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Campus Map

SUNY Potsdam Orientation
Office of Student & Family Transitions
128 Sisson Hall
(315) 267-2580 or ssc@potsdam.edu

Potsdam STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
FAQS

What happens at Orientation?
Orientation is a student’s first opportunity to become a part of the Potsdam community. You will have an opportunity to meet other first year students, get to know the campus’s programs and services and most importantly, you will meet with an Academic Adviser to choose and register for your Fall classes.

What time does Orientation begin?
Check-in for Orientation is between 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. the first day of each session. Based on availability, you may make changes to your Orientation session by calling the Office of Student & Family Transitions. Changes must be made one week prior to the scheduled session date. Please plan to park in Lot 2 and follow the signs to Merritt Hall for check-in.

Note: Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students will attend a special orientation session on July 5 through July 27, 2019. Look for another mailing from the EOP office soon!

Do parents have to come to Orientation?
It depends on the family. We have a very successful family program and we are confident guests will enjoy their time (we receive rave reviews each year). Almost all of our guests have gained useful information and peace of mind for having attended.

What do guests do during Orientation?
Guests attend many informative and interactive sessions concerning campus services.

What if I have to arrive the night before?
We recommend you contact one of our local hotels and make a reservation for a moderate price in the Potsdam, Canton or Massena area. This website may be helpful – St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce: http://northcountryguide.com.

What do I bring to Orientation?
• ALL new students and their guests must bring their own linens/bedding to their Orientation session.
• You are encouraged to bring a fan. Residence halls are not air conditioned.
• Umbrella, sweater, personal toiletries and towel, alarm clock, and anything needed for an overnight stay.

Note: Orientation is a great time for you to try out your new bedding, so please make sure to bring a STANDARD EXTRA LONG FITTED SHEET, AN EXTRA LONG FLAT SHEET, A PILLOW AND PILLOW CASE.

What if my guests sign up and cannot make it to Orientation?
You can be reimbursed for the guest fee if you cancel at least two days prior to the Orientation date.
academic calendar

Fall 2019
Fall Semester Payment Deadline Thursday, August 15
New Students Move In Friday, August 23
Welcome Week Activities Saturday - Friday, August 24 - August 30
Returning Students Move In Saturday & Sunday, August 24 & 25
Classes Begin Monday, August 26
Last Day to Add/Drop Friday, August 30
Progress Reports Due Friday, October 4
Fall Recess Begins Friday, October 11 (10 p.m.)
Classes Resume Wednesday, October 16 (8 a.m.)
Last Day to Withdraw Friday, November 1
Last Day to Elect S/U Friday, November 1
Thanksgiving Recess Begins Tuesday, November 26 (10 p.m.)
Classes Resume Monday, December 2 (8 a.m.)
Last Day of Classes Friday, December 6
Academic Preparation Saturday & Sunday, December 7 & 8
Final Examinations Monday - Friday, December 9-13
Final Grades Due Tuesday, December 17 (10 a.m.)

Spring 2020
Spring Semester Payment Deadline Wednesday, January 15
Students Move In Saturday & Sunday, January 25 & 26
Classes Begin Tuesday, January 27
Last Day to Add/Drop Monday, January 31
Progress Reports Due Friday, March 6
Spring Recess Begins Friday, March 6 (10 p.m.)
Classes Resume Monday, March 16 (8 a.m.)
Last Day to Withdraw Friday, April 3
Last Day to Elect S/U Friday, April 3
April Recess Begins Friday, April 10 (10 p.m.)
Classes Resume Wednesday, April 15 (8 a.m.)
Last Day of Classes Friday, May 15
Academic Preparation Saturday & Sunday, May 16 & 17
Final Examinations Monday - Friday, May 18-22
Commencement Ceremonies Saturday, May 23
Final Grades Due Wednesday, May 27 (10 a.m.)
step 1
SET UP YOUR POTSDAM OUTLOOK EMAIL ACCOUNT

It is very important to check your Potsdam Outlook email account often for Orientation updates and other important updates regarding your transition to SUNY Potsdam, such as financial aid, health requirements, student conduct, student billing, etc.

Microsoft Outlook can be accessed online at portal.office.com. Outlook is also a free App available in the Apple and Android App stores. Login using your email address and campus computer account (CCA) password (which you set when you received your admission information packet.) More information about Outlook is available on our website at potsdam.edu/cts/services/office365.

BearPAWS Login Instructions
Type in: bearpaws.potsdam.edu
Here you can register for Orientation, fill out mandatory health forms, complete an advising questionnaire, and sign up for a First-Year Interest Group (FIG), housing and meal plans.
- Use your Campus Computer Account (CCA), username and password
- Go to the “New Student Services” link; follow this checklist to complete all steps.

step 2
APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Make sure you:
- Submit your FAFSA at FAFSA.ed.gov (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- Apply for TAP and the Excelsior Scholarship at HESC.ny.gov (Higher Education Serviced Corporation) NYS Residents only
- Go into BearPAWS to check what you still need to complete or submit to confirm your financial aid

Payment deadlines:
August 15, 2019 - Fall Semester Payment Deadline (Payments received after this date may be subject to late fees.)
January 15, 2020 - Spring Semester Payment Deadline (Payments received after this date may be subject to late fees.)
step 3
SEND IN HEALTH INFORMATION

This information is due right now if you want to register for classes!

- Fill out the health requirements for attending SUNY Potsdam online at BearPAWS:
  - Go to the "New Student Services" link
  - Click on "Student Health Services" Portal
  - Click on "Forms" (complete the Health Information #3, Meningitis Response, and Tuberculosis Questionnaire)
- Mail or fax your immunization record to:
  Student Health Services
  SUNY Potsdam, 119 Van Housen Hall
  44 Pierrepont Avenue
  Potsdam, NY 13676
  Fax: (315) 267-3260

Student Health Services must ensure all new, readmitted, and transfer students meet state and local health requirements. Failing to comply with the health requirements will result in your inability to register for classes.

See important details at www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/healthservices

Questions about health forms/requirements?
Call Student Health Services at (315) 267-2377 or email the office directly at shs@potsdam.edu
step 4
FILL OUT ADVISING QUESTIONNAIRE

Before you can register for classes, your academic adviser needs to get to know your general interests and academic goals. Fill out the advising questionnaire on BearPAWS.

Follow these simple steps:
• Log in to BearPAWS
• Go to the “New Student Services” link
• Click on “Advising Questionnaire” [answer the questions and hit submit]

Questions about the Advising Questionnaire?
Email: advising@potsdam.edu
step 5

REGISTER FOR ORIENTATION

Log in to BearPAWS (bearpaws.potsdam.edu) and sign up for one of the six Orientation sessions:

- SESSION I: June 26-27, 2019
- SESSION II: July 1-2, 2019 (bus)
- SESSION III: July 8-9, 2019
- SESSION IV: July 18-19, 2019 (bus)
- SESSION V: July 22-23, 2019
- SESSION VI: July 25-26, 2019

EOP Dates: Friday, July 5, 2019 - Saturday, July 27, 2019

**Note:** When a session is full, it will not appear as a choice in BearPAWS. To help better accommodate students for advising, please indicate under special accommodations if your travel time one-way exceeds 4 hours.

For students and guests who are located in the five boroughs of New York City, there are two Orientation dates where the student and their guest(s) can travel to Orientation on a bus coordinated by SUNY Potsdam’s Office of First Year and Family Transitions. There is a fee of $120 per person (this fee does not go on the student’s bill; fee must be paid either online when the student and guest sign up or upon arrival to campus during the check in process.)

**Fees**

- Freshman Orientation Fee: A two-day session is $200 and includes all meals, activities and housing accommodation in a residence hall setting. This fee will be included in your first College bill. There is no need to pre-pay.
- Guest Orientation Fee: Guest fees for the two-day session staying in a campus residence hall is $100/guest. Guests may choose to stay off campus and attend orientation for a reduced fee of $85/guest. Lodging options are available at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce website: www.northcountryguide.com. Guest fees are not included in the student’s College bill.

**Payment Options for Guest Fees**

- Pay with a credit card on our secure website (bearpaws.potsdam.edu)
- Please note the student name and Potsdam ID number on all checks/money orders
- Please make check or money order payable to PACES 611 and mail to:
  Office of Student & Family Transitions
  SUNY Potsdam, 128 Sisson Hall
  44 Pierrepont Avenue
  Potsdam, NY 13676
- Payment by cash or credit card can be made at check in upon arrival to campus
step 6
PRE-REGISTER FOR CLASSES

SAVE THE DATE: April 15, 2019
After April 15, 2019 you may pre-register for some of your Fall courses by selecting a First-Year Interest Group (FIG). For details about the individual FIGs offered this Fall, visit www.potsdam.edu/support/firstyear/groups

Note: Crane students do NOT choose from this FIG list because their courses will be arranged at Orientation. For all other students, we highly recommend enrolling in one of the FIGs.

After April 15, 2019, you may register for courses during your summer orientation session. If you cannot decide on a FIG at this time, you may wait until Orientation to select a FIG. However, please note that some FIGs will fill during this pre-registration period. FIGS are learning communities of 10-25 students taking the same interdisciplinary set of two to five courses together. The instructors often collaborate to integrate their courses around a theme or problem.

What can FIGS offer students?
Research nationwide shows that learning communities:
• Intensify cooperation in a community of scholars
• Increase communication among faculty and students
• Promote student confidence in academic potential
• Facilitate transfer of skills from one course to another
• Increase participation and attendance in class
• Serve the very bright and those who have difficulty
• Provide an introduction to the liberal arts

Avoid the rush – sign up now!
• Develop a community of scholars with classmates and instructors
• Reserve seats for some of your Fall schedule now
• Discover connections between the fields of knowledge
• Improve your academic performance and satisfaction
• Accelerate your adjustment to college

All students except Crane students, are requested to select a FIG from the list on the First-Year Interest Groups page under the NEW student link on BearPAWS. Some FIGs make a complete, full-time course schedule, while other FIGs leave room for one or more other courses of students’ choice to be selected during orientation. Some FIGS will be residential and will participate in the First Year Experience (FYE) program.
step 7
REGISTER FOR HOUSING

SAVE THE DATE! April 15, 2019
After April 15, 2019, please refer to our webpage at www.potsdam.edu/reslife for more detailed information. All students must indicate their housing preferences and/or apply for an exemption to live off campus (available online). We know that deciding where you want to live, and who you might want to live with, is a big decision. In order to help you to decide, we offer two housing deadlines. Please note that we cannot process any changes once a student submits their request.

June 15: Priority Housing Deadline
This deadline is ideal for students who have a strong preference in their building and/or their roommate (or who are ok with Residence Life making the decision). We will make every effort fulfill the requests of students who sign up for housing by this date. In addition, students who complete by the priority deadline will receive advance notification of their housing assignment (August 1).

July 30: Housing Deadline
This deadline is ideal for students who would like time to meet a potential roommate. While we will do our best to accommodate a student’s preference, it is possible that we will not be able to fulfill the request. Students who sign up for housing by this deadline will be notified of their housing assignment by August 15.

Note: If you have any physical conditions or concerns that impact your housing needs, please see our website for information on how we can accommodate your needs.

Live On Campus:
• Log in to BearPAWS
• Go to the “New Student Services” link
• Go to the “New Student Housing Registration” link
• Read/agree to Housing License and submit
• Indicate your housing preference from the drop down menu
• If you have a roommate request, provide their information. (Note: You are not required to have a roommate request.)
• “Submit” your preferences

Note: First-year students must live on campus for 2 years/4 semesters.

Live Off Campus:
• Apply for a housing exemption
• Log in to BearPAWS
• Go to the “New Student Services” link
• Go to the “New Student Housing Registration” link
• Indicate that you will not be residing on campus and continue on to complete the exemption form and submit.
• You will receive an email with the decision of your request for exemption.
**FYE**

THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE)

The First Year Experience (FYE), housed in Bowman South, FYE provides opportunities for first year students to make meaningful connections with their peers as well as faculty and staff at SUNY Potsdam. Studies show that students who make these connections during their first year of college have a better chance of performing well academically and reaching graduation. Further, FYE participants often remark that the friendships they made in their first year lasted long after graduation. FYE combines three major components: residential, programmatic and academic to promote a fun, dynamic and academically focused experience for first year students. All students who live in FYE are also enrolled in a two-credit First Year Success Seminar (FYSS).

**FYE Theme Floors**

- **Arts Floor:** One floor has been reserved for students interested in the visual arts, dance, drama and music. This floor is co-ed by door. Students planning to enroll in any arts related courses are encouraged to take advantage of this unique program where you can live and learn in a community of artists.

- **Honors Floor:** A portion of one floor has been reserved for students accepted into the Potsdam Honors Program. This floor is co-ed by door. A study lounge is provided for the use of the floor participants. The Honors Floor has been designated as a study-intensive area.

**Signing up for FYE Housing**

To sign up to live in FYE, follow the housing instructions in Step 7 and make sure to express your interest in FYE on the housing online form. Space in FYE is limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information about FYE, please contact the Office of Residence Life at (315) 267-2350. For more information about the Honors Floor, contact the Honors Department at (315) 267-2900.
step 8
SIGN UP FOR MEAL PLAN & BEAR EXPRESS ACCOUNT

Students are responsible for making meal plan selections on BearPAWS before the start of the semester. Per campus residency requirement, residential students must have a meal plan. Meal Plans consist of weekly meal swipes and semester’s use of FLEX and Guest Passes. First Year Students have two meal plan choices. (19 Meals/100 Flex/5 Guest or 14 Meals/500 Flex/5 Guest)

Meal Plans expire at the end of the semester; they are non-refundable, have no cash value and do not rollover into the next semester. Meal Plan contracts are valid for the academic year and are billed in the fall and spring semesters: changes must be made within a week of the start of classes or between semesters. Changes to the amount must be made within a week of the start of classes or between semesters.

For details about residential or commuter plans, and their costs, go to: www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/dining/MealPlans

Bear Express is an optional declining balance account on your student ID card. It may be used on campus for services, in vending machines, and at participating off-campus restaurants and businesses. A Bear Express account is opened for most residential students and the amount will appear on your college bill. The amount is billed in both the fall and spring semesters. Changes or cancellation to the amount placed on the account must be made prior to Thursday of the first week of classes on BearPAWS. After that date, money can be added to the account through BearPAWS; in person with cash, check, credit, or debit cards at the PACES Business Office; or at any Dining Service campus location.

Unused Bear Express account balances roll over from semester to semester and remaining balances (over $20) may be credited to accounts at the end of the academic calendar year.

Choose a meal plan and Bear Express account amount:

• Log in to BearPAWS
• Go to the "New Student Services" link
• Go to the “Meal Plan & Bear Express Registration”
• Read/agree to Meal Plan License & click submit
• Select your resident status
• Select the 1st Year Meal Plan
• Select Bear Express Amount for the semester
• Click save
step 9
ORDER CAMPUS ID CARD

The campus ID card, also known as the Campus Card, is provided by PACES. The card provides access to meal plans, residence halls, Bear Express account, fitness center and other campus services.

All Potsdam students, faculty and staff are required to have a Campus Card. Cards are issued at the PACES business office in Merritt Hall. *If you submit your photograph online through sunycard.potsdam.edu, two weeks prior to your arrival for orientation or the start of classes, your card will be ready for you to pickup. You must bring and show a valid government issued photo ID (passport, driver’s license) to pick up your Campus Card.

PACES is not responsible for purchases made with lost or stolen cards. Dining services will issue meal vouchers at the Student Union Dining Court if a student loses their card when the PACES Business Office is closed. You are responsible for managing your card. If you lose or temporarily misplace your card, you must deactivate or reactivate it through BearPAWS. Students can sign up for low-balance notifications, check meal account balances, and upload and submit ID photos online at sunycard.potsdam.edu.

Photo requirements:
- Must be in JPG file format
- Must be in color
- Must be taken within the last 6 months
- There must be space above the top of your head and the bottom of your face
- The photo must be of your face/torso
- The entire head and shoulders must be visible
- No hats, sunglasses or gestures

Submit your photo online:
- Go to: sunycard.potsdam.edu
- Log in using your CCA (campus computer account – this is the account used when logging in to BearPAWS, or campus email)
- Click on Submit ID Photo
- Click on the Browse button to find the location of the photo you wish to upload
- Select the desired photo, then click on the “upload” button
- Click “submit”

Note: If you submit your photo online, you will then pick your Campus Card up at Orientation or at the PACES office in Merritt Hall.
step 10
ORDER TEXTBOOKS

The College Store is the official SUNY Potsdam textbook retailer and stocks professors’ required and recommended course materials. Getting the right books and course materials is important to a student’s academic success. The College Store has a direct connection to faculty instructors and each semester it orders materials the faculty have requested. In many cases, this includes special course packs, CDs and study guides.

Books ordered online through the Store’s website bookstore.potsdam.edu can be shipped or pre-packed for pick-up on campus. The online ordering system will show you which titles are required, recommended or suggested for courses. The Store sells textbooks in different formats: new, used, e-book, or rental. USED books are generally 25% less than the new book price, rentals and e-books are usually less expensive than new. The College Store also has a price comparison tool for easy reference.

Online ordering and pre-packing begins two weeks prior to the start of the semester. Pre-pack orders are filled first, so the chances of getting a preferred format is greater when ordered online. All orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Students who choose not to pre-pack can come and purchase the books at The College Store in Barrington Student Union.

Changes to course titles, books and materials can be made prior to the start of the semester, so ordering books for prepack will assure greater accuracy. You will be notified as to when and where to pick up your books via email. The College Store has a textbook buy back program and a full inventory of school supplies. Books ordered through The Store may be paid for with Bear Express or credit card.

Order textbooks online:

• Go to bookstore.potsdam.edu
• Under the Textbook link click on “Order Textbooks”
• Go to “How to Order Textbooks Step by Step,” a PDF and review the step by step instructions
• After following the instructions, go back to the Textbook link and go to “Click here to order your textbooks.”
• Once you have completed your order, you will receive an email confirmation about where and when to pick up your books.