

## PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

### Welcome to Radford!

As you prepare to travel to the United States, you may have questions about arrangements for your trip. This handout gives you important information to help with your planning. Program dates and costs are available on the Language and Culture Institute at Radford University (LCI@RU) website at [www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html](http://www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html). The LCI@RU is offered through partnership with Virginia Tech.

### LOCATION AND OPERATING HOURS

The Language and Culture Institute (LCI@RU) is in Young Hall on the Radford University campus. Radford is just 36 miles (58 km.) southwest of the city of Roanoke, Virginia, and within easy driving distance of many mid-East Coast metropolitan areas. Richmond is only a 3½-hour drive, while Washington, D.C., is about 4½ hours away.

Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for the following holidays:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Third Monday in January
- Memorial Day – Last Monday in May
- Independence Day – July 4 (or celebrated weekday if a Saturday or Sunday)
- Thanksgiving week
- Winter break – December 24 to January 1

LCI@RU offices are closed the last week of the year and are open limited hours the first week of the year.

### YOUR ARRIVAL

#### Arrival Date

Plan to arrive in Radford before classes begin, but no more than 30 days early. This will give you time to become familiar with the area, open a bank account, find housing, and recover from traveling before beginning your academic work.

### AIRPORT ARRIVAL

There are several daily flights into the Roanoke Airport (ROA) from international airports in Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., Chicago, Detroit, New York, Orlando, Fla., Philadelphia, St. Petersburg, Fla., and Washington, D.C. Domestic flights from other major U.S. cities are also available.

Ground transportation from the Roanoke Airport to Radford can be arranged as follows:

- *By Taxi* ([www.roanokeats.com](http://www.roanokeats.com)): Reserve a taxi for your arrival by emailing [roanokeATS@aim.com](mailto:roanokeATS@aim.com), calling 1-800-288-1958, or faxing 1-540-362-8006 by 7 p.m. the day before arrival. Upon arrival, go to the Roanoke Airport Transportation Desk next to locate your driver. The cost is \$66.

In case of emergency related to your arrival, call the LCI@RU office at **1-540-231-9814** (from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) or call the interim director after hours at **1-540-520-1538**.

### HOUSING

#### On-Campus Housing

Housing on the Radford University campus is subject to availability. Campus housing is not available in the fall semester or spring semester. Dormitory fees vary by housing type. Rates are published online at [www.radford.edu/content/residence-life/home.html](http://www.radford.edu/content/residence-life/home.html).

On-campus residence hall rooms contain basic furniture, including beds, desks, dressers/cabinets, and a sink. You must provide your own sheets, towels, and blankets. Wait until you arrive to purchase them because the beds are an unusual “long twin” size. Students usually pay \$50 to \$100 for these items. Cooking facilities are limited.

#### Homestay

Accommodation with an American host in the Radford area may be arranged in advance to be available upon arrival. A host may be a “traditional” American family with a mother, father, and children; a couple without children; or a single person (with or without children). Homestays include a

continental breakfast and dinner each day. You may be responsible for preparing your own breakfast meal.

Homestay placements are private room (single occupancy.) Sheets, a blanket, a pillow, and towels are supplied, and you will have access to laundry facilities. Most homestay homes will be within easy access of public transportation and within 30 minutes of the LCI@RU, one-way.

“Rules of the family” apply to homestay guests. Smoking, for example, may be prohibited in some homes. If you are a smoker, you could, of course, smoke outside the home.

Americans commonly keep cats and dogs as pets. These animals often live in the house. Indicate to your homestay coordinator if you do not wish to be in a home with a pet.

For information on homestay accommodation, please see Blacksburg Homestay at [www.blacksburghomestay.com](http://www.blacksburghomestay.com).

### Apartment Housing

Many Radford University students live off-campus. Students who bring their families are required to live off-campus. An apartment, usually with one or more bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom, is normally rented by a family or shared by two or more students. Most students live in apartments or single rooms. Many of these are within walking distance of campus or are on the town bus routes.

Apartments are usually unfurnished and include cooking facilities. Bathrooms are usually shared. Rent may or may not include utilities such as water and sewer or trash collection. Gas and/or electric services may also be a separate expense; these costs can be significant during winter months for heating.

Rent for single rooms begins at \$299 per month, not including utilities or furniture. One-bedroom apartments, including utilities, cost on average of \$600 per month. Two-bedroom apartments cost on average \$600 to \$700 per month. Four-bedroom suites are about \$1,600 per month.

Occupants must sign a lease, or housing contract, usually for 12 months. Shorter lease terms are difficult to find in August but may be available in January and May. Once signed, a lease cannot be broken or changed.

Almost all apartments come unfurnished. Furnishings are generally acquired from secondhand stores and private “yard sales,” rental companies, or local stores.

For additional information on apartment housing, please see:

Radford Area Apartments: [www.radford.edu/content/dos/home/off-campus/housing.html](http://www.radford.edu/content/dos/home/off-campus/housing.html)

Craigslist: [blacksburg.craigslist.org](http://blacksburg.craigslist.org)

Be sure to type “Radford” in the search box.

### PLANNING FOR YOUR STAY

#### Financial Matters

Arrive in Radford with sufficient funds for the first four months. You will pay your tuition and housing separately. Acceptable forms of tuition payment are cash, checks drawn on a U.S. account, and credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express). Bring a bank cashier’s check or traveler’s checks issued through a U.S. bank in U.S. dollars and open a local bank account immediately.

Housing payment is generally due immediately upon occupancy and, depending upon housing type, at the beginning of each month or term thereafter.

You are required to pay tuition in full by the beginning of the second week of each term. You may use cash, personal checks (made out to Treasurer, Radford University), money orders, traveler’s checks, or credit cards to make tuition payments.

No refunds are given for tuition payments. Tuition reductions are not given for late arrivals or early departures.

More details regarding tuition and other fees may be found at [www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html](http://www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html).

### **Fees**

Fees collected each session include tuition and a student activity fee, which covers technology access, Radford Transit bus use, and the use of Radford University Student Health Services.

A local bus pass is issued that is good for unlimited transportation on the Radford Transit system. Route schedules and maps for the bus system are available at [www.radfordtransit.com](http://www.radfordtransit.com).

Walk-in care at the university's Student Health Center for minor illnesses is covered by fees. This is not the same as having health insurance; health insurance is required for more serious health issues such as hospital visits.

Course books are purchased separately.

### **Health and Accident Insurance**

Students are required to have a health and accident policy providing protection for themselves and their dependents in the event of major illness or injury. The university's minimum requirements for insurance are as follows:

1. Major medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per insured per policy year.
2. Repatriation coverage for each insured in the amount of \$10,000.
3. Maternity coverage will be treated as any other illness under the accident or sickness plan.
4. There should be no exclusion of coverage for participation in, travel to, or practice in club sports, intramural, or extramural sports. Only participation in intercollegiate sports may be excluded.
5. The accident and sickness insurance must be effective on the date an application and premium are received by the insurer with no qualification requirements.
6. There should be no pre-existing condition that excludes coverage permanently under the policy. After meeting a satisfactory waiting period, all accidents or illnesses must be covered.
7. Deductibles should be no more than \$100. While it is recommended the deductible be per insured per year with a maximum of \$200 in total deductibles paid per year, it is acceptable to have no more than \$100 deductible per illness or injury per insured with no cap on the maximum deductible paid out.
8. Benefits paid to a student under any plan prior to the students' initial policy effective date cannot be counted against the maximum benefit payable under the policy. The cost of a student health insurance policy is about \$1,400 for one year. A three-month policy can be purchased through the LCI@RU for about \$350. Students can purchase health insurance on their own, but policies must include the above-listed benefits as a minimum. Note that student insurance does not cover travel to the United States and vacation periods.

For additional information regarding insurance, please see:

Student Medical Insurance, Virginia Tech:

PSI: [www.psiservice.com](http://www.psiservice.com)

Insubuy: [www.insubuy.com](http://www.insubuy.com)

### **Medical records**

All new students entering Radford University are required to provide a health history (translated into English) that is documented by a licensed health professional and includes immunizations against measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, tetanus, diphtheria, and Hepatitis B.

All international students entering Radford University are required to submit results of a tuberculin (TB) skin test (PPD, Mantoux) performed in the United States within six months of the start of the program. (Tine tests are not accepted.) Exceptions to this rule include students with a history of previous positive tuberculin test and students with a history of diagnosed and treated tuberculosis. Those students must send proof of test and/or any treatment received and current chest X-ray. Note: Prior BCG vaccination is not a reason to be automatically exempted from the tuberculin-testing requirement. Students unsure of their status should consult with a member of the University Student Health Services staff for further information.

Bring translated medical records for any accompanying family members as well. Children are not allowed to enroll in school or participate in child care programs without the required immunizations.

Visit your health care provider before you leave home to get your vaccinations updated and to have the form completed and signed. Students who do not return the Radford University Student Health History Form to the LCI@RU will be denied continued enrollment until the completed form is returned.

## **IMMIGRATION AND TRAVEL**

### **Entering the U.S.**

When you enter the United States, you will present your passport, containing a valid F-1 visa and Form I-20 to an immigration officer. The officer will stamp the Form I-20, and return it with an I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. Keep the Form I-20 and the I-94 with your passport for identification purposes; these documents are necessary to leave and re-enter the U.S.

You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date in Section 5 of your I-20. You have 60 days to leave the country or transfer to another school after the program end date. You may request an extension of your program before the program end date.

### **Transfer Students**

F-1 students transferring from other English language programs in the United States must bring their old I-20 to the office. A new I-20 will not be issued until you turn in your financial certification form and the transfer form that shows that you maintained status at your original school.

### **Working on Campus**

One of the benefits of F-1 status is the ability to work on campus while studying. F-1 students can work up to 20 hours per week during academic sessions and up to 40 hours per week during summer or semester breaks. F-2 visa holders cannot work.

### **Paying Customs Duties**

U.S. Customs Service regulations restrict certain items from being brought into the U.S. Ask at a U.S. consulate in your home country for a copy of *United States Customs Hints for Visitors*, which explains customs regulations and may prevent unnecessary inconvenience or expense.

### **Weather and Clothing**

The Radford climate is quite pleasant and permits outdoor activities throughout most of the year. Summers are warm with temperatures averaging 80° F (21° C) and sometimes exceeding 90° F (32° C). Winters average 34° F (1° C) in the daytime, with the temperature going as low as -10° F (-23° C) at night. Rainfall is moderate throughout the year. Snowfall occurs occasionally during the winter months.

A heavy winter coat or waterproof parka, an umbrella or raincoat, and a pair of comfortable waterproof walking shoes are necessities for the winter months. We also recommend that students bring a warm scarf, hat, a sweater or sweatshirt, and gloves. Such items may also be purchased in local stores.

## **DRIVING IN THE U.S.**

### **Driver's License**

A valid driver's license is needed for operating a motor vehicle. The commonwealth of Virginia does not officially recognize the International Driver's License, although it does recognize your home country's driver's license for 30 days. If you are transferring from another school and already have a valid driver's license from another state, you do not need to get a Virginia driver's license. You may apply at any Division of Motor Vehicle branch or at any DMV driver's license station. Requirements are posted online at [www.dmv.state.va.us/drivers/#applying.asp](http://www.dmv.state.va.us/drivers/#applying.asp).

### **Car Rental**

Cars may be rented in the Radford area for trips on weekends or during school breaks. You may rent a car if you are over 21 and have a valid driver's license and a major credit card. Rental companies charge more for drivers under 25 and without U.S. auto insurance. Enterprise rental cars ([www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com)) can be rented at the Roanoke Airport and returned in Radford.

## **FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL**

### **Registration**

When you come to the LCI@RU for the first time, bring the following:

- Passport
- I-94 Card
- Form I-20
- Student Health Form
- Any insurance information that you have from your home country.

We are required to check those documents to verify your legal status in the United States and to make copies for your file in the LCI@RU office. The conference registrar will collect your tuition about two weeks after you enroll.

**Radford University ID Cards**

As part of the registration process, all full-time students will be taken to apply for an [RU Express ID card](#). The cards are needed to access meal plans, ride the municipal bus line, check out books at the libraries, use the gym, and use the Student Health Services Center. Cards may be obtained after registration by arrangement.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

If you are a person with a disability who may need accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Beth Loar at 1-540-231-9814 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) or at [lci-info@radford.edu](mailto:lci-info@radford.edu). Some accommodations may take time to arrange. Please give two weeks for resolution of such requests, if possible.

**MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on topics such as immigration, school rules, academics, health and safety, transportation, housing, food, and living in the U.S., see the LCI Student Handbook at [www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html](http://www.radford.edu/content/lci/home.html).