WELCOME!

Southern New Hampshire University welcomes you and your family to the United States! This guide will provide important information to help make your transition easier. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by email (iss@snhu.edu), phone (1-603-645-9676), or by visiting our office, located in the Green Center, Suite 108. We are happy to offer advice related to connecting with our community, adapting to life in New Hampshire, acquiring health insurance, and dealing with U.S. immigration regulations.

Please let us know how we can help!

— The International Student Services Team

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Checking in at SNHU
When your family arrives in the U.S., you will need to come to the International Student Services office to check in. To complete this process, you will need your dependents’ immigration documents (I-20 or DS-2019, passport and I-94). Our regular office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Finding Off-Campus Housing
As your family will be joining you in the U.S., you will need to look for off-campus housing. When looking for housing, we recommend that you begin your search before you arrive in the U.S. or before your family joins you. Factors to consider include:
- rental costs
- whether utilities are included in the cost of your rental
- where your rental is located (easy walking distance to a bus line is recommended)
- access to things like on-site laundry, a gym, a playground, or a pool

If you have school-aged children, also research the local schools as the school your child attends is tied to the neighborhood in which you live.

It is always a good idea to make an appointment with the property manager to visit the property in person once you arrive in the U.S. We don’t recommend that you wire any money to a landlord in the U.S. prior to your arrival as scams do sometimes occur. You may need to visit a few places before you secure housing, so try to arrive 7-10 days before the start of your program. Don’t forget to reserve temporary accommodation at a local hotel so you have a place to stay while you look for permanent housing.

For more detailed information about housing in the area, see the Housing for International Students section on the SNHU website. You can also contact a representative in our Public Safety office who will provide advice and information about the Manchester area and local neighborhoods. They can be reached by phone (603-645-9700), email (safety@snhu.edu), or in person at SNHU’s Morrissey House.

You can visit the Commuter Lounge in the Student Center for further information on off-campus housing and helpful handouts on where to buy or rent furniture.

Medical Care in the U.S.
As a SNHU international student, you will be automatically enrolled in the SNHU student health insurance plan. F-2 and J-2 dependents living with you in the U.S. however, are not covered under this plan unless you enroll them. If your dependents are on a J-2 visa, they are REQUIRED by U.S. law to have health insurance meeting certain requirements. For individuals on F-2 visas, purchasing health insurance is HIGHLY recommended.

Although health care in the U.S. is very good, it is also very expensive. It can cost about $1000 for 2 stitches in a cut finger, and many thousands of dollars for more serious injuries. You will therefore want health insurance to protect your family from high, unexpected medical expenses while you are living in the U.S. Please make sure to purchase the insurance BEFORE arriving in the U.S. and before a medical condition arises.

As there are many insurance providers in the U.S., it is best to research the insurance options for your dependents, compare policies and costs. You can choose to enroll your dependents under the university health insurance provider or one of the many other U.S. health insurance companies. The NAFSA website (www.nafsa.org) has links to various health insurance companies you may want to look into. You can also review the HealthMatters website which has further information about health and dental insurance options within New Hampshire; this is a good resource if you have dependents born in the U.S.

When researching providers, some questions to ask are: Does the insurance company pay expenses related to pre–existing conditions (like pregnancy, diabetes, thyroid conditions, etc.)? Does the policy cover illness and injury only, or also preventative care like checkups and vaccinations? Are there options to add dental and optometry coverage?

Once you decide upon a health insurance provider, then directly contact the company you select in order to enroll your dependents and get insurance cards.

Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room
In the U.S. there are different options for medical care based on the severity of your illness/injury. Please make sure you understand the differences between Urgent Care and the Emergency Room to ensure that you go to the appropriate place.

Urgent Care: If you do not have a doctor or your doctor’s office is closed, you should visit an urgent care clinic if you have an injury or illness that needs prompt attention but is not life-threatening. You can get quality medical attention for illnesses or injuries like colds, flu, sore throat, earache, infections, burns, cuts, skin rash, broken bones, and sprains. No appointments are needed as patients are seen by the doctor on a “first come, first served” basis. Service is faster and less expensive than at an emergency room. Research the Elliot Urgent Care and Concentra Urgent Care locations closest to you before the need arises.

Emergency Room: If you have a life—threatening or extremely serious problem such as chest pains, breathing difficulty, deep cuts, uncontrolled bleeding, severe burns, multiple injuries, or unconsciousness, you should go to a hospital emergency room. Patients with the most serious problems are seen by the doctor first. Emergency room care is very expensive and should not be used for routine medical problems or non—life—threatening illnesses or injuries. Catholic Medical Center (CMC) and Elliot Hospital are the two hospitals closest to SNHU, and each is equipped with an emergency room.

For life—threatening emergencies which require the help of an ambulance, the police, or the fire department, call 911.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING TIPS

Visiting the property before signing any contracts or putting down a deposit is highly recommended.

Beginning your search early is especially recommended.

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**Studying and Working in the U.S.**

There are a number of laws that govern working and studying in the U.S. If you have any questions about these laws, please come see us in International Student Services (ISS).

**Employment**

F-2 dependents are not allowed employment under any circumstances. J-2 dependents may seek employment permission. A SNHU International Student Advisor will guide you through the process.

**Studying in the U.S.**

F-2 and J-2 children may attend school through the high school level. Dependents may also attend a university or language training program on a part-time basis. Before your dependents start any university program here in the U.S., please be sure to discuss this with an International Student Advisor in ISS.

**Schools and Daycare for Children**

In New Hampshire, children aged 6-16 are required to be enrolled in formal schooling. This could include a public or private school or home schooling. Although school districts may have slightly different structures in terms of grades within each level, generally they are similar to the levels illustrated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of School</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool (or pre-K)</td>
<td>Typically 3–5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Typically age 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Grade 1 (typically age 6) through Grade 5 or 6 (typically age 9-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High or Middle School</td>
<td>Grades 6 – 8 (typically age 10/11-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Grades 9 – 12 (typically age 15-18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Registering Your Child for School**

Public schools in the U.S. are controlled by the city in which you live. Contact the main School District Office for your city to learn how to register your child for school. The school your child will be enrolled in is based on where you live within the city, so you may wish to consider this when looking for housing. Contact details for the Manchester and Hooksett School Districts are provided in the left-hand column.

You will be asked to provide several documents in order to register your child in school. These may include:

- A legal birth certificate (with translation if not in English).
- Proof of immunizations for each child. Your child may require a health examination by a physician before starting school.
- Copies of school records from any previous schools the child attended.
- You also may need to submit proof of where you live in the U.S. (such as a copy of your signed lease and/or a utility bill).
- There may be required language testing. Many schools offer English as a second language (ESL) programs to help ease the transition of students speaking other languages.

**Daycare for Young Children**

Many daycare centers are located in and around Manchester, NH. You may find them by searching on the web, or you can check the NH Department of Health and Human Services’ Child Development Bureau (CDB) website to search for state-licensed daycare centers in the town where you live. State licensing lets you know that a daycare has met certain quality and safety standards. Programs can be licensed, “licensed plus,” or accredited (these terms are explained at the CDB website). The website also has a useful two-page handout which includes specific questions to ask and four key steps to selecting a child care provider:

1. Interview caregivers by calling first, and then visiting in person.
2. Check references.
3. Make the decision for quality care.
4. Stay involved.

Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. There is a weekly fee for daycare, which varies by the child’s age (the younger the child, the more expensive), and different centers will offer different options for part-time or full-time daycare. Not all daycare centers will have immediate openings and you may be placed on a waiting list.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION**

Manchester School District
195 McGregor Street
Suite 201
Manchester, NH 03102
Phone: 603-624-6300
Fax: 603-624-6337
http://www.mansd.org

Hooksett School District
90 Farmer Road
Hooksett, NH 03106
Phone: 603-669-3731
Fax: 603-669-4352
http://hooksett.sau15.net

**PLEASE NOTE**

Outside of school/daycare hours, arrangements must be made for children to be supervised by an adult. Children may not be left home alone.

You can look at the following websites to find individual childcare providers: care.com, indeed.com, and sittercity.com. The caregivers listed on these sites need to be certified with CPR and have background checks. When seeking a caregiver, always ask for proof of certification and check their references thoroughly.
Connecting to Your New Community

Adapting to Life in New Hampshire

When moving to a new place, getting involved in the community is a key part of easing the transition. In the Manchester area, there are many organizations and opportunities for you to connect with the local community. Here are some ways your family can take part and enjoy their experience in the United States:

- **Volunteer.** This is a great way to improve English language skills, make friends, and keep active during the day. **VolunteerMatch** is a great resource to find local organizations looking for volunteers.
- **Visit your local library.** Sign up for free membership at your local library to get access to great books, videos, and special programs and events.
- **Share your culture.** Contact the ISS office (iss@snhu.edu) to find out if there are any current opportunities to speak with local schools or other organizations about life in your country.
- **Take a class.** F-2 and J-2 dependents can study part-time in academic and/or vocational programs, as well as ESL studies. These classes can be either online or on-campus.
- **Learn the language.** There are a number of adult English classes for speakers of other languages. See the New Hampshire Department of Education’s webpage for details about opportunities within your community.
- **Join an interest group.** Local community groups can be a great way to connect with others and have fun. Search Meetup.com for interest groups in the area. Examples include the Moms’ Club in Bedford, a Salsa group in Manchester, or the Adventures & Events group.
- **Get your kids active.** New Hampshire has a large number of museums, parks, fairs, special programs, and events. Visit your local library or on-campus.

Connecting with the local community will also help you better understand American culture, which may be quite different from your own. Here are some helpful insights:

- **Be on time.** When you agree upon a time for a meeting, appointment, or class, it is expected that you will be there at the agreed upon time. Being late is viewed as disrespectful.
- **Communication.** Americans can often be seen as being direct and saying what they mean. Everyone is expected to contribute within a conversation, so be ready to express your thoughts and join in.
- **Individuality.** American culture tends to encourage and praise individual drive and accomplishment.
- **Equality.** There is an expectation that everyone is treated equally regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds. These rights are protected by law. Please speak with staff in the ISS office if you want more information regarding life here in the U.S.

Staying Safe

Your New Community

Transitioning to life in the U.S. will take time. If you make an effort early on to meet people and learn about the area, it will help you feel comfortable in your new community. Although New Hampshire and the Manchester area are quite safe, it is always good to take steps to ensure your experience here in the U.S. is a positive one. Keep in mind these general safety tips:

- **Meet your neighbors.** Take the time to meet your neighbors, as they will be a great source of information about the local area, resources, etc.
- **Explore your new community.** It is also a good idea to explore your new town and know where the closest schools, police stations, hospitals (emergency rooms), and recreational facilities are located.
- **Lock up.** Make sure your windows and doors are locked when you are not at home. You should also lock your car doors and avoid leaving valuable items in sight. Do not give robbers the opportunity to steal from you.
- **Check first.** Check to see who it is before you open your door.
- **Use your “street smarts.”** If walking at night, walk in well-lit, well-traveled areas with another person. Keep your valuables concealed. Also be aware of your surroundings and avoid distractions such as wearing headphones or talking/texting on a cell phone.

SNHU’s ISS Office is Happy to Help

The office can provide information about current programs connecting dependents with one another and Americans in the local community. Examples of current options include: Thanksgiving Hosts, Conversation Partners, International Friends, and our spouses programs.

American Culture

Within the U.S., verbal or physical assault of one’s spouse or children is against the law. What is defined as assault here in the U.S. may be stricter than in other countries. If you do find yourself in a situation where you need support, there is assistance available in your community. Some local area resources are:

- **YWCA Crisis Service**
  - 72 Concord Street
  - Manchester, NH 03101
  - Crisis Line: 603-668-2299
  - Crisis Center of Central NH Crisis Line: 866-841-6229

- **La Casa de Amistad**
  - 318 State Street
  - Manchester, NH 03101
  - Crisis Line: 603-644-0007

- **Crisis Line**
  - 866-841-6229

- **Crisis Center**
  - 603-668-2299

- **VolunteerMatch**

- **NHlife**

- **Staying Safe Resources:**
  - **New Hampshire Domestic Violence Hotline**
    - 1-866-298-6788
  - **YWCA**
    - 603-744-7272
  - **NH Department of Health and Human Services**
    - 1-800-888-7824
  - **NH Criminal Justice Information Services**
    - 1-800-256-1386
  - **NH Department of Safety**
    - 1-800-449-9944
  - **NH Office of the Attorney General**
    - 1-800-582-4145

Staying Safe

Please speak with staff in the ISS office if you want more information regarding safety in the U.S.
Driving in New Hampshire

Drivers License for a Dependent

F-2/J-2 spouses or dependents are eligible for a NH driver’s license under the same rules that apply to the student. To obtain a NH Driver License a dependent must apply through the Concord Division of Motor Vehicles office, located at 23 Hazen Drive in Concord, NH. Further information may be found on their website [http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv](http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv) or by calling their customer service line at 603-227-4000. You can also refer to the "Driving in New Hampshire" ISS brochure for further information.

Seat Belts and Child Safety Seats

The NH Child Passenger Safety law requires that all children under age 18 riding in a motor vehicle be restrained and properly fastened in a safety belt. Children under the age of 7 years or 57 inches (145 cm) tall must be restrained and properly secured in an approved child safety seat. Many police stations and other locations will do a free check to be sure the car seat is correctly and safely installed. For additional helpful videos, please visit [Safercar.gov](http://Safercar.gov).

Winter Driving

Driving in the snow can be a challenge, even for those who grew up here in New Hampshire. Before the snow arrives, we recommend that you review the American Automobile Association’s helpful handout and video for tips on preparing yourself and your car for driving in winter weather. Also, feel free to attend our Winter Driving Workshop in November. The date and time of the workshop will be listed in the International Student Services newsletter.

Manchester Weather

As the table below details, the temperature in Manchester varies quite a bit depending on the season.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average high</td>
<td>33°F</td>
<td>37°F</td>
<td>45°F</td>
<td>57°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average low</td>
<td>12°F</td>
<td>16°F</td>
<td>24°F</td>
<td>30°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. rain (inches)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average high</td>
<td>69°F</td>
<td>77°F</td>
<td>82°F</td>
<td>80°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average low</td>
<td>66°F</td>
<td>59°F</td>
<td>60°F</td>
<td>59°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. rain (inches)</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.66</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average high</td>
<td>73°F</td>
<td>61°F</td>
<td>50°F</td>
<td>38°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average low</td>
<td>51°F</td>
<td>39°F</td>
<td>31°F</td>
<td>20°F</td>
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<td>3.27</td>
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Data from: [http://www.usclimatedata.com/](http://www.usclimatedata.com/)

Although these temperatures may surprise you, a benefit of living in New Hampshire is that you will get to experience every season. The state’s mountains, woods, and beaches provide the perfect setting for walks in the warmer months and snowshoeing and skiing when the snow falls; however, winter can be challenging if snow is new to you. As winter approaches, be sure to take the necessary steps to prepare:

- Buy appropriate winter clothing (a heavy jacket, mittens, hat, scarf, and waterproof boots). Local charity shops like Goodwill, Salvation Army, Savers, and OutFITers thrift store are great places to buy winter clothing on a budget.
- Listen to the local news for weather updates. At times, severe weather conditions (such as large snowstorms) lead to university and local school closings, cancellations, or delays. The website of our local news station, WMUR, will have the latest information about delays/closures. Also remember to register for SNHU Alerts (details are located in the column to the right).

TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

F-2 and J-2 dependents must have a current travel signature by one of the SNHU International Student Advisors in order to reenter the U.S. after international travel. All dependents on a F-2/J-2 visa must leave the U.S. if the F-1/J-1 student is absent from the U.S. for more than 5 months.

SIGN UP FOR SNHU ALERTS

Register for the university’s notification system, SNHU Alerts, to receive text messages and emails about SNHU closings, cancellations, and delays. Sign up at: [https://snhuweb.snhu.edu/snhu-alerts/](https://snhuweb.snhu.edu/snhu-alerts/).