

Student Life

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Accessing your college email

To access your college email account, go to: <http://sites.southseattle.edu/email/>

Activities, Organizations, and Resources

Activities Led by International Programs

South Seattle College provides opportunities for you to explore your interests and pursue your goals outside of the classroom. We offer a variety of student-focused activities and programs each quarter to enhance your leadership skills, provide service opportunities, and build a network while meeting your academic responsibilities.

Activities are either free or very low cost. Check out our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to sign up for current activities and events! Quarterly events are posted at the beginning of each quarter – sign up early to reserve your spot! Some examples of activities we have done in the past:

- Annual BBQ Party
- Hiking
- University Tours
- Snow Tubing
- West Seattle and Seattle City Tours

Student Leadership

Many international students choose to get involved on-campus in student leadership opportunities. It is a great way to enhance your college experience and get involved!

Please check out the [Student Leadership](#) section of our website.

Clubs

Participating in student clubs is a great way to make new friends and enhance your college experience. It also provides opportunity to gain leadership and organizational experience.

Please check out the [Student Clubs](#) section of our website.

On-Campus Resources

Bookstore <https://southscc.bncollege.com/shop/southseattle-cc/home>

Library <https://libguides.southseattle.edu/home>

Tutoring <https://southseattle.edu/tutoring>

Writing & English Learning Lab <https://southseattle.edu/tutoring/well>

Getting Started in Seattle

Taking the Public Bus

King Country Metro Transit serves South Seattle College and the surrounding community. For help in determining your route to South Seattle College, use [Metro's Trip Planner](#). You can also download the OneBusAway App on your smart phone.

[Metro bus schedule and fairs](#)

New students can also watch [videos on taking the bus and paying the fare](#). These videos are available in many different languages.

Visit the Cashier for an ORCA card (your bus pass).

- Cost: \$125
- Card Value: \$250 (declining balance)

Popular bus routes serving South Seattle College and West Seattle:

- #125 – Downtown/Westwood Village
- #128 – Southcenter/Admiral District
- #120 – Downtown/Burien
- RapidRide C – Downtown/Westwood Village

Driving

There are certain rules and regulations for driving in the United States. In order to drive in the United States, you are required to obtain a state driver's license and car insurance.

The information on this page is intended as a resource for international students who attend South Seattle College.

How to Apply for a Washington State ID or Driver's License

Step 1

Visit the Department of Licensing website at <http://www.dol.wa.gov/> to get the necessary and most up to date information about applying.

Step 2

Gather documents to prove your identity and WA State residency. Most common documents* to bring include ALL of the following:

1. Passport
2. Valid US visa
3. Printed I-94: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>
4. I-20
5. Official transcript from a school in Washington State

Alternate options are listed below.

*Acceptable documents may be subject to change. To ensure accurate information, visit <http://www.dol.wa.gov/>

Step 3

Apply for your WA ID or Driver's License with the Department of Licensing

Additional Resources to Obtain a Driver's License:

1. To drive in the United States, you must obtain a state driver's license and car insurance. The Washington State ID card is not a driver's license. Driving with a driver's license from another country is permitted for up to one year without a WA driver's license (see RCW 46.20.025)
2. Learn more about the state's driving rules and regulations. Find the Washington Drivers Guide in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Japanese here: <http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/guide.html>
3. Apply for Washington State Driver's License at Department of Licensing Office (see above)
4. Take and pass the Knowledge Test and Driving Skills Test** at an independent driving school.

Find an approved testing location here: <https://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/testlocations.html>

1. You must pass the Knowledge Test with 32 out of 40 questions correct.
2. You must provide proof of insurance and vehicle registration if using your own vehicle.
3. You must pass the Driving Skills Test with at least 80 out of 100.

**Some testing exceptions may apply. More information:
<https://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/moving.html>

If you are under 18 years old, you must also:

- Pass a traffic safety course through an independent driving school in King County.
- Have an instruction permit for at least 6 months
 - You can receive an instruction permit if (1) you are enrolled in a traffic safety course or (2) you pass the knowledge test.
 - Complete this form (<http://www.dol.wa.gov/forms/520003.pdf>) with your parent, legal guardian, or employer stating that you have at least 50 hours of driving practice (including 10 hours at night) with someone who’s been licensed for 5 or more years.

Accepted Documents* to Prove Identity

- Identity can be established by ONE of the following options:
- OPTION 1: One Stand Alone Document
- OPTION 2: Two A-List Documents
- OPTION 3: One A-List Document + Two B-List Documents
- OPTION 4: Four B-List Documents

Stand Alone Documents	A-List Documents	B-List Documents
WA ID or Driver’s License	Foreign passport with I-94 card**	I-20
Out of state driver’s license or ID	Valid US visa (not expired)	Social Security Number
		Driver’s license from a foreign country
		Official school transcript
		Certified birth certificate
		Marriage certificate

Acceptable Documents* to Prove Washington State Residency

- Official Transcript from a WA State school
- Gas, electricity, or utility bill with your name & address, within the past 2 months
- Internet or TV bill with your name & address, within the past 2 months
- Land-line telephone bill with your name & address, within the past 2 months

*Acceptable documents listed may be subject to change. There may be other options for acceptable documents. You will find a complete list here:

<https://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/idproof.html>

**I-94 accessible at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>

Car Insurance

There are many car insurance companies in Seattle and the greater Seattle area. We recommend “shopping” for a car insurance company that will work best for you and best fits your budget.

Some questions to consider when shopping for car insurance:

- Are there translators with your company who speak my language?
- Does your company offer a safe driver discount?
- Can you explain your policies to me in simple terms?
- What are your payment options?
- How do I manage my account/insurance?
- How much will my coverage cost?

Health Insurance

Overview

The cost of medical care in the U.S. is very high. For this reason, all international students enrolled at South Seattle College are required to purchase the Seattle College District insurance policy which is offered through the Lewer Agency and includes specific benefits to international students. As explained in the video below, the insurance policy will help students cover the cost of medical issues that might arise during their stay in the U.S.

Lewermark Insurance has a site specifically designed for international students attending South Seattle College: lewermark.com/southseattle.

From this site, students are able to print insurance cards, find a doctor, file a claim, and learn about their coverage.

LewerMark Video: <https://youtu.be/OuZREByI5Xw>

Dependents are not eligible to receive Lewermark Student Insurance. Please refer to the [website](#) for more information on insurance options for your spouse and children.

Vacation Quarter or Quarters with No Enrollment

If you are not taking any classes at South Seattle College during a vacation quarter, leave of absence, or medical leave, you will not be covered by South Seattle College's insurance policy unless you buy insurance for that quarter. The IP Office strongly recommends that students purchase insurance in these circumstances to ensure they have adequate coverage. Please visit the International Programs Office to purchase insurance.

If you choose not to purchase coverage during a vacation quarter, leave of absence, or medical leave, you will have a break in coverage from the last day of the previous quarter until the first day of the next quarter you enroll and purchase insurance. You will also be subject to the pre-existing conditions policy if there is a break in your coverage.

If you have a serious medical condition that requires you to be on full or part-time medical leave, the Lower policy may not cover you after your first quarter of full or part-time leave. If your condition prevents you from enrolling full time for a second quarter, you may consider returning to your home country until you have fully recovered. If you remain in the United States on medical leave after your first quarter of full-time or part-time medical leave, you may need to find a new insurance policy to cover your medical expenses.

Finishing your Program

If you finish your program and are going home, then you are covered for 30 days from the last day of your program. If you plan to stay through the full 60 days of your program grace period, you have the option of purchasing a 30-day extension of the insurance policy (see the International Programs Office for details).

OPT

If you have been approved for Optional Practical Training (OPT), you may purchase South Seattle's policy while you are on OPT. To have insurance during OPT, you must pay the premium at South Seattle no more than 60 days after the last day of your graduating quarter. It is important that you pay by this day; otherwise, you will not be eligible to purchase South Seattle's insurance while you are on OPT. Please visit the International Programs Office to purchase insurance during OPT.

Exceptions to the Insurance Requirement

The following students are exempt from purchasing the South Seattle's insurance policy:

- International students attending South Seattle on visas other than F-1 or M-1
- F-1 students enrolled at South Seattle while on an I-20 form from another U.S. institution

- Government-sponsored students already provided with insurance from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, the Embassy of Kuwait, Embassy of Oman, or Embassy of the UAE

MySSP

Morneau Shepell's International Student Support Program (MySSP) is the world's leading international counseling organization, offering culturally relevant mental health support to international students.

- International Support Advisors can help you with:
- Adapting to a new culture
- Stress, sadness, loneliness
- Relationships with friends and family
- Being successful in school

Three ways to connect with MySSP:

- Download the free My SSP app
- Online: <https://us.myissp.com/>
- 1-866-743-7732
- If calling from outside of North America: 001-416-380-6578

Paying for Classes

Billing

Your [online statement of tuition and fees due](#) is also noted on the copy of your printed schedule. South Seattle does not provide invoices for tuition.

Forms of Payment

After they have registered for classes, students can pay their tuition and fees:

- by [credit card online](#) (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover)
- by international wire (contact the IP Office for instructions)
- in person at the Cashier's Office

If paying with an international credit card, enter WA for State and 98106 for ZIP. The following forms of payment are accepted by the Cashier's Office:

- Cash
- Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover)
- Debit card from a bank in the U.S.
- Personal check from a bank in the U.S.
- Traveler's checks
- Money order from a bank in the U.S. (written for the exact amount of charges)
- International Bank draft (written for the exact amount of charges)

Refund Policies

Intensive English Program	Refund Available
Withdraw prior to the first day of class	100%
Withdraw within first five calendar days	80%
Withdraw within sixth - fourteenth calendar days	50%
Withdraw after fourteenth calendar day	0% (no refund)
College Programs	Refund Available
Withdraw due to cancellation by the college	100%
Withdraw through the first week of the quarter	100% (less \$5 fee)
Withdraw within eighth - twentieth calendar days	50%
Withdraw after twentieth calendar day	0% (no refund)
Medical Insurance	Refund Available
Withdraw prior to the first day of the quarter	100%
Withdraw on or after the first day of the quarter	Varies*

NOTE: The insurance premium may be partially/fully refunded. See the section on **Medical Insurance** for more details.

Scholarships

International student scholarship opportunities are currently under review.

Opening a Bank Account

It is recommended students open a bank account shortly after arriving in Seattle. To open a bank account, students will need to bring their student identification card, passport and the funds they wish to deposit. Many banks provide services such as checking accounts, savings accounts, bank drafts, foreign currency exchange, money orders, traveler's check, wire transfer, and safe deposit boxes for valuables.

The banks listed below are located near our campus and are used to serving international students:

[Bank of America](#)

2600 SW Barton St.
Seattle, WA 98106
+1-206-358-2235

[Key Bank](#)

9655 17th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98106
+1-206-763-8440

[Chase Bank](#)

1616 SW 100th St.
Seattle, WA 98146
+1-206-461-6425

[US Bank](#)

15820 Ambaum Blvd SW
Burien, WA 98166
+1-206-444-5748

[Wells Fargo](#)

800 SW 152nd St.
Burien, WA 98166
+1-206-433-6262

[BECU Credit Union](#)

9620 28th Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98126
+1-206-439-5700

Banks in the United States have different policies on opening bank accounts for individuals under the age of 18. Many require that 16 or 17 year olds have an adult who can co-sign on a bank account before they are willing to open an account in a minor's name. Others offer flexibility in allowing 16 or 17-year-old students to have bank accounts.

Questions to ask when opening a bank account:

- Is there a minimum starting deposit?
- Is there a minimum account balance required?
- Is there a charge when receiving an international wire transfer?
- Is there a charge when sending a wire transfer?
- Is there a bank close to my house or easy to get to?
- Is there a fee to use the ATM?

On Campus Employment

F-1 Employment Basics and Eligibility

- F-1 students that maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher and are in legal status are eligible for on-campus employment.
- F-1 Students are eligible to work on campus for 20 hours a week during the quarter. An F-1 student may, however, work on campus full-time when school is not in session or during the annual vacation. The Seattle Community College District only allows part time employees to work 16 hours per week.
- F-1 Students are NOT allowed to work off campus without prior approval from a DSO with the IP Office or US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

How to Find a Job On Campus & Apply for a Social Security Number

You will need to have the following documents to apply for a social security card:

1. Go to the International Programs Office to pick up an On-Campus Employment Form
2. Find an open position on campus and apply for the job
3. Once you have been offered a position ask the supervisor to complete the On-Campus Employment Form
4. Go to [SCDGlobal](#) to request an On-Campus Employment Letter. You will need to upload your signed On-Campus Employment Form
5. You can pick up your letters when you receive an email notification from the IP Office.
6. Visit the nearest Social Security Administration office to apply for a social security number.
 - The Employment Letter prepared by the Center for International Education Office (Please do not open)
 - Original I-20
 - I-94 card or print off the electronic I-94 - www.cbp.gov/I94
7. Once you receive your social security card you will need to present the card to your supervisor and to the Registration Office to have the number put into the Student Management System

Federal Tax Information

International students are required to complete U.S. income tax forms each year, even if they did not earn income here. Everyone who was physically present in the United States at any time from January 1st and December 31st of the past year must file a tax form in the current year.

Why Should I File a Tax Return?

Many students choose to ignore U.S. taxes, but this is NOT a good idea. It's possible that requests for visa renewals or change of status (especially to permanent resident) will be denied if you do not file tax forms. If you ever apply for permanent residency (green cards), the Department of Homeland Security may ask you to show proof of tax filing for previous years in the United States. It is strongly recommended that you complete all the required forms!

Forms You Must Complete

Form	Who Submits	Deadline
8843	ALL students and dependents (F, J, M, and Q status) must complete this form, whether or not the student earned money in the United States during the past year.	June 15th*
1040NR or 1040NR-EZ	Students who earned any income last year must complete one of these forms. Sources of income include: Employment on or off-campus for which you received compensation Practical Training (CPT or OPT) Money from scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships used for housing or meal expenses.	April 15th

Where to Get Tax Forms

- Online: www.irs.gov (official IRS website)
- Request forms by mail: 800-829-3676 (toll-free number)

Information to Help You with Your Tax Return

The booklet "Publication 519: U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens" can answer many of your questions. It contains information about residency status and how to prepare your tax return papers.

Glossary of Terms

- **Tax return:** This is the paperwork that must be completed. It may be just one form or several forms depending on your financial situation. Even though it is called a Federal Income Tax Return, not everyone who files a "return" is going to get a refund. Many of you will find out that everything will balance out to "0", and some of you may find out that you owe more taxes to the Federal Government
- **Filing:** The process of completing the paperwork and sending it to the IRS.
- **SSN vs. ITIN:** You do not need an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or a valid Social Security Number (SSN) for the required IRS tax form 8843. You may need an ITIN or SSN for other tax forms. If you are not eligible for a SSN, you may choose to apply for an ITIN using Form W-7. (The form and instructions can be downloaded from the IRS web site.) It may take 6-8 weeks for the IRS to process your request, so apply as soon as possible
- **W2 / "Wage and Tax Statement":** If you worked in the U.S. during the year, your employer will send you this information form; it tells how much money you earned last year. It will include several copies of the same information. One copy should be mailed to the IRS with your tax forms; keep the others for your records. If you did not receive this form, contact your employer
- **Form 1098-T:** Typically, international students do not receive the IRS Form 1098-T, "Tuition Payments Statement". However, if you are a US resident for tax purposes (most international students are not), you may be eligible to claim a tax credit on your federal tax return if you paid qualified educational expenses to any of the Seattle Colleges. Any student wishing to receive a 1098-T must have a Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification number. If you qualify but did not receive a 1098-T and you have a SSN or ITIN, email taxcredit@seattlecolleges.edu or call (206) 934-6300. The college cannot provide any tax advice or make a determination as to whether students qualify for tax credits (for that information, students must consult with their own personal tax advisor).
- **1099INT:** Your bank will send you this form if you earned interest on checking or savings accounts. This income is not taxable.
- **1099DIV:** This form reports interest earned on U.S. investments (stocks, bonds, dividends, etc.). This is taxable income.
- **1042S:** Scholarship information. You may not receive this form, depending on your situation.

Tips

- You will need your passport, Visa, I-94 card, and I-20 or IAP-66 in order to complete the tax forms. It will also help to have the dates you entered and left the U.S. during the year.
- Always make copies of your tax return documents before you mail them to the IRS. Keep copies of other forms also (W-2, 1042-S, 1099 bank interest statements, etc.).

- If you go back to your country, you should still complete the proper forms and mail them from your home country. You can download the forms and instructions from the IRS web site.
- It's a good idea to start looking at the paperwork early. Then if you have questions you will be able to talk to someone before the deadlines.

Additional Tax Resources

Information contained on this page should not be used as the sole source of information for making decisions that may affect one's legal status in the United States. Please note that International Programs staff members are NOT trained to give you individual tax advice. If the questions you have cannot be answered by contacting the IRS, you should contact an accountant or a company that specializes in income tax preparation, e.g. H&R Block.