

# **International Student Booklet**

Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences  
Cornell University

2004

Compiled by  
The International Student Committee

## **Introduction**

The information in this booklet was compiled to help incoming and current international students at the Weill Graduate School Medical Sciences (WGSMS) learn about and manage life at their school and in the United States smoothly. Approximately half of the total 315 students at the WGSMS are international. Hence, during your time at the WGSMS you are likely to meet people from all over the world, a truly amazing opportunity for interesting friendships.

For the most part, daily life is the same for all students; however, there are a lot of challenges that only international students have to face. These can range from the obvious; a new country and a new city like no other, with new customs and social norms; to the more complicated, such as immigration and tax requirements. It is hoped that the information provided here will help international students understand their new school and home with less distraction and confusion. We are glad that you are part of our community at the WGSMS.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Immigration</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Tax Information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Student Health Services</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Applying for a Social Security Number</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Applying for a New York State Photo Identification Card</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Navigating New York</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Useful Links and Resources</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>About the International Student Committee</b>	<b>23</b>

## Immigration

This section provides useful information on immigration for the international students of the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS). Remember, it is very important for you to be aware of your immigration status at all times and not jeopardize your legal status in the United States.

The information in this section has been provided by students, not professional immigration officials. The Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS) has administrative officers who monitor and help maintain the legal immigration status of the students. Understanding and abiding by immigration laws and requirements is, in part, also the students' responsibility. Immigration matters are often specific to each individual. The more informed about your specific situation and what is required of you during your time in the U.S., the smoother your residence and travel will be. The best advice is: look into things, pay attention to dates, be aware and be prepared.

### Topics Covered

**Applying for a F-1 Student Visa**

**The I-20 Document**

**F2 Dependents**

**Extending your F-1 Status**

**Inviting Family**

**Traveling Abroad**

**Maintaining Legal Status in the U.S.**

**SEVIS**

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

**Hiring an Immigration Attorney**

**Immigration Contacts at the Graduate School**

**Useful Links**

### Applying for a F-1 Student Visa

As an international student, you will receive a “SEVIS” I-20 document from the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS) after you have accepted your offer of admission. For more information on SEVIS, look at the [SEVIS](#) section of this website, and for more information on the I-20, look at [I-20 Document](#) section. The I-20 is needed to apply for a F-1 visa stamp. As a student in the United States your visa status is classified as F-1. Rules and regulations for Canadian and non-Canadian citizens entering the United States differ and are described below. In brief, only non-Canadian citizens are required to apply for a F-1 visa stamp at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. For more information you can either contact the U.S. Consulate in your country of residence or check the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) website at <http://uscis.gov/>.

Prior to applying for a F-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy or at a Port of Entry, from September 1, 2004 onwards, the Department of Homeland Security requires that applicants pay a SEVIS fee. This fee has to be paid before applying for the F-1 visa. For more information regarding this fee see the [SEVIS](#) section of this website.

#### *Canadian Citizens*

If you are a Canadian citizen, you are not required to obtain a F-1 visa stamp in your passport if you enter the U.S.A. from within the Western Hemisphere. At your port of entry you will have to present the documents listed below to a U.S. immigration inspector and they will grant you F-1 status.

- 1) A valid passport or proof of Canadian citizenship.
- 2) A “SEVIS” I-20.
- 3) Evidence of financial support.
- 4) Evidence that you do not intend to abandon your country of residence (e.g. a bank

statement from your country of residence, proof of property ownership and/or evidence of family ties will usually suffice).

#### *Non-Canadian Citizens:*

If you are a non-Canadian citizen, you will need to apply for a F-1 visa stamp at the U.S. Consulate in your country of residence. The visa stamp is essentially your entry key to the U.S.A. The visa stamp does not state how long you can stay in the U.S., but rather shows the latest date at which you can enter the country. If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., you are still in legal status provided that your I-20 is valid. However, if you need to leave and then re-enter the US, you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa stamp at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad.

Please note that regulations governing visa applications have changed and consulates must interview nearly all foreign nationals applying for non-immigrant visa stamps. In addition, obtaining security clearance has become more stringent and if your area of study is on the technology alert list, you may experience longer delays. The technology alert list can be viewed at <http://travel.state.gov/state147566.html>.

The documents listed below are typically required in order to apply for the F-1 visa stamp, though, other documents may also be required. You can obtain this information from the U.S. Consulate.

- 1) A valid passport.
- 2) A “SEVIS” I-20.
- 3) Evidence of financial support.
- 4) Evidence that you do not intend to abandon your country of residence (e.g. a bank statement from your country of residence, proof of property ownership and/or evidence of family ties will usually suffice).
- 5) A letter of student status from the Graduate School, if you are currently a F-1 student.

*If you are already in the U.S.:* If you are already present in the U.S. on certain non-immigrant visas when you receive your I-20 and are not planning on returning to your country of residence before beginning graduate school, you may need to apply for a change of status with the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS). This may be the case, for example, if you are here on a B-1, B-2 or H-1B visa. To apply for a change of status you need to submit Form I-539, the Application to Extend/Change Non-Immigrant Status, to the USCIS. More information and forms are available on the web at <http://uscis.gov>.

*Transferring to the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences:* If you are transferring to the WGSMS from another educational institution, you must contact Francoise Freyre at the Graduate School Office to process the transfer.

### **The I-20 Document**

The I-20 is a document issued by educational institutions in the U.S. to non-immigrant foreign students. The document is sent to the student after admission is granted to the student and the student decides to attend the school. The I-20 states the beginning and expected completion dates of study, the level of study, the field of study and the school that the student will be attending. The I-20 is required in order to apply for a F-1 visa. The form is called “SEVIS” I-20 because it is catalogued on a centralized computer database called Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Please see the [SEVIS](#) section of this website for more information on SEVIS. The Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, Francoise Freyre, will endorse your I-20 to validate it. As this endorsement is only valid for one year, you must get your I-20 endorsed each year of your tenure at the Graduate School. Before traveling, make sure your I-20 is endorsed or it will not be considered valid. As mentioned, the

completion date for your studies is stated on your I-20. If you are unable to complete your studies by the date specified, you are required to apply for an extension at least 30 days before the completion date. For more information on this, please see the [Extending your F-1 Status](#) section.

### **F2 Dependents**

If you are married, and your spouse and dependent children are accompanying you to the U.S., they will be granted an I-20 containing their biographical information. They must apply for a F-2 visa stamp at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy in order to accompany you legally to the U.S. Evidence of marriage/birth, financial support and strong ties to their country of residence are also all required at the time of application. Be aware, the F-2 status does not allow for employment or full-time study in the U.S.

### **Extending your F-1 Status**

The completion date for your studies is stated on your I-20. If you are unable to complete your studies by the specified date, you are required to apply for an extension at least 30 days before the completion date in order for you to maintain legal status within the U.S. To apply for a F-1 reinstatement, please inquire at the Graduate School Office.

### **Inviting Family**

To invite family or friends to the U.S., the following information may be required by the U.S. Consulate or Embassy abroad and you will need to send this information to those invited.

- 1) A letter, written in English, stating that you would like the person(s) invited to visit the U.S. This letter should contain the following information: the length of the visit, the

purpose of the visit and how the visit will be financially supported.

- 2) A letter from the WGSMS stating that you are in legal status.
- 3) A copy of your valid I-20 as evidence of your F-1 student status.

If you are financially supporting the individual’s visit, you should provide proof of your finances; such as a bank statement.

### **Traveling Abroad**

It is important that you comply with all immigration regulations when traveling abroad as immigration processes have become more stringent. You should anticipate delays in obtaining visa stamps and in security checks at airports. If your visa stamp has expired, you will have to apply for a new visa stamp at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad in order to re-enter the U.S. For more information on applying for a F-1 visa, see the [Applying for a F-1 Student Visa](#) section of this site. If your visa stamp has expired, please speak with Francoise Freyre at the Graduate School Office before you travel to update you on any new regulations involved in the visa application process. All the latest information about travel requirements can also be found on the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) website at <http://uscis.gov>.

If you are a Canadian citizen, please note that you do not require a F-1 visa stamp in your passport, but you do need a valid and endorsed I-20.

Generally, the following documents are required when you travel abroad:

- 1) A valid passport.
- 2) A valid F-1 visa stamp in the passport.
- 3) An endorsed “SEVIS” I-20 (a signature not more than one-year old).

- 4) A statement of enrollment from the Graduate School Office.

If necessary, please bring your I-20 to the Graduate School Office at least one week in advance of travel so that Francoise Freyre can sign and endorse the form. This endorsement is valid for one year. In addition, the Graduate School Office requires that you submit a detailed itinerary of your travel plans to them in the case of an emergency.

### **Maintaining Legal Status in the U.S.**

In order to remain in the U.S. legally, you MUST maintain legal immigration status at all times. It is YOUR responsibility to maintain legal status. You must pay close attention to the completion date indicated in item #5 on your I-20, as you will have to apply for an extension if your studies extend beyond the specified date. Listed below are some rules you are required to follow. Additional updated information can be found on the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) website at <http://uscis.gov>.

- You must have a valid passport at all times.
- If you have not already done so, you must bring your I-20, passport and visa to Francoise Freyre to be photocopied.
- You must register every quarter at the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS).
- You must report any change in level of study or a change of program to Francoise Freyre as soon as it is approved by the WGSMS.
- You must not over-stay the completion date indicated on your I-20 unless you have requested a program extension.
- You must report any change of address to Francoise Freyre within 10 days of moving to a new residence.

### **SEVIS**

SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is a secure internet-based system that allows schools and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to exchange data on the immigration and academic status of foreign nationals and their dependents. Accurate and updated information on all foreign students who hold a F-1 visa must be reported to the ICE, through SEVIS, for the duration of their academic career. U.S. Embassies and Consulates also access SEVIS to facilitate the issuance of visas. More information on SEVIS can be found on the ICE website at:

[http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm\\_sevis.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm_sevis.htm).

Schools must report the following data into SEVIS:

- Name, date of birth, country of birth, country of citizenship, source and amount of financial resources, academic program, level of study, and program start and completion dates.
- Whether the student enrolled or failed to enroll.
- A change of the student's or dependent's legal name.
- A change of address (must be reported within 10 days).
- Graduation prior to the completion date listed on the I-20.
- Failure to complete the academic program or to maintain status.
- Academic or disciplinary actions taken due to criminal conviction.
- Termination date and reason for termination.
- Other data generated by standard procedures such as program extension, school transfer, change in level of study, change of program, optional practical training and reinstatement.

#### *Sevis Fee*

Starting September 1, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security will charge a \$100 SEVIS fee for

those applying for F-1 student visas. The purpose of this fee is to contribute towards the costs of operation of the SEVIS system.

**The fee has to be paid prior to the F-1 visa interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate. Canadian citizens have to pay the fee prior to applying for F-1 status at a port of entry into the U.S.A. Non-immigrants currently in the US who are applying for a change of status to F-1 must pay the fee before filing their change of status application.**

You can pay the fee electronically or via the mail. You can pay electronically using a credit card and by completing Form I-901, Fee Remittance for Certain F, M, and J Non-immigrants. You can pay through the mail by submitting Form I-910 with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency. To ensure electronic verification of the fee make sure to make the payment well in advance of your application for F-1 status. More information regarding the SEVIS fee can be found at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/factsheets/sevisfactsheet.htm>

### **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Permission for Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorizes students to obtain paid, professional-level employment related to their field of study for a period of 12 months. You can apply for your OPT 120 days prior to graduation, but the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USICS) must receive your application by your graduation date. The USICS can take up to 3-4 months to process each application so apply early to avoid delays. Please read the procedure section below to learn how to assemble your OPT application and make an appointment with Francoise Freyre to complete your OPT application.

You can only start working once your OPT is approved and you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. You can only begin working on the "start date" indicated on your EAD card and must stop working by the "stop date". Choose your start date carefully so that 1) you are able to start working when you want to and 2) that you do not waste any of your allotted 12 month work period.

More information on the OPT and EAD card can be found at the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) website at <http://uscis.gov>. To apply for an OPT you must file the Application for Employment, Form I-765, with the USCIS. Instructions for the form list the eligibility criteria, required documentation and processing fee.

Listed below are certain eligibility requirements for and information about the OPT:

- You must be a registered student in legal F-1 status to apply.
- You must have registered full-time with your school for at least one academic year.
- You must complete all requirements for the granting of your degree.
- Your employment must be related to your field of study.
- Though the maximum allowed time of employment is 12 months, you may change jobs during this period.
- Your OPT can be authorized without a job offer.
- You must update your address with the Graduate School Office when you are on OPT.

#### *Procedure for Applying for an OPT*

##### *Step One*

- Pick up an application package from the Graduate School Office.

- Read through the entire application package before filling it out.
- Obtain a letter from your Major Sponsor or from the person offering you the employment.
- Complete Form I-765 and sign. (See instructions for Form I-765 below). General instructions for filling out immigration forms can be found at the following USCIS website: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/forminfo.htm>.

##### *Step Two*

- Make an appointment with Francoise Freyre, (212) 746-6120, at the Graduate School Office. Bring your most recent I-20 (original, not a photocopy), as well as the documents listed below.

##### *Step Three*

- Make a photocopy of all of these documents for your records:
  - 1) The completed Form I-765.
  - 2) A photocopy of your SEVIS I-20 with the recommendation for Optional Practical Training on page 3 (normally kept by the Graduate School Office).
  - 3) A photocopy of both sides of your I-94 Card.
  - 4) Two green card type photographs according to INS specifications (NOT passport photos).\*
  - 5) A copy of the photograph page of your passport.
  - 6) A copy of the most recent U.S. visa page in your passport.
  - 7) A photocopy of your previous EAD, if applicable.
  - 8) The \$175 application fee made payable to USCIS (money order or check, NO CASH).
  - 9) You should also include copies of any previous I-20 documents if you transferred from another school.

- \* Print your name and admission number lightly in pencil on the back of each photograph, put the photographs in an envelope and attach the envelope to the petition. **DO NOT CUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS!** For information on the photograph requirements visit the following site: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/forminfo.htm> - Photos.

##### *Step Four*

- Staple all the above documents together and send by certified mail with a return receipt to the USCIS (see address below). The return receipt will provide proof that your application was received and will tell you on what date it was received. After mailing in the documents, you will receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) stating you need to wait for about 60-90 days to receive your EAD. In general, the application approval takes **approximately 90 days**. You **cannot** begin working before receiving the EAD card.
- Mail these documents to:
  - U.S.C.I.S.
  - Vermont Service Center
  - 75 Lower Weldon Street
  - St. Albans, VT 05479-0001

To check on the status of your OPT application you can call the telephone number listed on your receipt notice from the USCIS. When calling, you will have to refer to the receipt number (SRC number) written on your receipt notice. Additionally, you may check the status of your application online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/graphics/cris/jsps/index.jsp?textFlag=N>.

If 90 days have gone by since the receipt date on your receipt notice then your OPT card is late. In such cases you can check on the status of your OPT by calling or online (as mentioned above). If your application has been approved you will have to wait to receive your EAD card in the mail. If your application is still pending and it has been 90 days,

you can apply for an interim card by making an appointment with an immigration official at the USCIS New York District Office. You can make an appointment online at <http://infopass.uscis.gov/>

#### *Instructions for completing Form I-765*

- 1) Check the first box “permission to accept employment” and fill out lines 1 through 15. Then sign and date under “certification”.
- 2) Line #3 Return Address: Use an address where you can receive mail for the next 3 months.
- 3) Line #10: In most cases you will use your I-94 number found on the I-94 card that you received when you entered the US (small white card in your passport).
- 4) Box #11: You must check yes only if you have previously applied for an OPT at this or any other institution.
- 5) Line #16 enter: (c) (3) (i)
- 6) Remember to **sign and date** Form I-765.

#### *Travel*

Do not travel outside the US if you have graduated and are waiting for your EAD card. If you do so, you will lose F-1 status and are, therefore, not legally permitted to return and work on an OPT.

You are able to travel abroad if you meet the following criteria:

- You have applied for your OPT and are waiting for an EAD card but have not graduated yet.
- You will return before completing your degree program.
- Your visa and all travel documents are valid.

If you have graduated, you may travel abroad after you have received your EAD card provided that:

- Your I-20 has been endorsed in the last 6 months.
- Your EAD has not expired.

- You have a passport that is valid at least 6 months in advance (not Canadians).
- Your F-1 visa is valid.\*

\* If your F-1 visa has expired, you must be issued a new I-20 and will have to apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad for a new F-1 visa stamp. If this is the case, you must speak with Francoise Freyre before you finalize your plans. When applying for a new F-1 visa stamp, it will be your responsibility to convince the U.S. consular officer that you plan to return to your home country after completing your OPT. This may be difficult as you will now be working; not studying.

#### **Hiring an Immigration Attorney**

For certain immigration matters you may want to hire an immigration attorney to assist you. People typically choose a particular attorney based upon recommendations from friends or colleagues. When choosing an attorney you should make sure that they have handled cases similar to yours. You can contact the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) for names and contacts of immigration attorneys in the U.S.A. You can also visit the AILA website at <http://www.aila.org/contentViewer.aspx?bc=16,4794> to access their Immigration Lawyer Referral Service (ILRS) for a list of lawyers or contact the ILRS help line at 1-800-954-0254 to speak with a representative.

#### **Immigration Contacts at the Graduate School**

Francoise Freyre (212) 746-6120  
[ffreyre@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ffreyre@med.cornell.edu)  
Assistant Dean, WGSMS Graduate Office  
Oversees the SEVIS system for the WGSMS and is responsible for obtaining F-1 and OPT visas for all students.

Jeanie Huang (212) 746-1033  
[jch2003@med.cornell.edu](mailto:jch2003@med.cornell.edu)  
Immigration Manager, Human Resources  
Handles immigration matters for post-doctorals and scholars.

#### **Useful Links**

U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS)

- Main Page  
<http://uscis.gov>
- Forms  
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm#chart>

Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) – SEVIS information

[http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm\\_sevis.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/enforce/imm/imm_sevis.htm).

U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs – Technology Alert List

<http://travel.state.gov/state147566.html>

US Department of State – Websites of U.S. Embassies Worldwide

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Immigration Lawyer Referral Service (ILRS)

<http://www.aila.org/contentViewer.aspx?bc=16,4794>

ILRS help line 1-800-954-0254

## Tax Information

All students, both American and foreign, at the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS) have the legal responsibility to file U.S. tax returns. The information in this section is provided in order to facilitate the understanding of foreign nationals at the Graduate School of their tax filing obligations and the U.S. tax system.

The information in this section has been provided by students; not professional accountants. The Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS) cannot and does not provide advice about filing taxes. Filing taxes is a unique situation for each individual. Making sure that your taxes are filed properly is the responsibility of the student and the more informed about the situation and what is required you are, the smoother tax season will go. The best advice is: look into things, pay attention to dates, be aware and be prepared.

### Topics Covered

#### The American Tax System

#### Resident or Nonresident Alien for Tax Filing Purposes

#### Social Security Number and Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

#### Tuition Scholarship and Stipend

#### Tax Treaties

#### WINDSTAR

#### Tax Withholding Forms (W8-BEN, W-9 and W-4)

#### Forms Required For Filing Taxes

#### General Tax Filing Information

#### Information Contacts

#### Professional Tax Filing Help

#### List of Useful Forms for International Students

#### List of Useful Forms for All Graduate Students

#### List of Useful Forms for U.S. Residents

#### Useful Links

## The American Tax System

The tax filing system in the U.S.A. can be quite complicated. In general, employers are required to withhold taxes from their employees' paychecks. Then, each year, individuals are required to file tax returns to the federal and state governments for the previous calendar year, to reconcile the amount of tax that was withheld from the income (paid) with the amount of tax that they actually owe to the government. If too much tax was withheld during the year, an individual may be eligible to get a tax refund for the amount overpaid. If too little tax was withheld, then an individual may be required to pay additional tax. Many factors can influence the amount of tax that is owed by an individual and that is one factor that makes the system complicated.

### Resident or Nonresident Alien for Tax Filing Purposes

International students at the Graduate School are issued F-1 visas. Foreign nationals who hold F-1 visas are considered non-residents of the U.S.A. for federal tax purposes, for the first 5 years of their presence in the U.S.A. with that visa status. It is possible to file as a resident for tax purposes while still being considered a non-resident for immigration purposes. After 5 years, F-1 students are no longer automatically considered "exempt individuals". As a result, they can become subject to the [substantial presence test](#) and usually must file tax returns as resident aliens of the U.S.A. for tax purposes. Students who qualify under their country's treaty can continue to claim the treaty tax exemption (see *Tax Treaties*). Foreign nationals who have been issued a Permanent Resident Card ("Green Card") are considered resident aliens of the U.S.A. While non-residents are taxed only on their income from U.S. sources, residents are taxed on their world income. Non-residents may also be exempt from certain types of taxes while residents are not.

International students who are married to either an American citizen or a resident alien can file as residents for tax purposes if they choose. In the first year that this choice is made the individuals must file a joint income tax return, though, in the future the individuals can file separately. Once the decision to be treated as a resident alien is made the student/spouse must continue to file as a resident alien in subsequent years. The details on how to choose to file taxes in this way can be found in Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens, Chapter 1.

### Social Security Number and Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

In order to file either federal or state taxes in the U.S.A. individuals are required to have a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Foreign students at the Graduate School are allowed and required to obtain a Social Security Number. This is discussed in the [Applying for a Social Security Number](#) section. Some foreign nationals who have dependents with them in the U.S.A. (i.e. spouse, minor children) may be able to claim them as exemptions on their tax return in order to lower the amount of tax they owe. In order to do so, the dependents must also obtain a Social Security Number or ITIN. If dependents do not qualify for a Social Security Number, they can obtain an ITIN by completing and submitting a Form W-7 (Application for Individual Taxpayer Identification Number). An ITIN is for tax purposes only, it does not entitle the holder to social security benefits or immigration status under U.S. law. For more information about obtaining an ITIN see Publication 519 and Publication 1915 (Understanding Your Individual Tax Payer Identification Number).

## Tuition Scholarship and Stipend

All students at the Graduate School receive a tuition scholarship, which is classified as a qualified fellowship, and is a non-taxable income. You do not need to record this as income on your American income tax returns.

In addition to the tuition scholarship, graduate students are also given an annual stipend for living expenses. The student stipend is classified as a non-qualified fellowship for foreign nationals and is considered a taxable income. As such, the student stipend is subject to a federal tax withholding rate of 14%. The Graduate School is required to report this income on a Form 1042-S and issue it to students by March 15 of each year. After 5 years, F-1 students are eligible to pass the substantial presence test and can be considered resident aliens of the U.S.A. for tax purposes. Such students will have their stipend reported on a Form W-2 and the income will be subject to standard graduated tax withholding. Students who qualify under their country's treaty can continue to claim the treaty tax exemption (see *Tax Treaties*).

Funds received from scholarships awarded by outside funding sources will contribute towards the student stipend, not be added to it. Scholarship funds from U.S. sources will be recorded on a 1042-S for nonresident alien students and on a W-2 for resident alien students. Funds from sources outside the U.S. are not considered U.S. income and will not be reported by the Graduate School.

Additionally, any student who is enrolled and regularly attending classes at a school, college, or university may be exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes on pay for services performed for such school, college, or university.

## Tax Treaties

Certain countries have tax treaties with the U.S.A., which allow part or all of the stipend to be exempt from tax withholding. You can find a list of these treaties in Publication 901 – U.S. Tax Treaties. Be aware that not all countries have tax treaties with the U.S.A. and not all tax treaties provide exemptions to students; the details will vary from student to student, from year to year and from country to country. If there is a tax treaty that applies to you the Windstar system (see [WINDSTAR](#)) will identify it and will generate a Form W-8 BEN during your registration at the Graduate School during Orientation Week (see Publication 519).

As stated above, F-1 students who have been in the U.S.A. for 5 years become eligible to pass the substantial presence test and are considered resident aliens for tax purposes. Resident aliens are not generally granted tax treaty exemptions. Even if a student can pass the substantial presence test, they can be treated as a nonresident alien if they meet certain criteria (closer connection to home country, tax home in foreign country, etc.). Students who have been eligible to claim a tax treaty as nonresidents that has an exception to the treaty's saving clause can, if they qualify, continue to claim the treaty tax exemption. Such students should also re-evaluate their treaty standing to determine if any tax treaty they may have been claiming still applies, as some treaties have time period limits. If the treaty can still be claimed without proof of closer ties to the home country, the Windstar system will detect it and generate a Form W-9 and the student will be contacted to sign it. If proof of closer ties to the home country are required in order to continue to claim treaty benefits, upon being notified by the Payroll Department of their resident status, the student will need to submit a Form W-9 with an attached statement (see Form W-9 instructions) to the Payroll Department in order to continue to claim the

treaty. Information on these situations can be found in Publications 519 and 501.

While the Graduate School does not report students' income to the home country, it appears that the IRS does report income that is exempt under a treaty to the home country.

## WINDSTAR

The Graduate School uses computer software programs to help manage immigration and taxation related matters for its foreign national students and scholars. These programs can be collectively referred to as the Windstar system. This system automatically allows the Graduate School to determine the tax status, analyze tax treaties, determine applicable tax rates and exemptions, automatically prepare completed Forms 8233, W-8 BEN and W-9 for withholding exemptions, and Form 1042-S reporting for all foreign nationals. The program produces calendar year by calendar year status reports for substantial presence tests that are used to calculate the number of days that a foreign national is present in the U.S.A. and determine whether the individual is a nonresident alien or resident alien for purposes of calculating U.S. tax withholding. The Windstar system maintains visa records for all students and scholars and is used by the Graduate School to follow government data submission requirements to the INS' Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), which is described in the [Immigration](#) section.

## Tax Withholding Forms (W8-BEN, W-9 and W-4)

Upon arriving at the Graduate School all students are required to fill out tax withholding forms, which are used by the Payroll Department to calculate the amount of tax to be withheld from the student's bi-weekly paycheck. During Orientation Week all new

students are required to go to the Graduate School Office to have their immigration information inputted into the Windstar system (see [WINDSTAR](#)). All the required tax withholding forms will be generated and require signing at that time.

The student stipend is classified as a non-qualified fellowship and, as such, the Graduate School is required to withhold federal tax at a withholding rate of 14%. A tax treaty may exist between the United States and a student's home country that provides an additional exemption from or a reduced rate of withholding for some, or all, of the stipend. When the student information is inputted into the Windstar program at the Graduate Office, a Form W-8 BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding) will be generated for the student's signature and will be submitted to the Payroll Office on their behalf.

Students that were nonresident aliens and who became U.S residents for tax purposes, and that can continue to claim a tax treaty exemption as described above, are required to fill out a Form W-9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification). If the treaty can continue to be claimed without proof of closer ties to the home country, the Windstar system will detect this and generate the form automatically and the student will be notified. If additional proof of closer ties to the home country are required in order to continue to claim a tax treaty, when a student is notified by the Payroll Department of their resident status they will have to submit a Form W-9 with an attached statement (see Form W-9 for instructions) to the Payroll Office themselves.

Students who become resident aliens who cannot claim any tax treaties between their home country and the U.S.A. are required to fill out a Form W-4 to replace their Form W-8 BEN. The Graduate School monitors the immigration status of all students via the Windstar system and, at such time that a student

becomes a tax resident, they will be contacted by the Payroll Department to be notified of their change in status and asked to fill out and submit the required forms. As residents for tax purposes, such students will be taxed at a graduated rate based on their income in the same way that American citizens are. Students should determine what withholding rate would be most beneficial for them prior to filling this form out to avoid having either too much or too little tax withheld (see List of Forms for All Graduate Students).

### **Forms Required For Filing Taxes**

\*All tax forms & publications are available online. See Information Contacts.\*

#### *Federal Tax Return*

Highly recommended reading for determining how to file taxes as a foreign national is Publication 519 – U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens. This document provides a lot of information on how foreign nationals are taxed in the U.S.A. and how tax returns should be filed.

As a non-resident, you have to file the following federal tax forms:

- Form 1040NR or 1040NR EZ – U.S. Non-resident Alien Income Tax Return  
The 1040NR EZ is a simplified version of the 1040NR that can be used if certain criteria are met.
- Form 8843 – Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals With a Medical Condition (All non-resident F and J visa holders are considered *exempt individuals*, whether they have income or not, including dependents.)

If you claim a treaty tax exemption you must disclose the specific treaty article in your federal tax return.

The treaty articles and citation numbers are listed in Publication 901 – Table 2: Compensation for Personal Services Performed in the U.S.

#### *State Tax Return*

If you live in New York State you must also file a New York State tax return. Residency for state taxes is different from the definitions used by the federal government and literally refers to where you reside. For state income tax purposes, your resident status depends on where you were domiciled and where you maintained a permanent place of abode during the taxable year. In general, your domicile is the state where your permanent home is located. You are a New York State resident, though, if your domicile is not New York State, but you maintain a permanent place of abode in New York State and spend 184 days or more in New York State during the taxable year. This is the case for the majority of foreign nationals at the Graduate School. In your first year, you will not be a resident of New York State unless you have lived in the New York State for at least 184 days. In your second year, you need to determine your status as either a resident or a non-resident of New York State. If you have lived the entire year in New York State, like the majority of students, you will be considered a resident. For tax purposes, New York State residents are required to file Form IT-201 and non-residents are required to file Form IT-203.

New York City residents are not required to file a separate city tax return. The city tax that is withheld from the student stipend is reported on the New York State tax return.

### **General Tax Filing Information**

- Depending on the specific situation, additional forms than listed above may need to be filed.
- Tax forms and publications are available at most U.S. Embassies and/or Consulates.

- Copies of your 1042-S or W2, whichever you receive, must be attached to both your federal and state tax returns.
- You should photocopy your returns and all supporting documents before mailing and keep them for your personal records.
- In general, the tax filing postmark deadline (the day that the documents are actively received by the post office) for both the federal and state governments is April 15. Tax returns can be filed before this date if all the necessary documents are in hand. Also, this is a strict deadline only for individuals who are calculated to owe tax, if you do not owe any tax to the government or are calculated to receive a tax refund, you can file your tax return after April 15.
- The deadline for mailing IRS Form 8843 is June 15, but it can be included with your federal tax return.
- If you are unable to file your tax return by April 15 and you owe taxes, you must at least submit a request for extension of time to file your return to the federal and/or state government by April 15 (see the List of Useful Forms for All Graduate Students below).
- If you realize you have made a tax filing error (not simply mathematical), you can file an amended or corrected return with the federal and/or the state government. Include copies of any schedules that have been changed or any Forms W-2 or 1042-S you did not include. Generally, to claim a refund, the Form 1040X must be received within three years after the date you filed your original return or within two years after the date you paid the tax, whichever is later.

### Information Contacts

#### *Federal Government*

Tax Assistance 1-800-829-1040  
(24 hours, 7 days a week)

International Tax Assistance (787) 759-5100  
Forms & Publications 1-800-829-3676  
Hearing Impaired 1-800-829-4059  
Tax Return Mailing Address  
Internal Revenue Service  
Philadelphia, PA 19255

#### *New York State Government*

Tax Information 1-800-225-5829  
Forms & Publications 1-800-462-8100  
Tax Return Mailing Address  
State Processing Center  
P.O. Box 61000  
Albany NY 12261-0001

#### *Websites*

*\*All tax forms & publications are available online.\**

Internal Revenue Service  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)  
New York State Department of Taxation and Finance  
[www.tax.state.ny.us/](http://www.tax.state.ny.us/)

#### *Weill Medical College Contacts*

Francoise Freyre (212) 746-6120  
[ffreyre@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ffreyre@med.cornell.edu)  
Assistant Dean, WGSMS Graduate Office  
Oversees the SEVIS system for the WGSMS and is responsible for obtaining F-1 and OPT visas for all students.

Noreen Smith (212) 746-6565  
[nvsmith@med.cornell.edu](mailto:nvsmith@med.cornell.edu)  
Registrar, WGSMS Graduate Office  
Oversees the Windstar system for the WGSMS.

Suzanne Baly (212) 746-6565  
[spbaly@med.cornell.edu](mailto:spbaly@med.cornell.edu)  
Administrative Secretary, WGSMS Graduate Office  
Collects and inputs incoming student information into the Windstar system.

Jeanie Huang (212) 746-1033  
[jch2003@med.cornell.edu](mailto:jch2003@med.cornell.edu)

Immigration Manager, Human Resources  
Handles immigration matters for post-doctorals and scholars.

Ewart Johnson (212) 680-7105  
[ejohnson@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ejohnson@med.cornell.edu)  
Manager of Compliance & Disbursements Review, Finance Department  
Handles procedures to ensure proper tax withholding and issuance of tax documents for the Weill Medical College.

### Tax Information Sessions

Every year, the Graduate School holds an information session hosted by a representative from the Internal Revenue Service to provide tax advice to international students. It is highly recommend that foreign students attend this session, as this is the opportunity to address personal and specific tax questions.

### Professional Tax Filing Help

You may also wish to consider seeking professional help for filing your tax returns. Be aware, though, that many of the easily accessible and inexpensive accountant services are not very familiar with the details involved in filing taxes for foreign nationals. When choosing an accountant you should discuss with them their qualifications before contracting their services. An internet-based company that specializes in filing taxes for foreign nationals and that has helped some graduate students in the past is Tax Back International, Inc. Another internet-based company is LBF International Tax, LLC.

### List of Useful Forms for International Students

- Form 1040NR and Instructions “U.S. Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return”
- Form 1040NR EZ and Instructions “U.S. Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return”
- Form 1040-ES (NR) “U.S. Estimated Tax for Nonresident Alien Individuals”
- Publication 901 “U.S. Tax Treaties”
- Publication 519 “U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens”
- Form 1078 “Certificate of Alien Claiming Residence in the U.S.”

### List of Useful Forms for All Graduate Students

- Publication 4 “Student’s Guide to Federal Income Tax”
- Publication 505 “Tax Withholding & Estimated Tax”
- Publication 521 “Moving Expenses”
- Form 3903 “Moving Expenses”
- Publication 520 “Scholarships and Fellowships”
- Publication 525 “Taxable and Nontaxable Income”
- Publication 503 “Child and Dependent Care Expenses”
- Publication 54 “Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad”
- Publication 1915 “Understanding Your Individual Tax Payer Identification ITIN”
- Form 4868 “Application of Automatic Extension to File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return”
- Form 1040X “Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return”
- NYS Form IT-201 “Resident Income Tax Return For Full-Year State Residents”
- NYS Form IT-203 “Nonresident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return”

- NYS Form IT-370 “Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File for Individuals”
- NYS Form IT-201-X “Amended Resident Income Tax Return”
- NYS Form IT-203-X “Amended Nonresident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return”

### List of Useful Forms for U.S. Residents

- Form 1040 and Instructions “U.S. Individual Income Tax Return”
- Form 1040-ES “Estimated Tax for Individuals”
- Form 8863 “Education Credits (Hope and Lifetime Learning Credits)”
- Publication 970 “Tax Benefits for Higher Education”
- Publication 596 and Schedule EIC “Earned Income Credit”

### Useful Links

- IRS International Taxpayer Section  
<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/index.html>
- IRS Foreign National Frequently Asked Questions  
<http://www.irs.gov/faqs/faq13.html>
- IRS Tax Topic 851 – Resident and Nonresident Aliens  
<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc851.html>
- IRS Tax Topic 852 – Dual Status Aliens  
<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc852.html>
- IRS Tax Topic 857 – Individual Tax Payer Identification Number – W-7  
<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc857.html>
- IRS – Individual Tax Payer Identification Number  
<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96287,00.html>
- IRS Tax Topic 354 – Dependents  
<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc354.html>
- IRS Tax Topic 100 - Help Available  
<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc100.html>

IRS International Taxpayer – Substantial Presence Test

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96352,00.html>

International Student

<http://www.internationalstudent.com/tax/faq.shtml>

LBF International Tax, LLC.

<http://www.LBFtax.com/>

1-877-977-0090

Tax Back International

<http://www.taxback.com/>

1-888-203-8900

H & R Block

<http://www.hrblock.com/>

360 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues),  
New York, NY

1-212-268-5751

Identify yourself as Cornell Medical College international student and ask for someone experienced in “non-resident” taxation. While there are other H&R Block locations, this office has some experience with non-resident tax issues.

## Student Health

For international students, the health care system in the United States can be somewhat confusing and can be quite different from what you are used to in your own respective countries. There are a number of issues related to health care that you need to be aware of and this site provides information on some basic health care matters.

The information in this section has been provided by students. The Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences has administrative officers, Weill Medical College health professionals and insurance company liaisons who are available for advice and guidance on health and health insurance matters. Understanding the terms of the health insurance coverage provided by the Graduate School is the best way for you to make the wisest decisions when it comes to your and your dependents' health. The more informed you are about the available health services and the way to obtain them, the easier it will be for you to get the services you require without any surprise charges. The best advice is: look into things, pay attention to details and be aware.

### Topics Covered

**What is health insurance and how do I get it?**

**Consulting a Physician or a Specialist**

**Consulting a Dentist**

**Prescription Medicine**

**Medical Bills**

**Medical Testing for Incoming Students**

**Health Care Contacts at Cornell**

**Useful Links**

**Nearby Pharmacies**

### What is health insurance and how do I get it?

The U.S. has highly rated medical facilities and services that can be expensive and that is why purchasing a health insurance plan is a necessity here. Such insurance plans require periodic payments and in return the insurance company guarantees the provision of health care treatment when the need arises. The Graduate School pays the yearly premium for health insurance for its students without any charge to them. There is, however, a “co-pay” cost for different health services. A “co-pay” is a small payment you need to make when visiting a health care specialist or a when purchasing prescription medication that contributes towards the total cost of the service, and the insurance company covers the remainder of the cost. The amount of “co-pay” required is detailed on your health care insurance card. The current insurance company that is providing health insurance coverage for the students is United Healthcare. A company called Travers, O’Keefe is the Plan Administrator/Billing Consultant for our insurance plan. It is Travers, O’Keefe that receives the bills of service from health professionals and directs United Healthcare on how to pay them. See the [Medical Bills](#) section below for more information.

To apply for health insurance you must fill out a health insurance application form at the Graduate School Office. You will be mailed your health insurance card shortly there after. You will need a SSN number to apply for health insurance; however, if you do not have a SSN upon registration, the Graduate School will issue you a “dummy” SSN for health insurance enrollment purposes. Upon receiving your actual SSN, you are responsible for providing it to the Graduate School, to Student Health Services and to the insurance company and plan administrator, as soon as possible. You should carry your health insurance card with you at all times, as you will require it in the case of an emergency.

If you do not want the health insurance offered by the Graduate School, for instance, if you are covered by the health insurance of your spouse or wish to purchase your own coverage, you can opt out by indicating so on the application form. There is no reimbursement to the student for opting out of the Graduate School’s insurance policy.

### Consulting a Physician or a Specialist

To see a physician you can make an appointment at the Student Health Services Office located at 413 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street (between York and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenues), Suite 21. You must make an appointment over the phone by calling (212) 746-1450. The physician can be visited Monday through Friday between 8am and 4pm. There is no fee for consultations at the Student Health Services Office. When you register at the Graduate School during Orientation Week of your first year you must present your medical history for filing with the Student Health Services Office. You must update your file with facts about new allergies and medical conditions during your tenure at the Graduate School, so that the physician is aware of your health status.

If you need to see a physician on nights, weekends or holidays, you should report to the emergency room (ER) at the New York Presbyterian Hospital (68<sup>th</sup> Street entrance between York Avenue and the East River). In you are not in the vicinity of NYPH, go to an emergency room at the hospital closest to you. You will have to pay a co-pay for visits to the emergency room and you should make yourself aware of any requirements for an ER visit by United Healthcare in case of such an emergency. If any medication is prescribed, this can be purchased at the many pharmacies around campus. A co-pay is required for prescription medication. You should notify both the Student Health Services Office and the “Care Coordination” division at United Healthcare within 24 hours of visits to the ER.

Upon seeing a physician at the Student Health Services Office, they might recommend that you visit a specialist. There are a number of specialists you can visit within the United Healthcare's network of physicians, a list of which is provided at the Student Health Services Office and on the United Healthcare website. The specialist that the Student Health Services physician refers you to will usually be an in-network physician. A co-pay is required for consultations with specialists and is usually paid at the specialist's office after your appointment. United Healthcare does not cover (pay for) visits to specialists outside its network of physicians and you will have to pay significantly more to do so. The details of United Healthcare's health coverage for different services and their costs are clearly outlined in the insurance package you will receive when you register and at the company's webpage ([www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com)).

### **Consulting a Dentist**

The Graduate School has arranged for free, annual visits to the dentist for a general teeth cleaning (including X-rays) at the New York Presbyterian Hospital and Weill Medical Center Dental Clinic. The clinic is located in the Baker Pavilion, at 525 East 68<sup>th</sup> Street (between York Avenue and the East River), on the 21<sup>st</sup> Floor. Students must pay for additional cleanings and other dental services out of pocket, but the costs are quite low. You can get an estimated cost for a service over the phone. To visit the clinic you must make an appointment by calling (212) 746-5190. The clinic is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Please be aware that the clinic is very busy and it can take a long time to get an appointment, so you should plan ahead if you wish to see a dentist. In the case of an emergency you should go directly to the ER.

Some students also decide to see dentists of their own choosing and pay for the services done out of pocket.

### **Prescription Medication**

Prescription medication can be purchased at the many pharmacies located around the medical campus. A co-pay is required in order to receive your prescription medication. A co-pay is the portion of the total cost that you have to pay for the medication and the insurance company will pay the remainder of the cost. You must have your insurance card at the time of purchase of prescribed medication. With many of the pharmacies around campus, after you first set up an account with them and provide your contact and insurance information, you will no longer need to present your insurance card each time you go back.

There is also a mail-order prescription service available for those students who require monthly prescriptions from Medeco Health Home Delivery Pharmacy Service. You can pick up the order form at the Student Health Services Office and mail in your prescription. Payments are made by check or credit card. Your medication will be mailed to you in 3-month allotments. To order refills of your medication, you can call 1-800-473-3455 (1-800-4REFILL) or go to the United Healthcare website. More information about this service is available on the website at <http://www.myuhc.com/>.

### **Medical Bills**

Every medical service performed for you generates a bill of service (also known as "claim") that is sent to the insurance plan administrator and then the insurance company for payment. Sometimes you may incorrectly receive medical bills for services that our health insurance policy should pay. In such instances, you can contact Travers, O'Keefe, which is our Health Plan Administrator company for United Healthcare. The WGSMS liaison at Travers, O'Keefe is Irene Sais, who serves as an advocate on behalf of Cornell Medical College and Graduate

School students. She can be contacted for assistance with enrollment, eligibility, claim issues, service issues, and any other questions related to our medical plan. Irene can be reached at (212) 742-7900 or by email at [wmcstudents@travers-okeefe.com](mailto:wmcstudents@travers-okeefe.com). Additional contact information for her is listed below under [Health Care Contacts at WGSMS](#).

### **Medical Testing for Incoming Students**

Incoming students will receive information and forms from Student Health Services detailing what they require of you prior to your beginning your studies at the Graduate School. Student Health Services usually requires that you submit the results of a recent physical examination and a record of your immunizations. Blood titers to determine immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella will be drawn when you arrive at the WGSMS. International students are also required to take a PPD test to determine if they have been exposed to tuberculosis. If you ever received the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MTB), you should be aware of this as your Purified Protein Derivative (PPD) test result will most likely be positive. This does not necessarily indicate the presence of MTB in the body, though. If your PPD test result is positive, you will be required to take a chest X-ray. Even if the X-ray indicates the absence of active disease, the Student Health Services physician will recommend that you take a 9-month antibiotic regimen of Isoniazid (INH). To inquire more about this you can contact your physician in your home country. All these tests are conducted free of charge for the students at the WGSMS.

When you arrive at the Graduate School and have your first health examination, you will also be offered the Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge. If you have already begun the vaccination process, you can continue it here without cost to you. In addition, the Graduate School offers its students an annual

influenza (flu) vaccine for free. The Meningococcol Meningitis Vaccine (Menomune) is also available to students at a charge of \$80. During Orientation Week, you will receive an introduction to Student Health Services, at which time you can get answers to additional questions you may have.

### Health Care Contacts at WGSMS

#### *Student Health Service*

418 East 71st Street, Suite 21  
Phone: (212) 746-1450 Fax: (212) 746-1732  
Medical Director: Maria Maldonado, M.D.  
Hours: Monday – Friday, 8am – 4pm

#### *Mental Health and Substance Abuse*

Mental Health Director: Richard Friedman, M.D.  
Phone: (212) 746-5775

#### *New York Presbyterian Hospital and Weill Medical Center Dental Clinic*

The Baker Pavillion, 525 East 68<sup>th</sup> Street (at York Avenue), Floor 21  
Phone: (212) 746-5190  
Hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

#### *United Healthcare Group Company*

Phone: (866) 633-2446  
WGSMS Group #: 702477

#### *Travers, O’Keefe (Health Plan Administrator)*

Contact: Irene Sais  
Phone: (212) 742-7900 Fax: (212) 742-9423  
Address: 11 Hanover Square  
New York, N.Y. 10005  
Email: [wmcstudents@travers-okeefe.com](mailto:wmcstudents@travers-okeefe.com)

#### *Graduate Student Executive Committee (GSEC) Student Health Representative*

This GSEC representative is elected annually and can be contacted for health related information or if problems arise.

Current Representative: Tina Higgins

Email: [chh2006@med.cornell.edu](mailto:chh2006@med.cornell.edu)

#### *International Travel*

Provides vaccinations for travel abroad.

Phone: (212) 746-1601

### Useful Links

United Health Care - Main Webpage

<http://www.uhc.com/>

My United Healthcare - Personal Account Log In

<http://www.myuhc.com/>

WGSMS Student Health Services

<http://www.med.cornell.edu/education/student-affairs/student-health/>

International Student Insurance

<http://www.InternationalStudentInsurance.com>

### Nearby Pharmacies

Duane Reade

1187 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue at 64<sup>th</sup> Street (917) 432-0634

1345 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street (212) 535-9816

CVS

1396 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at 72 Street (212) 249-5062

Eckerd

1299 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at 68<sup>th</sup> Street (212) 772-0104

## Applying for a Social Security Number (SSN)

All individuals who receive income in the U.S.A. are required to have a Social Security Number (SSN). As such, foreign national students at the Graduate School are required to obtain a SSN. A SSN will allow you to receive your stipend, register with the school's insurance company and carry out other financial transactions. This section helps to explain how to apply for a SSN and details about the way the number can be used.

The information provided in this section has been provided by students. While the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences will help facilitate the process of obtaining a SSN for its international graduate students by providing immigration documents and a letter certifying student status, it is the responsibility of the student to properly apply and obtain a SSN. To ensure that all the requirements for this process are met, the government websites indicated in the text should be checked to verify the proper procedures.

### Topics Covered

**Why do you need a SSN?**

**Why does SSN privacy matter?**

**How do you apply for a SSN?**

**What do you need to bring to the Social Security Office?**

**How long will it take until you receive a SSN?**

### Why do you need a SSN?

The Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. government requires that U.S. residents who receive income are required to have an SSN and that employers are required to report income to the IRS using the SSN. This is also the case for foreign nationals who are present and allowed to work in the U.S.A. As such, all the international students accepted to the Graduate School are required to obtain a SSN. You need a SSN in order to:

- 1) Receive your stipend.
- 2) Register with the school's insurance provider.
- 3) Open a bank account.
- 4) File for taxes.

The tax filing requirement for a SSN or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is discussed in the [Tax Section](#).

### Why does SSN privacy matter?

Except for the reasons given above, there are few situations that *require* you to give out your SSN.

There are many restrictions on government agencies asking for your SSN, but few on individuals or companies. There are two problems with the way SSNs are currently used. First, SSNs are used (by different parties) as if they were both a representation of identity and a secure password. Second, SSNs have become a widely used identifier, which can be used to tie multiple records together about a single individual.

Many institutions, including hospitals and some banks and brokerages, use clients' SSNs as a secure representation of their identity. Other institutions, notably banks, use SSNs as if they were secret passwords that only the owner would know. If someone knows the name and the SSN, and is willing to say they have forgotten the account number, they

will usually be allowed to transfer funds, or make other changes to an account with serious repercussions. The problem is that these uses are incompatible. As SSNs are widely used representations of people's identities, appearing on driver's licenses, mailing labels, and publicly-posted progress reports at universities, their broad availability becomes more apparent.

In the U.S.A., one of the fastest growing crimes is that of identity theft, where a criminal gains unauthorized access to a victim's finances by misrepresenting themselves as that person. In many cases it is the norm to use your SSN as described above, but use your best judgment when giving your number to any individual or company. It is strongly recommended that you memorize your number rather than carrying your card with you. An excellent site that describes these issues is Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility at <http://www.cpsr.org/cpsr/privacy/ssn/ssn.faq.html>.

### How do you apply for a SSN?

To apply for a Social Security Number and card, you need to complete Form SS-5 (Application for a Social Security Card). Form SS-5 can be used by anyone who has never been issued a card, needs a replacement card or has changed his or her name. This service is free. You can obtain the form at any Social Security Administration (SSA) Office or download it at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html>. The SSA form must be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper in blue or black ink for it to be acceptable.

The local SSA Office is located at:

755 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at 41<sup>st</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm

Once you complete Form SS-5, you must take it to the SSA Office with the required original supporting

documents, as explained on the form. Photocopies or notarized copies are not acceptable. The application can be submitted by mail to the SSA Office, but you would also have to send all your immigration and identification documents via mail and be without them for a certain amount of time, so we don't advise it.

If you need to find another SSA Office location you can call 1-800-772-1213 or search at <http://s3abaca.ssa.gov/pro/foi/foi-home.html>.

### **What do you need to bring to the Social Security Office?**

In addition to the completed SS-5 form, you will also need to submit at least two documents as evidence of your age, identity, and lawful alien status. On your arrival at the Graduate School you will receive a letter verifying your status as a student of the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences of Cornell University and that your F-1 visa status allows you to be employed on campus. When you submit your application, you will need to bring this letter, your Form I-20, your passport and your I-94 card (the white card stapled inside your passport) to the SSA Office.

### **How long will it take until you receive a SSN?**

It should take approximately two weeks for you to receive your SSN card in the mail. Please note that the agency needs to verify documents from non-U.S. citizens with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) before issuing a SSN card. Most of the time, they can quickly verify your documents online with the DHS. They will issue the card within two days of receiving verification from DHS.

## Applying for a New York State Photo Identification Card

Though not a requirement, there are some circumstances that make having a New York State Photo Identification Card useful for some students. If the photo identification that you have is in another language or all you have is your passport, it can be easier to present a state-issued ID for identification purposes when you need to. This section explains some of the reasons you might want a NYS Photo ID and how to get one.

The information in this section has been provided by students. The Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences does not advocate or facilitate the obtaining of a NYS Photo ID by its students; it is the student's choice if they wish to obtain one. As the guidelines for obtaining a NYS Photo ID may change, it is important that the information provided in this section be verified by visiting the websites indicated in the text.

### Topics Covered

**Why do you need a NYS photo identification (ID) card?**

**How do you apply for a NYS photo ID card?**

**What do you need to bring to the Department of Motor Vehicles?**

**How long will it take to receive a NYS photo ID card?**

**Why do you need a NYS photo identification (ID) card?**

You are not obliged to have a state photo ID. However, there are a few instances where having one can make life easier.

For example:

You have to be over the age of 21 to enter bars and clubs in the U.S. You can use your passport or ID card from your country to enter most places, but if they are not in English they may be refused. It makes things much easier if you have a NYS ID card and, in addition, you don't have to carry your passport with you and risk losing it.

If you would like to open a store credit card, the store representative will most likely want to see a valid photo ID and they may not accept non-American or non-English forms of identification.

### How do you apply for a NYS photo ID card?

You have to go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to apply for a photo ID card. The DMV to which foreign nationals can go is located at:

Herald Square – NY State DMV  
1293-1311 Broadway, 8th Floor (between West 33 & West 34 Streets), New York, NY 10001  
Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm  
Telephone: (212) 645-5550 or (718) 966-6155

Information about obtaining a NY State non-drivers ID card, as well as different drivers licenses, can be found at the NY State DMV Office website at <http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/index.htm>.

**What do you need to bring to the Department of Motor Vehicles?**

Documents showing proofs of identity and date of birth are required to apply for a photo ID card. Each document is designated a point value and you have to provide enough documents to add up to a total of 6 points.

Below are some documents that can be used and their point value but a complete list can be obtained at <http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/idlicense.htm#idpoints>

Foreign passport with your visa, I-94 card, and Form I-20 that is valid for at least 6 more months

- 3 points\*

A U.S. Social Security card that shows your signature

- 2 points\*\*

A U.S. college photo ID card and a current academic transcript

- 2 points

A computer printed pay stub that shows your name

- 1 point

An employee ID card that shows your name

- 1 point

A health insurance card issued in the U.S.

- 1 point

A utility bill (cellular phones are not considered utilities)

- 1 point

A W-2 form

- 1 point

Only one of the following items issued by a financial institution

- 1 point

- A bank statement.

- A cancelled check which displays your pre-printed name.

- An ATM card or a debit card that displays your pre-printed name and your signature.

- A valid major U.S. credit card.

\* Foreigner nationals **must** present a valid passport, I-94 card and Form I-20 as part of their proofs of identification, but they will only be counted towards the required points if the names on all 3 are the same as the name on the other proofs presented.

\*\* Currently, **all** individuals must present their U.S. Social Security card as part of their proofs of

identification, no matter what other points of identification they have.

All the documents that you bring to use as identification must have the **same** name on them. Abbreviations of the first name can cause a problem depending on the DMV clerk that you meet with. For those students who have gotten married and are changing their surnames, it is advisable to change your name on all of your identification prior to trying to obtain a NY State ID card. A marriage certificate from outside the U.S. is not considered a valid proof of marriage. If your name is too long to fit on the cards you are using as proofs of identification, it is better to have your first name as an initial than a shortening of your surname.

It is best to plan on arriving at the DMV Office prior to their opening, as the office is incredibly busy. There is usually a line of people outside before the office opens every day. If you arrive later in the day, it will definitely take several hours for you to have your application processed. The DMV representatives are very strict on the rules regarding points so be very sure that you have exactly the proofs that are eligible and even more if possible, as they will reject your application and send you away without debate if you do not.

**How long will it take to receive a NYS photo ID card?**

Your New York State photo ID card will be mailed to you in 2 - 4 weeks.

## Navigating New York City

Getting around New York City is made easy by the availability of several modes of transportation. It can be a bit confusing until you understand how the transportation systems here work, but once you do, you can get anywhere in the city easily without the need of a car. After living in New York City for a while, many people don't want to go back to trying to get around by car again!

The information in this section has been provided by students. The Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences (WGSMS) does not issue travel advice or information. Before making travel plans, the information in this section should be verified at the business websites indicated in the text.

### Topics Covered

**Metrocards**

**Subway and Buses**

**Traveling Out of New York City**

**New York City Area Airports**

**Driver Permits and State Identification**

**Useful Links**

### Metrocards

MetroCards are passes used to pay for travel on subways, buses, ferries and the Roosevelt Island Tram. They can be purchased at any subway station, as well as at MetroCard merchants throughout the city. In the area, MetroCards can be purchased in the Cornell Medical Bookstore, located on East 70th Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and York Avenues. A MetroCard can save you money on multiple rides. Options include the \$7 one-day Fun Pass; the 7- (\$21) and 30-day (\$70) unlimited ride cards; and a pay-per-ride card (\$10 for 6 rides, \$20 for 12 rides, but you may put any amount of money onto a MetroCard). The cards do expire though so you should be sure to monitor the amount of money you have on your card as the expiry date nears so you can transfer the funds to a new card.

### Subway and Buses

Traveling within the 5 boroughs is easily possible by bus or subway train. Bus and subway maps and general information from the Metropolitan Transport Authority can be found at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info).

Subways are a fast, easy, and inexpensive way to get around the city. Trains run 24 hours a day, with waiting time between trains normally just a few minutes, depending on the time of day. The subway operates 24 hours a day, is safe, and is used daily by more than 3.5 million people. Subways traverse Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx; Staten Island is served by the Staten Island Railway, with connections to the Staten Island Ferry from the St. George station. The cost is \$2 per ride, no matter the distance. You can only pay the fare with a MetroCard. . Each paid trip gives you a free subway-to-bus transfer that is good for 2 hours after swiping your MetroCard.

Anywhere in the city you are usually within a few blocks of a bus stop. Routes run uptown/downtown and crosstown from 6am until shortly after midnight, with the waiting time between each bus approximately 5-15 minutes, depending on the time of day. The cost is \$2 per ride, no matter the distance and you can pay your fare with a MetroCard or exact change in coins. You will also receive a transfer that will allow you to take another bus or subway train for free within 2 hours of getting on the bus. Keep in mind that, while buses are a great way to see the city and get to your destination, the ride can be slow going when there is a lot of traffic – if you have the time and patience, sit back and enjoy the ride!

### Local transport

The subway station closest to student housing and the WGSMS laboratories is located at Lexington Avenue and East 68<sup>th</sup> Street, which is a stop on the number **6** green line. The green line runs north/south on the east side of Manhattan and into Brooklyn. From the 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Station you can catch the **4** or **5** trains on the green line and the **N** or **R** trains on the yellow line.

Buses that are readily available in the area are:

M66 and M72 - travel crosstown

M31 - travels from West 57<sup>th</sup> Street to East 92<sup>nd</sup> Street along York Avenue

M15 - travels uptown to East 125<sup>th</sup> Street along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and downtown along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

### Traveling Out of New York City

New York City has two main rail stations, Grand Central Terminal and Pennsylvania (Penn) Station. Grand Central is on the East Side, in midtown, and Penn Station is on the West Side, just below midtown. Both stations are served by numerous bus and subway lines.

Grand Central serves the Metro-North Commuter Railroad, which goes to NYC suburbs in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Penn Station serves the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), a commuter railroad serving New York's Long Island; Amtrak, the U.S. national passenger railroad, serving many points throughout the U.S.; New Jersey Transit, a commuter line serving points in New Jersey; and PATH (Port Authority Trans Hudson), a subway line serving Manhattan and New Jersey.

Traveling by bus is also an option and several bus lines have services that originate and terminate at the Port Authority Bus Terminal. If you are traveling to cities along the east coast namely Boston, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. a cheap and convenient service to use is the popular Chinatown buses, bus schedules and ticket prices can be found at the Chinatown Bus Lines website (<http://www.staticleap.com/chinatownbus/>).

### **New York City Area Airports**

Three airports are located in and around the New York City area. Both the John F. Kennedy (JFK) International and the La Guardia Airports are located in Queens. Newark Liberty International Airport is located in Newark, New Jersey. More details about each can be found at the Port Authority website (<http://www.panynj.gov/>).

Commuting to and from airports in NYC can be a hassle and most people use the NYC taxi cabs. It is sometimes cheaper, however, to use one of the many shuttle services that are also readily available. Contact numbers for shuttles can also be found at the Port Authority website.

You can also use the subway system to get to the JFK Airport. Take the **A** train on the blue line from Manhattan to the Howard Beach/JFK Airport stop

and then transfer to the AirTrain monorail to get directly to the airport.

The Newark Liberty International Airport can be reached by taking the North East Corridor Line of the New Jersey Transit Railway, which has a stop at the airport.

If you decide to use a cab, we strongly urge that you use a metered yellow cab, rather than an unmarked freelance cab, which are illegal and could also be unsafe. Alternatively, you could use a private car service.

### **Driver Permits and State Identification**

Some students and postdoctoral fellows working in the laboratories here at the WGSMS have found it convenient to live outside the immediate area and have acquired their own vehicles. If you are considering this as an option, you will need to acquire the necessary documentation for owning and operating a vehicle. The information you will need to do this is provided in the links below. Even if you are not planning on obtaining your own vehicle it is sometimes necessary to get state identification, and acquiring this will also involve interacting with the facilities of the New York or New Jersey motor vehicle authorities. This is discussed further in the [Applying for a New York State Photo Identification Card](#) section.

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles  
[www.nydmv.state.ny.us](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us)  
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission  
[www.state.nj.us/mvc](http://www.state.nj.us/mvc)

### **Useful Links**

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of NY State  
<http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/>

Grand Central Terminal (201) 346-4200  
Broadway between 178<sup>th</sup> & 179<sup>th</sup> Streets and Fort  
Washington & Wadsworth Avenues

<http://www.grandcentralterminal.com/>

Penn Station (212) 630-6401  
33<sup>rd</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues  
<http://www.amtrak.com/stations/nyp.html>

### **AMTRAK**

National railway with lines from Boston to Washington D.C.

<http://www.amtrak.com/stations/nyp.html>

### **Long Island Rail Road**

Railway from NYC to Long Island.

<http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/lirr/>

### **Metro-North Railroad**

Railway from NYC to upstate New York and Connecticut.

<http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/mnr/>

### **New Jersey Transit**

Railway from NYC to New Jersey.

<http://www.njtransit.com/>

### **PATH Train**

Commuter railway from NYC to northern New Jersey.

<http://www.panynj.gov/path/pathfram.HTM>

### **Chinatown Bus Lines**

Information on bus lines to Boston, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia & other destinations.

<http://www.staticleap.com/chinatownbus/>

### **Transit Center, Inc.**

TransitGuide – your gateway to transit service in the NY region with links to all the major transit providers.

<http://www.transitcenter.com/transitguide/index.htm>

NYC Visit - NYC's official tourism web site; sponsored by NYC & Company, NYC's official tourism marketing organization.

Contains a lot of travel links and information.

<http://www.nycvisit.com/content/index.cfm?pagePkey=14>

STA Travel

A travel agency specifically for students that books discounted travel tickets. Locations all around the world.

<http://www.statravel.com/statravel/default.aspx>

International Student Identity Card

An ISIC is an international form of student identification that provides its members with deals in international travel and access to discounts on goods and services around the world.

<http://www.isiccard.com/isiccard/template.asp?pageId=1>

New York State DMV

Driver & vehicle services & information for NY State.

[www.nydmv.state.ny.us](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us)

New Jersey MVC

Driver & vehicle services & information for NJ State.

[www.state.nj.us/mvc](http://www.state.nj.us/mvc)

## Useful Links and Resources

### Topics Covered

#### Weill Medical College Websites

**Immigration**

**Taxes**

**Social Security Number**

**Health Care**

**International Websites of Other Universities**

**Transportation and Maps**

**Miscellaneous Links**

#### Weill Medical College and Related Websites

##### Main Pages

Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences

[http://biomedsci.cornell.edu/graduate\\_school/html/14045.cfm](http://biomedsci.cornell.edu/graduate_school/html/14045.cfm)

Weill Medical College

<http://www.med.cornell.edu/>

Weill Medical College – Faculty and Student Directory

<http://www.med.cornell.edu/contact/directory.html>

##### Housing

Cornell Weill Medical College Housing

<http://www.med.cornell.edu/housing/>

Cornell Graduate School Housing

[http://biomedsci.cornell.edu/graduate\\_school/html/15014.cfm](http://biomedsci.cornell.edu/graduate_school/html/15014.cfm)

##### Libraries

Weill Medical College Library

<http://library.med.cornell.edu/>

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Medical Library

<http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/75.cfm>

The Rockefeller University Library

<http://www.rockefeller.edu/library/>

Local and National Libraries

[http://library.med.cornell.edu/Library/HTML/sources.html - localhsl](http://library.med.cornell.edu/Library/HTML/sources.html-localhsl)

##### Student Associations

WGSMS Graduate Student Executive Council

TBA

Chinese Student Association

<http://www.cssamedcornell.us>

Chinese Student Association Message Board

<http://www.cssamedcornell.us/cgi-bin/leoboard.cgi>

Chinese Student Association Email-list

[Messenger@cssamedcornell.us](mailto:Messenger@cssamedcornell.us)

South Asian Medically-Oriented Student Association (SAMOSA)

Aisha Baqai [aib2001@med.cornell.edu](mailto:aib2001@med.cornell.edu)

Vinnie Kathpalia  
[vpk2001@med.cornell.edu](mailto:vpk2001@med.cornell.edu)

Neha Sharma [nes2007@med.cornell.edu](mailto:nes2007@med.cornell.edu)

Korean Journal Club of New York City

Hyung Don Ryoo [ryooh@mail.rockefeller.edu](mailto:ryooh@mail.rockefeller.edu)

##### Publications

WGSMS Orientation Booklet

See [Download Website Information](#)

### Immigration

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

U.S. Department of State – Websites of U.S. Embassies Worldwide

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

### Taxes

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

<http://www.irs.gov/>

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Forms and Publications

<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

<http://www.tax.state.ny.us/>

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance Forms and Instructions

<http://www.tax.state.ny.us/Forms/default.htm>

### Social Security Number

U.S. Social Security Administration

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

U.S. Social Security Office Locator

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

### Health Care

United Healthcare

<http://www.uhc.com/>

My United Healthcare

<https://www.myuhc.com/>

## **International Websites of Other Universities**

Cornell University-Ithaca International Students and Scholars Office

<http://www.isso.cornell.edu/>

New York University Office for International Students and Scholars

<http://www.nyu.edu/osl/oiss/index/index.html>

## **Transportation and Maps**

### *Transportation*

Metropolitan Transport Authority (MTA)

[www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info)

New York City Subway and Buses

<http://www.mta.info/nycst/service/subsch.htm>

Long Island Railroad

<http://www.mta.info/lirr/>

Long Island Bus

<http://www.mta.info/libus/index.html>

Metro-North Railroad

<http://www.mta.info/mnr/>

Amtrak

<http://www.amtrak.com/>

New Jersey Transit

<http://www.njtransit.com/>

New Jersey/New York PATH

<http://www.panynj.gov/path/index.html>

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

<http://www.panynj.gov/>

### *Maps*

Map Of New York City Region

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?country=US&address=&city=New+York&state=NY>

New York State Map

<http://www.nysegov.com/map-NY.cfm>

### *Student Travel*

STA Travel

<http://www.statravel.com/statravel/default.aspx>

International Student Identity Card

<http://www.isiccard.com/isiccard/template.asp?pageId=1>

## **Miscellaneous Links**

### *Post Office*

New York City Post Offices

<http://www.citidex.com/732.htm>

United States Postal Services

<http://www.usps.com/>

*Currency Converter and Metric to Imperial Converter*

Universal Currency Converter

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Metric to Imperial Converter

<http://www.initium.demon.co.uk/converts/metimp.htm>

### *Calling Cards*

Calling Cards

<http://www.callingcards.com/>

247 Calling Cards

<http://www.247calling.com/cccart/customer/home.php>

### *Renters Insurance*

Renters Insurance Information

<http://www.rentlaw.com/renterinsurance.htm>

State Farm Homeowners Insurance

<http://www.statefarm.com/insuranc/homeown/homeown.htm>

### *Banks*

New York Banks

<http://newyorkcitymetro.com/banks.htm>

Citibank

<http://www.citibank.com/us/index.htm>

Chase Bank

<http://www.chase.com/>

## **Out on the Town**

New York Citysearch

<http://newyork.citysearch.com/>

Digital City

[Home.digitalcity.com/newyork/](http://Home.digitalcity.com/newyork/)

MenuPages

<http://www.menupages.com/>

## About the International Student Committee

The International Student Committee (ISC) was founded in November of 2001 by a group of international students who wished to address foreign national issues at the WGSMS. We met to discuss how international student concerns were handled at the Graduate School, what resources were available and what improvements could be made.

Initially, we compiled an International Student Booklet for incoming international students and became involved in international student orientation, thus making the transitional process for incoming international students smoother. Next, we developed the International Student Information website and this updated information booklet, which serve as important resources to all international students at the WGSMS. As tax and immigration policies are intricate and can be very confusing for international students, this site aims to simplify some of the complexity of these issues. In addition, the site provides basic information regarding health and everyday life in New York City. We are now working with the WGSMS Administration to establish an International Students and Scholars Office, which will manage and advise all foreign national persons in the WGSMS community.

In June of 2004, the ISC was officially named in the Graduate Student Executive Council (GSEC)'s charter as an autonomous and complimentary standing committee with an annually elected Committee Representative. To read the section of the charter pertaining to the function of the ISC and the role of its members, please read the [GSEC Charter – ISC section](#).

We would like to formally thank all the WGSMS and Weill Medical College officials that have played such an important part in helping us achieve our goals;

most of whom have been named in the different sections of this website. Their commitment to helping the ISC is what allowed us to bring our goals to fruition; and for this we are most grateful.

~ The International Student Committee

For further information or to become involved, please contact:

Sheetal Gandotra [shg2004@med.cornell.edu](mailto:shg2004@med.cornell.edu)

### *Founding Members*

Omar Vandal, Jennifer Giordano-Coltart, Earl Gordon, Rana Sawaya, Jaspreet Jaggi, Ming-Ching Wong

### *Current Members*

Omar Vandal, Jennifer Giordano-Coltart, Earl Gordon, Sheetal Gandotra, Claire Coupillaud, Jale Refik, Deirdre McGarrigle, Jaspreet Jaggi

*The information in this booklet was compiled by the ISC of 2004 (Omar Vandal, Jennifer Giordano-Coltart, Earl Gordon, Claire Coupillaud, Jale Refik, Sheetal Gandotra and Deirdre McGarrigle) and was edited and formatted by Omar Vandal and Jennifer Giordano-Coltart.*

## **GSEC Charter – ISC**

An excerpt from: *Charter of the Graduate Student Executive Council of the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences of Cornell University.*

“Article V. Student Committees

1. Standing Committees

[...]

B. International Student Committee

The International Student Committee (ISC) shall serve as a liaison between international students and

the Graduate School Administration and other administrative offices. Unless a standing ISC is already in existence, a committee shall be formed in May at the GSEC general meeting for that month. The ISC remains autonomous of GSEC, but shall nominate a member to serve as a liaison between the two committees. International student concerns that are directed to GSEC will be forwarded to the ISC for evaluation and resolution, and, if required, GSEC and the ISC will work in conjunction to appropriately address these issues. The responsibility of the Chairperson of the ISC, to the best of her/his ability, is to be well informed on all issues that concern international students attending the Graduate School, recruit new members to the ISC, ensure the ISC remains in continued existence and to serve as the main contact and spokesperson for ISC activity. The responsibility of the ISC, in its entirety, is to solve and coordinate issues related to taxation, immigration, and other such related matters concerning international students. The ISC shall establish and maintain an Orientation Booklet for international students and work with the Orientation Committee and the Orientation Booklet Committee to organize International Student Orientation during Orientation Week. The ISC will also maintain communication and work with the Administration of the Graduate School in order to completely accomplish its functions.”