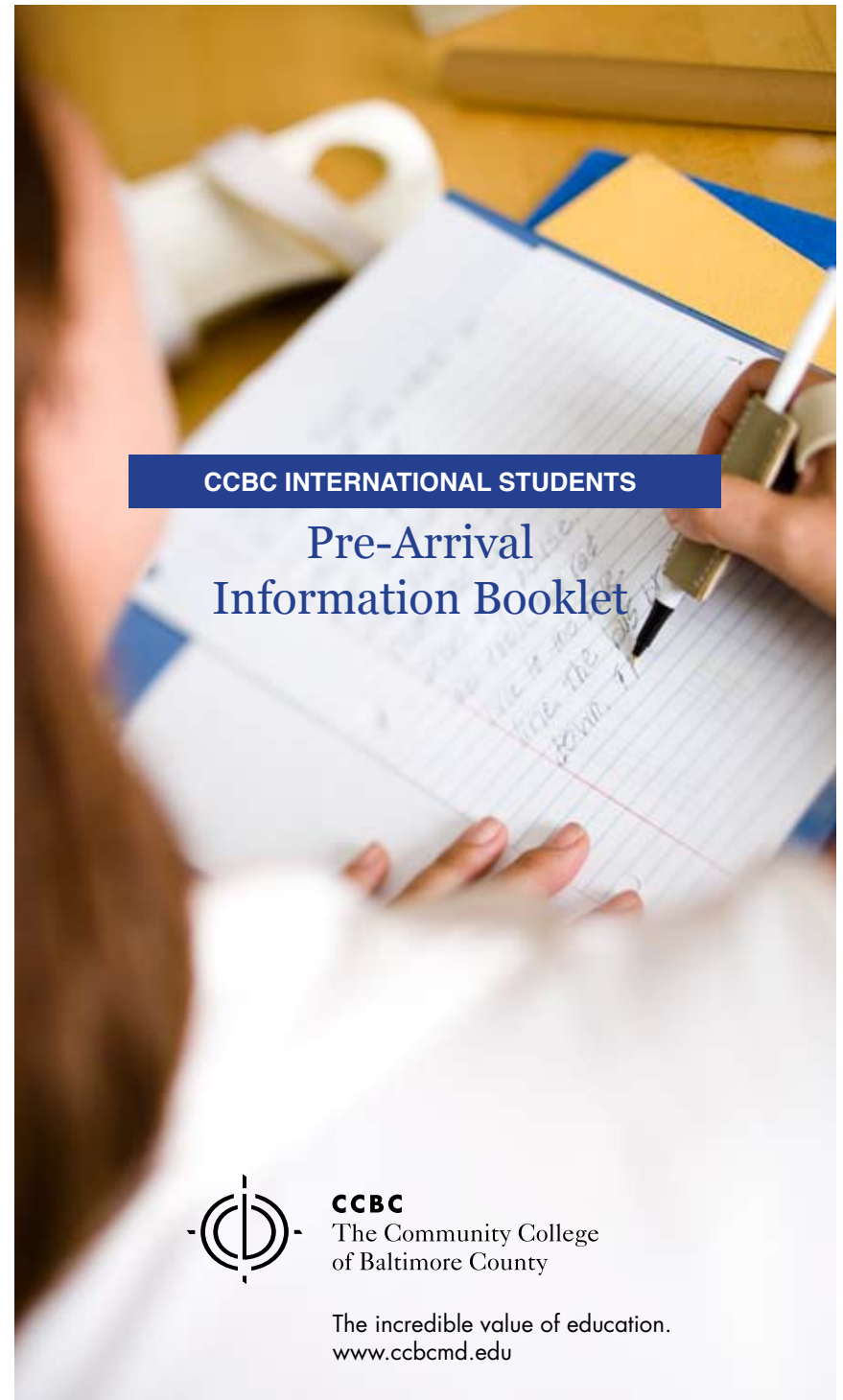


CCBC

The Community College
of Baltimore County

CCBC INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

www.ccbcmd.edu/iss



CCBC INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Pre-Arrival Information Booklet



CCBC

The Community College
of Baltimore County

The incredible value of education.
www.ccbcmd.edu



WELCOME

to the Community College of Baltimore County!

We are delighted that you have chosen the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) to be partners with you in achieving your academic goals and dreams. We hope that the information contained in this booklet will help you prepare for your arrival and that you will enjoy your studies at CCBC.

The City of Baltimore Maryland:

Baltimore is an excellent place to start your studies in the U.S. It is a major port city in Maryland with a mild climate and easy access to major destinations on the East Coast: Washington DC, Philadelphia and New York City.

This booklet includes important information regarding:

Preparing to Come to the U.S. and CCBC

Documents and Visa Procedures 5
 Questions and Precautions 7
 Transfer Students 8

Getting Ready

Your Health 9
 Money 10
 Credit Cards 11
 Weather 11
 What to Pack 11

Arriving in Baltimore

BWI Airport 15
 Airport Transportation 15
 Hotels 16

Getting Started at CCBC

Transportation to CCBC 17
 Becoming a Student 18
 Placement Testing 19
 Orientation 20

Living in Baltimore

Banking 21
 Housing 21
 Transportation 22

International Student Orientation

The week before you begin your first semester of classes, you will need to attend a brief mandatory orientation session for all new and transfer F-1 international students. During the orientation, you will enjoy some refreshments, meet faculty, staff and other students from around the world. Most importantly, you will learn essential information about maintaining your visa while you study at CCBC.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us.

International Student Services

CCBC Catonsville
 Building K, room 102
 800 South Rolling Rd
 Baltimore, MD 21228-5317
 Telephone: 443.840.5005
 Fax: 443.840.4992
 Email: hhenein@ccbcmd.edu

International Student Services

CCBC Essex
 Building A, room 270
 7201 Rossville Boulevard
 Baltimore, MD 21237-3899
 Telephone: 443.840.1005
 Fax: 443.840.2200
 Email: standia@ccbcmd.edu



You will find more helpful information on these websites:

CCBC International Student Services www.ccbcmd.edu/iss

Baltimore's Visitors Bureau www.baltimore.org

City of Baltimore www.ci.baltimore.md.us/visitor/

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

Preparing To Come To the U.S. and CCBC

Your Documents and Visa Procedures – 8 Steps

1. Check your passport - Be sure your passport is current and will not expire for at least six months beyond your intended period of stay. If your passport is going to expire soon after you arrive in the U.S., the consulate or embassy may not give you a visa.

Make photocopies of your passport and keep them separate from your passport in case it is lost or stolen. Leave one set of copies in a safe place at your home and carry another set of copies when you travel.

2. Check your I-20 Form

Is the spelling of your name exactly the same as it is in your passport?
Is your country of birth and country of citizenship entered correctly?
What is the starting date? (See No.5 on your I-20).

3. Complete the SEVIS I-901 Form and pay the fees –Download the form at www.fmjfee.com. Be sure to enter your name exactly as it appears in your passport and on your I-20. You must complete this step before applying for an F-1 student visa.

4. Apply for an F-1 Student visa appointment as soon as possible - In most countries, first time student visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. However, each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. Students should consult embassy web sites at <http://www.usembassy.gov/> and review regulations at http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html.

Note: Early planning is important. June, July, August, and September are the busiest months, so during this time, it's important to schedule your interview appointment early. You may apply for your visa as soon as you have your I-20 Form from CCBC and have paid the U.S. Government I-901 SEVIS fee.

Also note that embassies and consulates are able to issue your student visa 90 days or less, in advance of the course of study registration date. If you apply for your visa more than 90 days prior to your start date or registration date as provided on your I-20 Form, the embassy or consulate will hold your application until it is able to issue the visa.

5. Collect and prepare your documents for your visa application.

Students need to plan ahead to avoid having to make repeat visits to the embassy. To the extent possible, prepare the documents suggested below, as well as any other documents that might help establish your ties to the local community – proof of family ties, employment, real estate, family businesses, etc.

- a. Passport valid for at least six months after your arrival in the U.S.
- b. CCBC Form I-20
- c. CCBC acceptance letter
- d. Application form DS-156 completed and signed
- e. One photograph
- f. Original bank statements from your sponsor
- g. Receipt of the SEVIS I-901 fee payment
- h. Immunization records
- i. Official TOEFL score
- j. Additional supporting documents, if requested

6. Take all of the documents and apply for your student visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country. When you receive the visa, make a photocopy of it and keep the copy in a safe place. The visa will allow you to enter the U.S.

7. Make travel arrangements. After you have obtained your student visa, you should make travel arrangements to Baltimore. Your visa requires that you enter the U.S. at least 15, but not earlier than 45 days prior to the first day of classes.

8. Enter the U.S. and get your I-94 card. When you arrive in the U.S., you will proceed through immigration control, the official there will inspect your documents, including your passport, I-94 card and I-20. The official will stamp these three (3) documents and return them to you. Be sure to keep them in a safe place and bring them to International Student Services at CCBC. After immigration, you will collect your luggage (even if you have another flight to catch) and proceed to customs. If this is not your final destination, you will re-check your bags and go on to catch your next flight.

Visa/Immigration Questions and Precautions

What if my visa application is denied?

If your visa application is denied:

- Request a written statement from the embassy that describes the reason for denial.
- Send or fax your denial statement to your CCBC International Student Counselor.
- Plan to return to the embassy to reapply for the visa with the denial statement and requested documents.

How long may I stay on my F-1 student visa?

When you enter the U.S. on an F-1 student visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status. (This is noted with D/S by the U.S. immigration officer on the I-94 Admission Card you complete when you arrive in the U.S.) In other words, you may stay as long as you are a full-time student, even if the F-1 visa in your passport expires while you are in the U.S. However, if you depart the U.S. with an expired visa, you will need to obtain a new one before you return to the U.S. to resume your studies. A student visa cannot be renewed or re-issued in the U.S.; it must be done at an embassy or consulate abroad.

The date on your I-20 is important. It must remain valid while you are in the U.S. If your I-20 will expire before you complete your studies, speak to an international counselor about the possibility of extending your I-20.

For a student who has completed the course of studies shown on the I-20, and any authorized practical training, he/she is allowed the following additional time in the U.S. before departure:

He/she is allowed 60 additional days beyond the end date on the I-20 or the completion of studies, whichever comes first, to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer to another school.



If your goal is to be a student at CCBC, do not try the following:

- **Do not** use the I-20 of another school to enter the U.S. if you plan to study at CCBC. U.S. immigration regulations require that you attend the school that issued the I-20 you used to enter the U.S.
- **Do not** enter the U.S. on a B-1/B-2 visitor visa. U.S. immigration rules prohibit B-1/B-2 visitors from pursuing a course of study prior to obtaining approval to change to student status. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may refuse to grant a change of status from B-1/B-2 to student status after entry to the U.S. unless the student has received a notation of "prospective student."
- **Do not** enter the U.S. through the Visa Waiver Program, it will be impossible to extend your stay or change to student status. Be sure to carry your I-20 with you when you travel to present it with your passport when you enter the U.S. The officer at the port of entry to the U.S. will check your documents and stamp your I-20 as well as your I-94.

Transfer students currently in the U.S.

If you are currently an F-1 international student in the U.S. and plan to transfer to CCBC, complete the first section of the CCBC Transfer Eligibility Form and have the DSO at your current school complete the remaining section and transfer your SEVIS record to CCBC. We will not be able to issue your I-20 until the transfer of this SEVIS record is complete.

Getting Ready

Your Health

Before you leave your home country, you should have a complete physical and dental examination. You should tell your doctor that you are going to study in the U.S., possibly for several years. Ask your doctor what medical care or monitoring you need while you are away from home. Find out how you can get necessary or prescribed medications. Your home doctor or clinic might be able to help by referring you to a source for prescription drugs in the U.S. Get copies of your medical records translated into English if your doctor recommends it.

Have your teeth checked thoroughly by your family dentist and complete all of your dental work before you come to the U.S. There are excellent dental care facilities in Baltimore, but dental work can be very expensive, and it is not covered by most health insurance plans.

Consider purchasing medical insurance at home. All international students are required to have adequate health insurance coverage while attending CCBC. The minimum coverage of such a plan includes: up to \$100,000 per accident or illness, up to \$15,000 for repatriation of remains, up to \$15,000 for medical evacuation to the home country and a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness. Co-insurance may not exceed 25% payable by the student.

If you do not have adequate coverage through a company in your home country, you must purchase the health insurance policy provided by the college through HTH Worldwide. If you have existing health insurance with coverage comparable to or greater than the CCBC sponsored plan before you arrive in Baltimore, you may request an exemption from having to purchase the CCBC sponsored plan. You must submit proof that your plan meets or exceeds the following requirements:

- Medical benefits no less than \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains no less than \$15,000
- Medical evacuation to the insured person's home country no less than \$15,000
- Funds must be payable in the U.S.

Your proof of insurance must also show:

- Dates of coverage; begin date and expiration date
- Student's name as the insured
- A phone number for the insurance company
- Documentation must be in readable English

It is your responsibility to confirm details of your policy with your insurance company. Students are required to have year-round coverage, as illnesses and accidents can happen at any time. This means that all international students are required to have summer insurance coverage, whether or not they are enrolled during the summer session.

Money

It's best to bring a combination of cash, traveler's checks and bank drafts. It is difficult to exchange currency in the U.S., so don't bring a lot of money in foreign currencies with you.

This is an estimate of how much you will need your first semester:

Tuition, fees, and books for 12 credits	\$3,797.00
Housing and meals	\$ 4,100.00
Health Insurance	\$ 517.50
Total	\$8,414.50

You should bring some of your money in cash. Don't bring a lot of cash, however, because if you lose it, it's gone. It's a good idea to bring some of your money in the form of traveler's checks—large denominations, such as \$100's, and some \$50's work well.

When you register for classes at CCBC, you will have to pay your entire tuition for the term. Normally, tuition and fees will range from \$3,300-\$4,700 depending on how many credits you take and whether you are enrolling in HTH health insurance. You may want to bring a bank check or money order for \$4,500 issued in U.S. dollars made payable to CCBC to pay your tuition, fees, books, and health insurance. If this is less than what you owe, you can pay any additional amounts with cash, traveler's checks, or credit cards. Please note that if you overpay the college, it can take time before the college sends a refund.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are very useful. They are widely accepted in the U.S. You can use Visa or MasterCard to pay for your tuition and fees, buy books and groceries and even pay some of your utility bills. However, it is very difficult for foreign citizens to open credit card accounts in the U.S. If you want to use a credit card, bring one with you from your home country.

Weather

The weather in Baltimore is seasonal. Temperatures in the spring and fall are mild with daily highs of 18-25° C. Summers are humid and hot with highs in the 30's °C and winters are cold with temperatures near freezing and occasional snow.

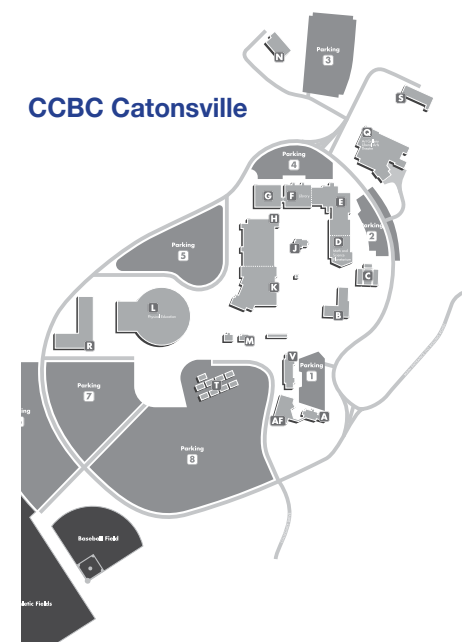
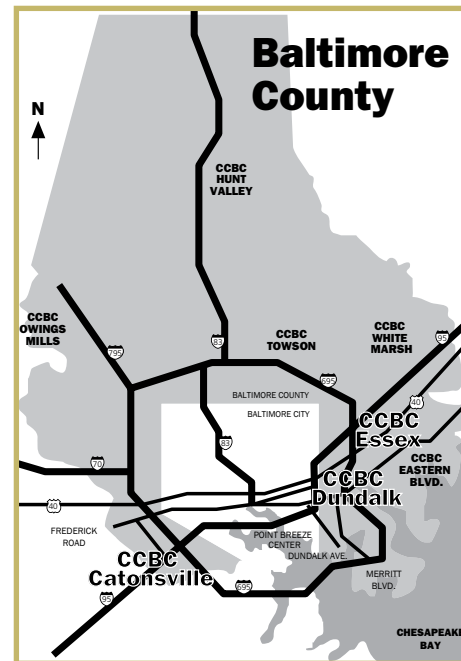
What to Pack

Most students in the U.S. dress very casually. It is common for students to wear jeans, sweaters, shorts, t-shirts and athletic shoes to class. We recommend that you bring clothes that don't require special care, so you can take care of your own clothes easily. Self-use washing machines and dryers are easily accessible and usually reasonably priced, but dry cleaning can be very expensive. It's also a good idea for men to bring at least one suit and tie and women to bring one or two nice dresses in case they are invited to a party or special event. Finally, bring or plan to buy a winter coat and solid shoes to get you through the winter.

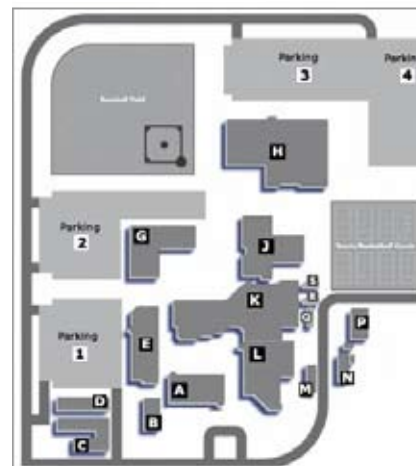
Other things to bring:

- A traditional national costume or dress from your home country to wear to festivals or special occasions when you are invited to speak about your culture
- Family photos, small photo albums, or items of sentimental value. These items will help you get over "homesickness" and will be fun to show your new friends here.
- Any medications and prescriptions you are taking
- Eye glasses and a prescription for your glasses in case they are lost or damaged
- A cookbook to help you prepare some of the foods you love
- Copies of your documents kept separately from your originals in case of loss
- A major credit card – Visa or MasterCard
- Your driver's license and an international driver's license - If you plan to drive in Maryland, you will eventually need to get a Maryland State Driver's License. Having your license from home makes this process cheaper and easier.





CCBC Dundalk



CCBC Essex



Arriving in Baltimore

BWI Airport

Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) is the closest airport to CCBC. It's about 12 km to the Catonsville Campus and 34km to the Essex Campus. If BWI is your first port of entry in the U.S., see item #8 on page 5 to read about arrival procedures. If you have flown to Baltimore from another U.S. airport, then follow the signs to collect your baggage and proceed to Ground Transportation.

Airport Transportation

BWI has excellent airport transportation options. It is served by train, bus, light-rail, shuttles and taxis. Light-rail is the least expensive at \$1.60, shuttles are approximately \$25 and taxis can cost \$40-80. Please go to **www.bwiairport.com** and click on "Ground Transportation" to learn more.

Caution: All taxis in the U.S. are well-marked and have meters. Do not get into an unmarked vehicle. Also, do not ask a driver at BWI to set a price for the ride before you leave. This is illegal in Baltimore.



Hotels

It's easy and frequently cheaper to arrange a hotel over the internet than it is to wait until you arrive at BWI. Here are a few hotels that are close to CCBC.

Hotels near CCBC Catonsville

Comfort Inn Baltimore West

5801 Baltimore National Pike
Baltimore, MD 21228
410.744.5000

Days Inn

5701 Baltimore National Pike
Baltimore, MD 21228
410.747.9000

Ramada Limited Baltimore

6422 Baltimore National Parkway
Baltimore, MD 21228
410.788.3900

Hotels near CCBC Essex

La Quinta Inn and Suites Baltimore North

4 Philadelphia Court
Baltimore, MD 21237
410.574.8100

Hampton Inn

8225 Town Center Drive
Baltimore, MD 21236
410.931.2200

Hilton Garden Inn White Marsh

5015 Campbell Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21236
410.427.0600

Getting Started at CCBC

Transportation to CCBC



CCBC Catonsville 800 South Rolling Road

By Bus MTA Bus #77

By Car CCBC Catonsville is located off Baltimore Beltway (695) Exit 12, Wilkens Avenue West. Follow Wilkens Avenue West to Valley Road. Make a right on Valley Road to the college entrance.

CCBC Essex 7201 Rossville Boulevard

By Bus MTA Buses #24 and 55

By Car CCBC Essex is located off Baltimore Beltway (695) Exit 34 (Rosedale). At Exit 34, turn onto Maryland Route 7 (Philadelphia Road) heading towards White Marsh. Proceed one-quarter mile and turn left onto Rossville Boulevard.

Becoming a CCBC Student in Seven Steps

1. **Visit International Student Services at Catonsville or Essex as soon as possible.** Classes fill quickly and we want you to get the schedule that works best for you. Bring the following when you come:
 - a. Passport,
 - b. CCBC I-20 (original)
 - c. U.S. and foreign college and/or university transcripts in English. If you plan to transfer courses from a foreign college or university to CCBC, you will need to have them formally evaluated. We recommend AACRAO (www.aacrao.org).
 - d. Proof of health insurance (If you do not have health insurance, you will automatically be enrolled in the HTH Worldwide Insurance plan offered through CCBC).
2. **Take placement tests.** An international counselor will determine which placement tests you are required to take. Most students entering CCBC for the first time must take placement tests, but there are some exceptions:
 - Students who have completed English 101 at a college or university in the U.S. are exempt from the English placement test. However, credits in English do not transfer from any other country into the U.S.
 - Students who have completed higher level math courses at a college or university may also be exempt from the math placement test. We recommend that students who believe they have taken the required math in a country outside the U.S. should have their transcripts evaluated by AACRAO as soon as possible so that previous college work can be considered. More information can be found at www.aacrao.org.
3. **Discuss placement test results with an international counselor and register for classes.** The counselor will help you determine the best classes for you.
4. **Purchase your student bus pass and books** at the CCBC bookstore.
5. **Set up your SIMON** (Student Information Management Online Orientation) account.
6. **Pay your tuition and fees** (See information under Money).
7. **Attend mandatory orientation.** This orientation is required as part of your I-20. It is designed to cover not only your SEVIS requirements, but also important information regarding your academic future at CCBC and beyond. To register for the orientation at Essex, email dtakaoglu@ccbcmd.edu. To register at Catonsville, email hheinein@ccbcmd.edu.

Placement Testing

The Michigan Test - International students who have not completed English 101 at a college or university in the U.S. are required to take the Michigan Test for Non-native Speakers to measure their mastery of the English language. This test requires a student to answer 100 questions in 65 minutes. There are 20 listening, 30 grammar, 30 vocabulary and 20 reading questions. To view sample questions, go to www.ccbcmd.edu/iss/michtest.html. Students may also find it useful to study from the book *How to Prepare for the Michigan Test Battery*, by Pamela J. Sharpe.

The Writing Test - Students who score more than 60 on the Michigan Test are also required to take the Writing Test. On the Writing Test, students are given four topics and must choose only one topic as the basis of their writing sample. The sample is evaluated for organization, grammar, and vocabulary and most students receive their results in two business days. For more information, go to www.ccbcmd.edu/iss/wrtest.html.

The Math Test – Students who have not completed a university level math course must take the ACCUPLACER math test. This is a multiple choice, computerized adaptive test. This means that the questions are chosen for you on the basis of your answers to previous questions. When taking the math assessment test, the Elementary Algebra test will appear first. Depending on your performance on the Elementary Algebra questions, you may also continue testing in Arithmetic or College Level Mathematics. Details follow.

Elementary Algebra - A total of 12 questions, of three types, are administered in this test and they are as follows:

- Operations with integers and rational numbers
- Operations with algebraic expressions using evaluation of simple formulas and expressions, and adding and subtracting monomials and polynomials
- Translating written phrases into algebraic expressions and solving equations, inequalities, word problems, linear equations and inequalities, quadratic equations (by factoring), and verbal problems presented in an algebraic context

Arithmetic - There are 17 arithmetic questions, divided into three types:

- Operations with whole numbers and fractions
- Operations with decimals and percents
- Applications and problem solving, including rate, percent, and measurement problems

College-Level Mathematics - There are 20 questions in six content areas:

- Algebraic operations
- Solutions of equations and inequalities
- Coordinate geometry
- Applications and other algebra topics
- Functions
- Trigonometry

Orientation

All international students with F-1 visas are required to attend a 3-hour orientation session with important SEVIS information as well as helpful CCBC information for new students. Light refreshments are provided, and new I-20's are presented at the conclusion of the orientation. To register for orientation on the Catonsville campus, email Hesham Henein at hhenein@ccbcmd.edu. To register for the session at the Essex Campus, email Dawn Takaoglu at dtakaoglu@ccbcmd.edu.



Living in Baltimore

Banking

We recommend that you open a bank account in Baltimore as soon as possible. A checking account is the type of bank account that is most useful. It allows you to deposit your money and then write checks against the balance. You can also use an ATM (automated teller machine) card to access funds in your checking account.

To open a bank account, you will need your passport, another form of identification, an address, and some money. If you bring a cashier's check or a bank draft to use to open an account, remember that it might take a week or more for your check to "clear." That means that you will not be able to use that money for a week. If you use traveler's checks or cash to open a bank account, you will have access to your money immediately.

Housing

International students need to arrange their own accommodations. Fortunately, there are apartments or flats near every campus. To see what type of housing and amenities are available, you may want to start your search online at Baltimoreapartments.com or Rent.com. If you are interested in sharing a room or finding a room in a private home, check with the Office of Student Life. If you are planning to use public transportation, remember to ask about the proximity of a bus stop to the apartment or house you are considering.

Getting an apartment - When you rent or lease an apartment in the U.S., you are usually required to pay the first and last month's rent, plus a security deposit, before you can move in. Rental applications usually ask for a social security number in order to do a "Credit Check." You do not need a social security number to rent an apartment. Apartment managers do not need to run a credit check. Instead, they can ask for a larger security deposit. You may also need to provide proof that you have the funds to pay the rent. For this reason, it is a good idea to open a local bank account before you start your apartment search.

Transportation

In Baltimore, public transportation isn't nearly as developed as it is in most cities in Europe or Asia. Although it is possible to live without a car, it isn't always convenient or easy. If you plan to rely on public transportation, consider your transportation options as you choose your housing. Some students find it easiest to live within walking distance of the college. Others choose to live near a transportation hub so they can avoid making connections.

Bus - All CCBC campuses are serviced by the Mass Transit Authority bus service which operates seven days a week. College students can buy monthly passes at reduced rates at the CCBC Bookstore. Depending on where you live, you may need to take a connecting bus. Connection times can be long and buses are often late. Be sure to allow for extra time to avoid being late to class.

Maps and schedules of all bus routes are available at www.mtmaryland.com, at malls, post offices, and public libraries. You may also call 410-767-3999 to request information about routes or schedules. Ask, "How do I get from point X to point Y by bus?"

Taxicabs - There are many taxicab (usually called "cab") companies in Baltimore County. Taxi service is far more expensive here than it is in many other countries. Taxicabs have meters which register the fare a passenger must pay. It is customary to pay an additional 10-15 percent of the fare as a "tip."

Car rental - Cars may be rented by the day, weekend, week, or month by any licensed driver. Many agencies require drivers to be at least 25 year of age. Rental cars are very expensive.

Driving in Maryland - You may drive legally in the State of Maryland for the first 60 days using your home country's driver license. Be sure to have the license in your possession when you are driving. After 60 days, you need to have a Maryland State Drivers License.

For more detailed information on living in Baltimore, including housing, utilities, transportation, communicating with family, student resources and student organizations, download the International Student Handbook at www.ccbcmd.edu/media/iss/inter_student_hdbk.pdf.