International Student Life at Duquesne

Pre-Departure Manual

Questions you’ve been asking yourself… answered!
Contents

Introduction ..............................................................................................................Page 3

What should I do now? .............................................................................................Page 4

What should I bring with me? ...................................................................................Page 5

Living Accommodations ...................................................................................... Page 6-7
  • Where will I be living?
  • What are the rooms like?
  • Is it fun?
  • Is it convenient?
  • Is it safe?

Weather ..................................................................................................................Page 8

Academics .......................................................................................................... Page 9-10
  • English as a Second Language (ESL)
  • Semesters and Credits
  • The Classroom
  • Scheduling
  • Exams

Social Life ......................................................................................................... Page 11-12
  • Will I have one?
  • Clubs and Organizations
  • Volunteerism

Living in Pittsburgh .................................................................................................Page 13

A Final Word .........................................................................................................Page 14
Congratulations on your recent acceptance to Duquesne University!

You will soon be starting a new life here where you will have the opportunity to:

- Meet people from around the globe
- Live with people your own age
- Study exciting subjects
- Experience American life and culture on a safe, green campus in the heart of buzzing downtown Pittsburgh

You’re about to experience the time of your life …

…and we want to make sure you are as prepared for it as possible. This electronic manual should answer some of those practical, important questions that you may be asking yourself right now. If there are still more practical student life questions that you have, why not ask your cultural ambassador?
What should I do now?

There are some things that you need to do right now, to make sure that you are prepared for us and that we are prepared for you!

1. Make sure all of your immigration papers are in order (Passport and immigration documents: I-94, visa (F-1 or J-1), and I-20 or IAP-66). If you’re not sure or you have questions, contact Michele Janosko, our International Adviser at janosko@duq.edu or (+1 412 396 5812).

2. Read all correspondence sent by the Office of International Programs (OIP).

3. Submit your deposit of $500 ($200 for class and $300 for room reservation).

4. Book your flight, ensuring that you arrive in time for International Student Orientation. Remember that the earlier you book your flight, the cheaper it will be. We will send the specific time and date of orientation in our communication with you.

5. Complete the Student Arrival form and submit it to the Office of International Programs.

6. Make sure you have received all required vaccinations.

7. Register for Duquesne’s New Student orientation (if you are an undergraduate student arriving in the fall semester).

8. Ask questions! Contact the following people with questions that you may have. This is a huge transition that you will be making; you’re bound to have questions about it. Make sure you ask your questions to the right people:

   **Admission and Application Questions**
   Helen Auckland
   aucklandh@duq.edu
   (+1 412 396 4108)

   **Visa and Immigration Questions**
   Michele Janosko
   janosko@duq.edu
   (+1 412 396 5182)

   **Student Life Questions**
   Your Cultural Ambassador
What should I bring with me?

Once you’ve completed all of the above tasks, you’ll need to start to pack! Below is a list of items that you’ll probably need, as well as a couple of useful hints:

- Passport and immigration documents: I-94, visa (F-1 or J-1), and I-20 or IAP-66. If you don’t have these, you will not be able to enter the US
- “Starting-off money” (at least USD $500.00) in small denominations ($100 bills or less)
- Contact names and phone numbers of OIP staff
- Contact names and phone numbers of your country’s consulates in the US
- Personal medicine and any medical records
- English dictionary – if necessary
- Changes of clothes in carry-on luggage in case of lost luggage or a layover
- Pictures, music, and mementos from home
- Photo of yourself (passport size, please)

And remember…

- Don’t weigh yourself down with things that you can buy here! Items such as toiletries, food and clothes are all easy to purchase here.
- Make sure that your important documents are in a safe place on you. Purchase a wallet or a small purse if that would help.
- Make photocopies of your passport, I20 and other important legal information and keep them in a different place from the original documents – just in case the originals get lost.
Living Accommodations

Where will I be living?
As an international undergraduate student, you will live in one of five dormitories (called Living/Learning Centers). At Duquesne, we believe that a university education is not just about academic learning but also it's about social, cultural and personal learning. By living on campus, you have the opportunity to bond with like-minded students in a safe, convenient, social environment.

What are the rooms like?
Living/Learning Center rooms are equipped with one, two or three beds as well as dressers, closets, desks, desk chairs, and bookshelves. Most international students choose to share a room as it is more affordable and a good way of getting to know others. Once you confirm and register for your room, you complete a questionnaire allowing The Office of Residence Life to match you with someone who has similar interests and habits as yourself.

There is one phone line per room. Students have access to voice mail options through the University telephone service and cable television channels. All rooms are wired for access to high speed network connections for access to library resources and the Internet.

Computer labs, study and TV lounges are available in each building as well as free laundry facilities. Refrigerators/microwaves can be rented and carpeting is sold on move-in day(s).

Duquesne has over 80 members of staff, responsible for student accommodation, many of whom are available on a 24-hour basis. They assist students in the day-to-day experiences of living in a university environment: enforcing policies and procedures, assisting with personal and academic problems, making referrals, and posting information on campus services and events. In addition, the Office of Residence Life employs over 50 student aides. These students are responsible for front desk security and act as Office Assistants.

Take a look at the following link for a specific description of each center:
http://www.residencelife.duq.edu/livinglearning.html

and the following link for Frequently Asked Questions:
http://www.residencelife.duq.edu/faq.html
What is dormitory life like?
You can be assured that life at Duquesne is not all work and no play. There are many opportunities to participate in cultural, educational, spiritual, recreational, social, and community service programs. Examples of some of these programs include: intramural activities, pizza parties, food and clothing drives, health-related discussions, prayer services, and most importantly, International Week.

There are many offices and organizations that provide special programs for undergrads, especially during the weekends. Past programs include shopping trips, ski trips, ice skating trips, volleyball tournaments, and retreats. Also, the Residence Hall Association (RHA) coordinates additional student events as well as leadership opportunities for students.

Is it convenient?
Living on campus is the most convenient way of living! The five Living/Learning Centers are all within minutes of the academic buildings as well as the Duquesne Union, the Chapel, the Power Center and the A.J. Palumbo Recreation Center. In addition, many services are located within the Living/Learning Centers including Health Services, Student Mail Center, cafeterias, convenience stores, a swimming pool, Campus Ministry offices and radio stations. Residents also have access to a bank, fax machine, copy machines, and a variety of vending machines.

The Living/Learning Centers are just a five minute walk from downtown Pittsburgh providing you with numerous cultural, entertainment and athletic facilities. Public transportation serves as a link to nearby shopping malls, numerous movie theaters, and dining establishments.

Is it Safe?
Yes it is. The Residence Life staff works closely with the Public Safety Department and the campus community to create a safe environment. Security cameras, a 24 hour monitored front desk, ID on entry, smoke detectors throughout, good lighting and 24 hour police officers are all factors that contribute to the safety of our campus.

Public Safety staff provides programs in the Living/Learning Centers to increase knowledge and awareness of personal safety issues.
Weather

Pittsburgh is a city of 4 different seasons:

**September – late November**

...is beautiful. Clear blue skies, crisp fresh air and cooler temperatures. In September it can be up to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. In late November, it can be down to 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

**December – beginning of April**

...is cold and snowy. If you want to see a typical North American snowy Christmas and New Year, you will do at Duquesne! Temperatures range from 45 degrees Fahrenheit to – 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Snow can reach up to 10 inches, but Pittsburgh rarely experiences snow in large amounts.

If you are arriving for the spring semester, make sure you have warm clothes (sweaters, scarf, hat and gloves) for when you arrive. Once you are here, you will probably want to buy some warm clothing to get you through the winter happily.

**April – June**

...is cool, fresh and pretty. The temperatures increase to 50-70 degrees Fahrenheit. Flowers are blooming and summer is on its way!

**June – September**

...is hot. You’ll need shorts, t-shirts and sandals to feel comfortable. Temperatures range from 70-100 degrees Fahrenheit, with quite a bit of humidity.

If you are from a country without the four seasons, coming to Duquesne will be an eye opening opportunity to experience four different seasonal climates – all in one city. As long as you are prepared for each season, you will be able to take advantage of all of the different cultural activities available to you at Duquesne: Whether it is the hayride and Thanksgiving lunch of the fall, the Christmas ice skating trips in December or the Easter lunch in the Spring, you will be equipped and ready to enjoy the seasonal and cultural experiences.
Academics

Since the structure of the U.S. higher education is different from many parts of the world, it can be confusing at first. Faculty and student expectations may be different.

You are likely to be taking either ESL, one of our undergraduate bachelor's degrees or, like many international students, you have been accepted to a major but will study English alongside your classes.

**English as a Second Language**

All of our international students, who are from non-English speaking countries, take the English Language Proficiency test as soon as they arrive at Duquesne. This determines their English level and if they need to take English classes alongside their major.

There is no need to prepare for this test. It is simply a general test that you will take to allow us to establish the level of English you will need.

**Semesters and Credits**

Most courses at Duquesne are only one semester long with a 15-week semester in the fall and spring semesters. Each course is assigned a number of credit hours. Credit hours are based upon how much time is spent in class each week. Most courses are three credits and therefore meet three hours each week during the semester. However, some courses may be one, two, three, four, or six credits. All programs require students to complete a minimum number of credit hours before graduation. For example: A Bachelor's degree program in Accounting requires a student to complete the following:

- 34 Core curriculum credits
- 50 Business credits
- 27 Major credits
- 5 Elective credits
- 6 Communication/culture credits

At Duquesne University, not only do you take subjects in your chosen major but you also take core courses and Communication/Culture credits. We believe that a well-rounded education prepares you better for life and gives you a wider perspective on life and work.

Take a look at our website for details of how your program is organized. [http://www.duq.edu/frontpages/main/undergraduate.html](http://www.duq.edu/frontpages/main/undergraduate.html). If you cannot find the details, either ask your Cultural Ambassador (if they are doing the same course), or contact Helen Auckland in OIP.

**The Classroom**

The relationship between faculty and students is generally open and casual. Students are encouraged to ask their professors questions. These questions may be asked at an appropriate time during class or outside of class during a professor's scheduled office hours. Furthermore, you will receive a syllabus for each course in which you are enrolled. A syllabus provides an overview of the course, a schedule of class lectures and required readings, evaluation criteria and grading information, as well as the professor's office phone number, Duquesne email address, and office hours. Some faculty may even list their home phone numbers on the syllabus!
Scheduling
Class scheduling will vary depending upon your program of study. The majority of undergraduate classes meet either three times per week for 50 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday or two times per week for 1 hour and 40 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday. Also, several sections of a particular course may be offered for a given semester. Each section is either taught by a different professor or offered at a different time. This allows you to have flexibility in scheduling your classes.

Exams
Most international students at Duquesne University find the exam structure familiar. Typically, undergraduate students are required to complete several multiple choice or essay tests and/or complete a research paper. Graduate students, on the other hand, usually take only one or two exams and/or submit a final paper. International students may ask for additional time on exams depending upon their English proficiency; however, you should request extra time only when your proficiency is a problem.
Social Life

Will I have one?
After all of the discussion of academic life, this is a good question, and the answer is most certainly YES! Duquesne University is a holistic university. This means that we value education as a whole – not only the academic aspect but the social and cultural aspects too.

Clubs and Organizations
Duquesne is home to over 140 different student organizations, meaning that you can find one, two or ten organizations to fit your interests.

We highly recommend that you join at least one club when you are on campus at Duquesne. It is a way of meeting and networking with other students, making friends, trying new things and getting involved. Here are just a handful of the clubs you may choose to join:

- **The ISO (The International Student Organization)** is one of the largest student organizations on campus. It strives to promote international understanding between and among international and American students. It encourages cultural exchange between students through participation in various activities such as its weekly meetings, biweekly dessert nights, and week long festivals that focus on specific continents and cultures throughout the year. ISO’s highlight of the year is its annual International Week – a week filled with dance, food and entertainment that honors all cultures.

- As well as the ISO, you may choose to join the **Asian Student Association**, the **Indian Student Association (DISHA)**, the **Latin American Student Association**, the **Union of African Students**, the **Muslim Student Organization** or the **Cultural Ambassadors** – just a handful of the 140 clubs available to you.

For a list of all clubs/organizations check out: [http://www.studentactivities.duq.edu/studentorgs_list.htm](http://www.studentactivities.duq.edu/studentorgs_list.htm)
Voluntary Work

At Duquesne University, service to others has always been an integral part of the University’s goals and objectives and it is a clear expectation in the University mission statement.

Volunteerism will be an integral part of your educational experience and you will be provided with numerous opportunities to participate in community service projects.

Volunteer service at Duquesne takes many forms. The DUV (Duquesne University Volunteers) Office organizes a wide variety of activities for students. Volunteering can be done on an ongoing basis. This could be: tutoring, providing companionship for the elderly, providing assistance to homeless shelters and soup kitchens, providing child care support at agencies where parents are undergoing counseling or treatment, or sorting and packing donations to be shipped to developing countries.

Volunteering may also be a one-time activity, usually a special event held by a local charity. An example is: Project Bundle-Up, an event sponsored by the Salvation Army. Volunteers accompanied small children from low-income families to select winter outerwear (coats, hats, mittens, and boots) that were paid for either by funds raised by the Salvation Army or donated by local retail stores. Students found their time to be extremely rewarding as they helped the small children make their important and much needed purchases.

On average, approximately 6,000 Duquesne community members annually take part in some form of volunteerism, donating an estimated 174,000 hours of volunteer service. This highlights the caring community that you are about to become a part of — we hope that you will become one of the many volunteers just as soon as you are settled into life as a Duquesne student.
Pittsburgh

No matter where you come from, you will find Pittsburgh to be a multi-cultural experience. The United States has welcomed generations of immigrants throughout the last two centuries. In Pittsburgh, religious diversity is visible. You will find Catholic churches, Hindu temples, Mosques or Synagogues throughout the city. Today, the U.S. enjoys and benefits from countless ethnic influences, both eastern and western.

Pittsburgh is a microcosm of the United States. During the industrial revolution, immigrants swarmed by the thousands to Pittsburgh to find economic opportunity in the steel mills and coal mines. Each ethnic group settled into its own individual neighborhood. Today, 88 district neighborhoods exist in the city of Pittsburgh and remnants of their strong ethnic ties still remain. Touring these communities you can explore and experience the cultures of the world – African, Arab, Asian, German, Indian, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Polish, Slovak, and more. Therefore, if you are longing for some food or entertainment from your homeland, you are sure to find it in one of Pittsburgh’s many neighborhoods.

Take a look at Duquesne’s page on Pittsburgh at:
http://www.duq.edu/frontpages/aboutdu/pittsburgh1.html

Learn about Global Pittsburgh at:
http://www.globalpittsburgh.org/about/index.jsp

Take a look at all of the events going on in Pittsburgh right now at:
http://www.visitpittsburgh.com/
A Final Word

We hope that the information in this manual has been informative and helpful. One way to prepare for your experience in the U.S. is to think about what you know of the American culture already and how it compares to your home country’s culture. Once you have identified the similarities and differences that exist, focus on the differences and think about how you will deal with these differences.

Who better to ask about life at Duquesne and in the U.S. than your Cultural Ambassador? The student who is sending you this email has been through what you are about to do. He or she has done many of the following things:

- Visited the U.S. Embassy in their country
- Bought a plane ticket to Pittsburgh
- Dealt with a different language
- Lived in Residence Halls/Leaving Learning Centers
- Cooked meals with friends
- Become a member of a Duquesne organization

...The fact is that your Cultural Ambassador can help you. Although you may feel overwhelmed or stressed, we would like to assist you. Your Cultural Ambassador can answer any of the strangest-seeming questions that you have about student life at Duquesne. It is likely that s/he has asked themselves the same question and has now found the answer. Email your ambassador and make contact with him or her!

Please note: Cultural Ambassadors are NOT qualified to answer questions on your application, admission, visa or immigration.

Admission and application questions, contact Helen Auckland: Aucklandh@duq.edu

Visa and Immigration questions, contact Michele Janosko: Janosko@duq.edu

You’re about to experience the time of your life …
At Duquesne University