com/** for the most current schedules and information.

Planning Your Finances

Getting yourself established in a new city can be expensive. You will have to pay deposits for your apartment, telephone, electric and heat utilities.
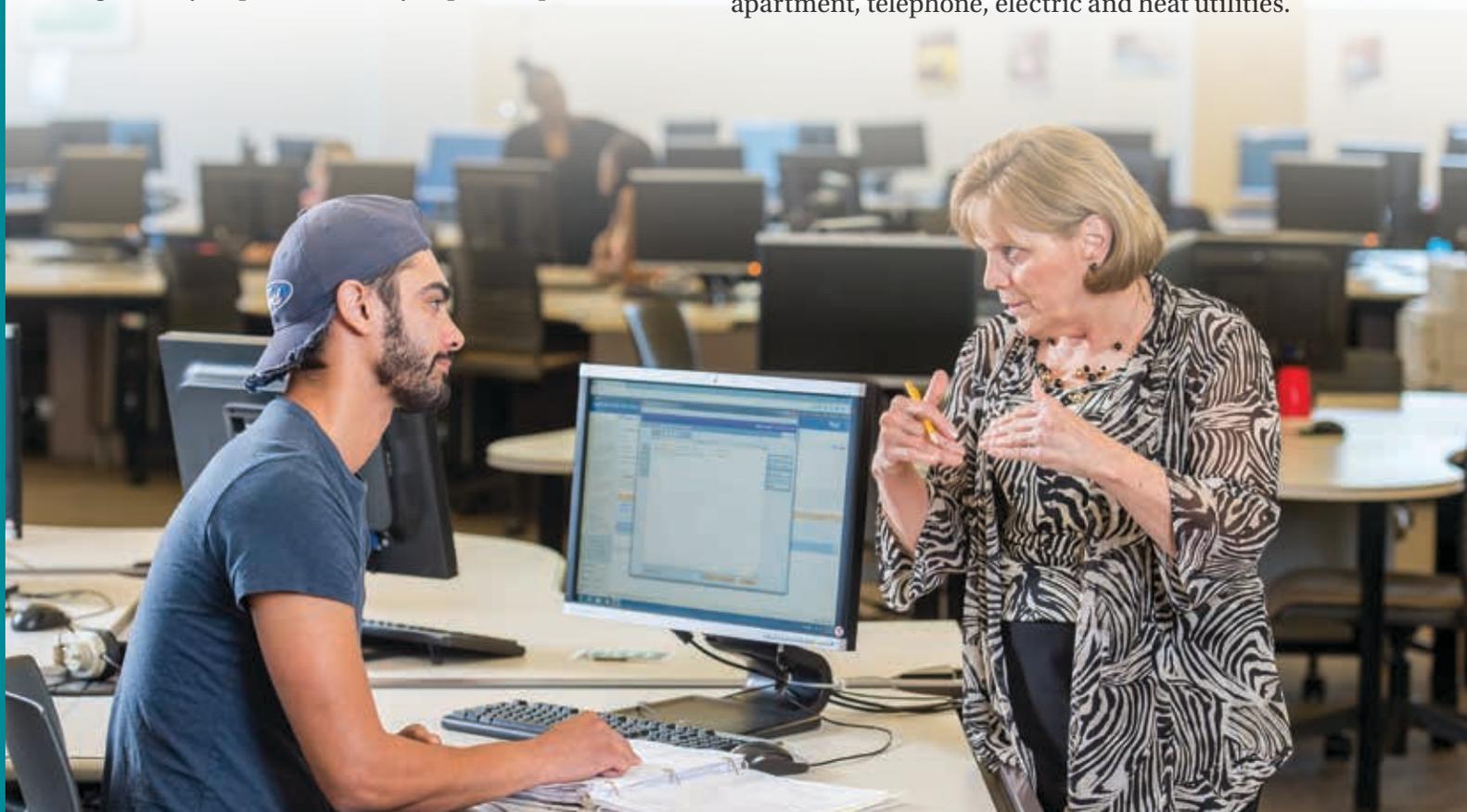
You will need to purchase food, cooking utensils and items for your living quarters. Plan to come to Cleveland with a minimum of $16,945 for initial living expenses per year. This amount is in addition to $6,650.00 for fall and spring tuition.

Bring only a small amount of your money in cash. It is far safer to get traveler's checks or a bank draft for most of your money. Bring only enough cash to get you through the first two weeks.

Banking

When you open a bank account, you will receive a checkbook and an ATM (automated teller machine) card, which allows you to withdraw cash from your account 24 hours a day. Without an SSN, you will be ineligible for credit cards or check cards.

Americans usually write checks for big purchases rather than paying cash. When opening your bank account, you'll be given a checkbook. Using a checkbook to pay your expenses helps you keep track of payments.

Most banks in the area offer special student accounts with minimal to no monthly charges. Be sure to ask questions about student accounts and the stipulations for international students when you visit the bank.

To open a bank account, you must bring your passport, Form I-20 and Tri-C student ID card.

Local financial institutions:

Citizens Bank: **www.citizensbank.com**

PNC: **www.pnc.com**

Huntington National Bank: **www.huntington.com**

KeyBank: **www.key.com**

Tuition Payments

DO NOT PAY FOR ANYTHING UNTIL YOU ARRIVE AT TRI-C. Please be aware that since your tuition payment is due at the time that you register for classes, you must be prepared to make the first semester's tuition payment upon arrival.

Be prepared to pay $3,505 for your first semester. This covers 12 credit hours – the minimum number of credit hours you are required to register for as an F-1 visa holder. Payment may be made in cash (U.S.), bank check or money order at the campus enrollment center. You may also choose to pay by credit card through my Tri-C space. There is a service fee of 2.25 percent for credit card payments. If your embassy will be paying your tuition, an official Financial Agreement describing the terms of your scholarship may be accepted in lieu of payment at registration.

International students do not qualify for the in-state tuition rate, regardless of how long they have lived in Ohio. Refer to the tuition and fee schedule at **www.tri-c.edu/tuition**.

Student Identification

You will receive a *My Tri-C Card* upon registering for classes. *My Tri-C Card* is the official photo identification card for Cuyahoga Community College students, faculty and staff. The card acts as your primary form of identification while on campus and allows you access to the College's libraries, testing centers, services and events. Additionally, the card doubles as a debit card at select College locations. To learn more visit **www.tri-c.edu/card**.

Can I Apply for a Social Security Number?

F1 students are eligible for a Social Security number (SSN) only if they receive an employment offer on campus. The campus special student services coordinator can assist with supplying the information necessary to obtain your SSN. Students who have never worked on campus, but who find authorized employment off campus (like Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training), are also eligible to apply for an SSN.

You will find that many businesses, like banks, apartment leasing offices or telephone companies, will ask you for your SSN even though you may not be eligible for one. Those businesses should be able to provide services without an SSN.

Employment

F-1 students are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week on campus. Off-campus employment is not authorized. Tri-C's Career Center can help prepare you for a job on campus. The Career Center is a College-wide network committed to helping students develop their skills and achieve their professional goals. They also provide a variety of free services to support and prepare students for a successful job search through workshops and individual career coaching. Visit **http://www.tri-c.edu/career-services/** for more information.

Driving in the United States

Non-U.S. citizens may apply for a driver's license at a Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) office. You will need to pass a knowledge and vision test to receive a temporary permit. With a temporary permit, you can drive only when there is a licensed driver seated in the front seat. To be issued a license, you will be required to pass a road test with your vehicle.

For detailed, up-to-date information on vehicle registration and becoming a licensed driver in the state of Ohio, visit **www.bmv.ohio.gov**. For complete information regarding driving laws, consult the Digest of Ohio Motor Vehicle laws: **https://publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/hsy7607.pdf**. Please note that, by law, all drivers must have car insurance. There are many companies that offer insurance coverage – be sure to shop around for the best rate.

For more information about the College, campus life and news, visit **www.tri-c.edu**. There you will find information on programs and degrees offered as well as important dates, including the duration of each semester, specific dates of sessions within the semester, holidays, graduation and more.

For more information, contact the special student services coordinator on your campus:

Eastern Campus
4250 Richmond Road
Highland Hills, Ohio 44122
216-987-2118 | internationaleast@tri-c.edu
Fax: 216-987-2238

Western Campus
11000 Pleasant Valley Road
Parma, Ohio 44130
216-987-5203 | international-west@tri-c.edu
Fax: 216-987-5514

Metropolitan Campus
2900 Community College Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
216-987-4167 | lori.brindisi@tri-c.edu
Fax: 216-987-3129

Westshore Campus
31001 Clemens Road
Westlake, Ohio 44145
216-987-5884 | internationalwestshore@tri-c.edu
Fax: 216-987-5830

www.tri-c.edu/international-students

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