



From Potential to **Achievement**

Mount Ida College

**International Student
Handbook**

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

1. Read this information
2. Pay the SEVIS fee and obtain an F1 student visa (see directions below)
3. Take the Mount Ida College Health Examination Report to the doctor who will complete the required examination and information as well as provide each student with the immunizations needed.
4. Plan one's arrival date. If the student will be living on campus, he/she should plan to arrive on the day the residence halls open. If a student is living off campus, he/she should arrive early enough to find a place to live and settle in before classes begin.

PACKING SUGGESTIONS

One needs to plan on the changing climate when deciding what clothes to take to college. The average temperatures for each season are listed below:

Fall:	September 21-December 20: 46-60 F (8-15 C)
Winter:	December 21-March 20: 0-17F (-7—3 C)
Spring:	March 21-June 20: 38-60 F (3-15 C)
Summer:	June 21- September 20: 60-95 F (15-35C)

In the fall and spring, it is often warm during the day and cold in the evening. Lighter clothing and sweaters are good to have. In the winter, temperatures are often below freezing and it does snow. A heavy winter coat, waterproof boots, gloves and a hat are necessary.

Most students wear casual clothes (jeans and shirts or skirts and sweaters) to class. However, sometimes students do dress more formally. It is suggested that men bring a suit or sport jacket, tie and a pair of shoes (in contrast to sneakers) and women bring a dress and dressy shoes for these occasions.

In addition, international students may wish to bring items typical of their culture to school as well as CD's of favorite music.

Students living on campus will find a list of what to bring and what not to bring on the following website: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=365>

All of these items do not have to be brought from home, but may be purchased when students arrive. Often a shopping trip is included as part of Orientation.

Students wishing to send packages to Mount Ida College before leaving home should time the arrival of the package with their arrival at the College.

PAYING TUITION BILLS

The easiest way to pay the tuition bill is to wire the funds directly to Mount Ida College. Directions may be found at the following website:

<http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=982>

HOUSING

On Campus Housing

There are six residence halls on campus which house approximately 950 students. Each hall has a professional Resident Director as well as student Resident Assistants who will help with student adjustment as well as problems or concerns.

Sometimes international students will have US roommates or other international roommates. This experience is often rewarding because it provides each student with the opportunity to learn about the other's culture.

When the college is closed for vacations, there are limited opportunities for students to stay on campus. If students wish to stay during the Thanksgiving and Spring Breaks, they may do so at no cost. During winter break, students may stay for part of the break for a cost, but when the College is closed between Christmas and New Year's Day, no one is permitted to be on campus.

Resident students' bills include a meal plan. Students are encouraged to go to:

<http://www.campusdish.com/en-US/CSNE/MountIda/MealPlans/ResidentStudents.htm>

and review the options in order to make the best choice for themselves.

Contacting Resident Students at Mount Ida College

By telephone:

Most students have and use their own cell phones. There are many choices of cell phone companies in the US. International students are encouraged to do research about these companies and select the one that offers the service needed for the best price. Some international students have an additional cell phone from their home country for use in contacting family and friends at home. There are telephone jacks in most of the residence hall rooms, and students may plug in their own telephones if they want to use a land line. Local calls are free. Service is provided by RCN.

By Mail:

Students living on campus will be assigned a mailbox. Mailboxes are located in the Mail Room on the bottom floor of Wingate Hall, and mail may be picked up on weekdays after 1:00 pm.

A student's college address will be:

Student's Name
Mailbox Number _____
Mount Ida College
777 Dedham Street
Newton, MA 02459

By Email:

All students will have a Mount Ida College email account and need to use it. Each residence hall room has internet connection.

Off Campus Housing

Students choosing to live off campus should arrive in the Boston area several weeks prior to the start of classes. The college does not maintain any apartment listings. Students might contact real estate agencies for help, understanding that there is a fee for their service. Local newspapers carry advertisements for housing as does the internet. Apartments may be furnished or unfurnished. If unfurnished, furniture will have to be purchased, which may be expensive and complicated.

Some rentals include utilities (heat, electricity, water, etc) while others do not. Almost all rentals require first and last months' rent in advance, which means that a student will need \$2,000-\$3000 at the time the apartment is rented. In addition, almost all rentals require signing a lease, which is a binding legal contract. Students should be sure they understand what they are signing before signing the lease.

Commuter students may purchase a Mount Ida College meal plan and have their meals at the College. Information about this is at:

<http://www.campusdish.com/en-US/CSNE/MountIda/MealPlans/Non-ResidentStudents.htm>

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Mount Ida College Health Center, located in Appleton House, provides free medical treatment for routine illnesses such as colds, sore throats, the flu and

simple infections as well as gynecologically related problems. The Health Center is open from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm on weekdays. It is best to make an appointment, but if necessary, students may go there without one. The telephone number is 617-928-4599.

All international students are required to purchase the Mount Ida College Health Insurance.

IF A STUDENT BECOMES ILL OR HAS AN ACCIDENT

1. First, the student should call or go to the Health Center
2. If the Health Center staff members feel that a student needs to see a doctor or go to a hospital, they will make the referral and help the student make the appointment.
3. Students requiring medical help after hours should call Mount Ida College Public Safety by picking up any red phone on campus or calling 617-928-4777. The officers will help the student decide where to get help and how to get to the doctor, clinic or hospital.

If a student feels that his/her English language skills are not good enough to explain the medical problem, it is recommended that another student who speaks the same language and English accompany the student to the Health Center. In some cases, the Health Center staff will be able to refer students to doctors who speak the student's native language.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Being safe on and off campus is a priority for all. The United States, like most countries, is not free of crime. Students will probably not experience any problems, but it is a good idea to take some basic measures to protect oneself. If a student does have a problem, asking a policeman for help either by telephone or in person, is appropriate. Mount Ida College Public Safety officers may be called at any time, day or night. Pick up any of the red phones located in all buildings on campus or call 617-928-4777.

SOME BASIC SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- 1, Do not keep large sums of cash in the residence hall rooms. There is an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) on campus.
2. Do not show money in public

3. Men should not carry their wallets in their back pants pocket. As in any large city, there are “pick pockets” in Boston. It is safer to carry ones wallet in one’s front pants pocket.
4. Women should not leave their purses open. It is best to have a handbag that zips or closes securely. Handbags should be carried close to one’s body.
5. No one should give their name or address to a person they do not know.
6. No one should lend money to people they do not know very well, and then only lend money if one wants to do so.
- 7.No one should leave valuable items (luggage, cameras, DVD players, computers, etc) in plain view in a car. Cars should always be locked.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

Obtaining an F1 Visa and entering the United States of America

Once a student has been accepted and has sent a deposit, Mount Ida College will send a Form I-20 to the student. Once the I-20 is received, these are the steps to follow to obtain an F-1 Visa and enter the United States of America. Students must:

1. have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry into the US.
2. read all of the information on the Form I-20 and understand the legal responsibilities of an F1 student in the US. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mandates that students follow the regulations pertaining to the F1 visa.
3. complete the Form I-20 by signing and dating it at the bottom of Page 1.
4. pay the SEVIS fee. If payment is via credit card over the internet, one must file the Form I-901 at least three days before applying for an F-1 visa. If payment is made by mail, a much greater amount of time is needed ([click here for information and directions](#)).
5. print and save the receipt.
6. make an appointment at the nearest US Embassy or Consulate for a visa appointment.

Students must:

- a. Take one’s passport, Form I-20, financial documents indicating that there are sufficient funds to cover the cost of being in the US for at least one year, the SEVIS Fee Receipt, and the visa application to the visa appointment.
- b. Even though students are applying for an F-1 non immigrant visa, the US official who conducts the interview may think that a student plans to stay in the US indefinitely and become a permanent resident. Applicants must be able to prove that:

1. there is enough money to cover expenses for the duration of stay in the US. If the support is personal or family funds, one must be prepared to show original bank statements, a letter of credit and possibly proof of the total assets that the student and his/her family have. At a minimum, one must demonstrate that there are sufficient funds to meet the financial requirements indicated on the Form I-20.
2. each student plans to return to their home country after the completion of studies. One may have to show that there is a good reason to return because all of one's family is in that country or that there is a job waiting, etc. One may need to demonstrate strong ties (family, professional, financial, etc.) to the country. If a student cannot prove these points to the US official, he/she may be denied an F-1 visa.
- c. When entering the US, an immigration inspector will review all papers and may conduct an interview again, asking about financial support and /or plans to return to one's own country at the completion of studies. **All papers, including original financial documents, should not be packed in checked baggage.** The officer will check the F-1 visa and Form I-20. Once cleared he will:
 1. stamp page 1 of the Form I-20 and return all three pages.
 2. stamp the form I-94 and write the following on it: F-1, D/S. This means that a student is permitted to enter the US and remain, as long as legal visa status is maintained.

MAINTAINING LEGAL F-1 STATUS

One must:

1. have a valid passport
2. be enrolled full-time each semester (taking a minimum of 12 credits)
3. not work without authorization from the International Student Affairs office
4. make progress toward the completion of your studies

TRAVEL AND RE-ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

Before leaving the United States to travel, students should check their documents with the Director of International Student Affairs to be sure that the I-20 is appropriately signed and valid. If a student is leaving the United States to travel to a country that is not his/her home country, he/she must find out if a visa is required for entry into that country.

When an international student leaves the United States, their I-94 will be taken. It should be kept in the student's passport. When returning to the US, a student's passport, I-20 and possibly financial documents will be checked by the US immigration official. On reviewing the papers, the immigration officer will stamp the student's I-94 and write F1, D/S.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

When applying to Mount Ida College, one must demonstrate that he/she or the family have sufficient funds to pay for the costs of attending Mount Ida College.. However, some students find that they need some extra money after they arrive. Federal regulations governing F1 students working are very clear.

1. On Campus Employment: International students with F1 visas may work on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and full time during vacation periods. For on-campus employment, students need only to have a release form signed by the Director of International Student Affairs.
2. Off campus employment: International students may not work off campus unless they are working at an approved internship. (For details, go to : <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=1005>)
3. Practical Training: This may be granted for employment either before or after a student's program is complete. For details, go to the above link or: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=1006>

In all cases, before working, it is suggested that students clear their plans with the Director of International Student Affairs.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

International students are to report any change of address to the Director of International Student Affairs within ten (10) days of the change. This change will be recorded, as required, in the SEVIS system as well as in the Mount Ida College data system.

CHECK IN

All international students must check in with the Director of International Student Affairs at the beginning of every semester so the student can be registered in the SEVIS system, as required.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Mount Ida College International Student Affairs Office has a legal obligation, mandated by the United States government, to report to the

Department of Homeland Security via the SEVIS system, students' continued attendance at the College. Therefore, if a student is not enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits (except during the final semester), decides to transfer to another institution, or requests a visa status change, the Office must be notified. Additional information regarding immigration regulations is available at: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=975>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Classes: Class sizes range from 15-35 students. International students find the class format in the United States to be very informal. Students at American colleges are encouraged to speak during classes, to ask questions and give their opinions, even if these differ from those of the professor. Some professors ask students to call them by their first names.

Books: Students are required to buy books for each course they take. At the beginning of the semester, faculty will inform students which books are required. These and other supplies may be purchased at the Mount Ida College Bookstore which is located in Carlson Hall.

Academic Advisors: To help insure success, all students are assigned a faculty advisor during their first semester. Usually within the student's major, this advisor will provide guidance on course selection, as well as long term academic planning and advisement to help each student successfully reach their career goals. Students will meet with their Advisors at least two times each year. Advisors will post times available, and students must sign up for appointments.

Counseling Center: The staff at the Counseling Center offers individual and group counseling for students having problems related to college adjustment, family issues, interpersonal relationships, etc. The Center is open on weekdays from 9:00 am- 4:00 pm. The telephone number to call for an appointment is 617-928- 4563 or 617-928-4591. For more information, see: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=355>

Academic Services: The College offers many programs to help students succeed academically which includes free tutoring. For detailed information, see: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=429>

Dining Services: Resident students pay a room and board fee which covers the cost of meals. As mentioned above, the meal plan offers students several options. For details, see: <http://www.campusdish.com/en-US/CSNE/MountIda/MealPlans/ResidentStudents.htm>

Transportation: Because Mount Ida College is located only 8 miles from Boston, it is not essential to own a car. The College offers free shuttle service to Newton Centre connecting to the MBTA (the Boston area public transportation system). The College offers students the opportunity to purchase semester passes. More information is available in the Office of Student Affairs in Malloy Hall.

GENERAL REGULATIONS/POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Proficiency in the English language is required of all students. International students are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and submit their score with their application for admission. Students scoring above 525 on the paper-based test or 69-70 on the internet based test will be eligible to take the English Placement test and not be required to take English as a Second Language. Those scoring below those numbers will enroll in English as a Second Language. See <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=667> for further information.

ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION

To help with the transition to Mount Ida College, there will be a brief orientation program for new international students during the first few days at the College. This program will include information on immigration requirements as well as adjustment issues and basic information about being on a US college campus. In addition, students will take placements tests, meet with an Academic Advisor and register for classes. Students will be required to check in with the Director of International Student Affairs and present their passports, I-20's, and I-94 cards.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

Under the current law, only international students who either have a job or a job offer can obtain a Social Security number. For details, see: <http://www.mountida.edu/sp.cfm?pageid=1867>

BANKING INFORMATION

There are many banks in the US and in Newton. The College banks with Bank of America, and their representatives are on campus during check in for first

year students. Additionally, there is a Bank of America ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) on campus. More information is found at:
<https://www.bankofamerica.com/index.jsp>

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS

It is very hard for international students to obtain a credit card in the US unless he/she has a Social Security number. Therefore it is recommended that students obtain a credit card in their home country that will be honored in the US before arriving at college.

Students are able to obtain a debit card without a Social Security number. Generally these are connected to the student's bank account, and as long as there are funds in the account, these cards can be used to charge items.

MASSACHUSETTS DRIVER'S LICENCES and ID's

International students may obtain a Massachusetts Driver's License. Detailed Information may be found at the Registry of Motor Vehicles' web site (www.mass.gov/rmv) Included is the Driver's Manual explaining the process for obtaining a driver's license as well as the rules of the road and all of the information needed to complete the procedure. Please note that an applicant must be 18 years of age.

If a student does not want to drive in the US and does not want to carry his/her passport at all times, he/she may apply for a Massachusetts ID card from the Registry (<http://www.mass.gov/rmv/license/13bMAID.htm>)

INCOME TAX REGULATIONS

Any international student who works on campus or participates in Optional Practical Training or a paid internship, will be required to file a US income tax return, due on April 15 of the year following the calendar year during which the student worked. It is essential that this regulation is adhered to as failing to do so can be a hindrance if the student decides to change his visa status or apply for a "green card".

Cultural Adjustment

You may find that some US customs and values seem very different or unusual. Below are listed some aspects of US culture which are very typical. Being aware of and understanding these and other differences will make your adjustment to life in the United States a bit easier.

Time: Time is very important to US residents. You should always try to be on time for classes, appointments, theater performances, meetings with friends, school events, etc. If you think you will be late or cannot make an appointment, you should call in advance to cancel the appointment or advise the person that you will be late.

Informality: People from other cultures feel that US residents are very informal. For example, we often dress casually, call each other by our first names, and eat or drink something in class. Informality does not indicate a lack of respect, but it is usually an attempt to feel comfortable or to make other people feel comfortable. (Note: Professionals should not be called by their first names unless they request you to do so.)

Independence: Independence in people is considered a very positive quality in the United States. Many US residents live far from their homes and families and realize the importance of taking care of things themselves. Some people may assume everyone feels the same way and may not offer to help unless asked. If one asks, one will find many who will be delighted to help.

Privacy: US residents enjoy and need other people in their lives just like people everywhere. Privacy, however, is very important to many US residents, and it is important to respect people's privacy.

World Awareness: Geography and world studies are not a major part of our educational system, and many US residents have not had the opportunity to travel. Some US residents may assume that life in other countries is the same as it is here. Others may believe that the United States is far more advanced. Having international students at Mount Ida College encourages all students to learn more about the world.

Ask Questions: Because US residents are so informal, one should always feel free to ask questions if unsure about how to act or what to do in a certain situation. If one explains that they are unfamiliar with US customs, most people will be happy to explain what is needed. Asking questions is the best way to learn. No one is expected to know everything from the start!

**MOUNT IDA COLLEGE OFFICE FREQUENTLY
CONTACTED**

All telephone numbers start with **617-928**- followed by the extension numbers below:

Academic Success Center – Hallden Hall 4709
Admissions – Carlson Hall – 4535
Associate Dean of Students – Shaw Hall - 4021
Bookstore – Carlson Hall – 4521
Counseling Center – Appleton House – 4599
Dean of Academic Support Services – Hallden Hall – 4556
Dining Hall – Wingate Hall – 4584
Director of International Student Affairs - 4624
Financial Aid – Holbrook Hall – 4785
Health Center – Appleton House – 4599
Library – Wadsworth Learning and Resource Center - 4552
Public Safety- Shaw Hall – 4777
Registrar – Holbrook Hall – 4534
Residence Life – Malloy Hall – 4612
Student Activities – Shaw Hall – 4761
Student Affairs – Malloy Hall - 4612