

Freshmen FAQ

Q: Are there any summer meetings with alumni/current students in Singapore before school starts?

A: There will be 2 summer contacts, one in early June (first two weeks) and one in late July/early Aug. We will start arranging a time and date for it once we know (as many of) the Singaporean freshmen (as we can find). For these two meet-ups, it'll mostly be chatting with us (current students).

Sometime in June, there'll most likely be an alumni contact as well, so you get to meet current alumni working/living in Singapore now.

Q: Roughly how many Singaporeans go to CMU every year?

A: Around 15-20. (And this number doesn't include grad students).

Q: May I ask if everybody staying in residence halls will be chased out during holidays? Is there a space provided for storage on-campus? Like a big temporary locker of sorts?

A: Yes, you will be chased out during winter break (Except for Morewood E-Tower) (you can leave your stuff in your room), however, for the mini mid-semester breaks, like spring break or thanksgiving, you will still be allowed to stay in your hall.

For summer, you will be chased out, and you will have to shift your belongings into storage. (Only if you continue to live on campus though) Most Singaporeans choose to move out after freshman year because it is much cheaper to rent so you can shift your stuff to your new house. If not, there are always seniors around who will be more than happy to help with storage over summer.

Q: 1. Is it possible for first year international students to get quad rooms? What happens if we don't get it, do we get pushed to single-standalone applicants if we don't get it?

2. Which are the blocks closer to the engineering blocks? I've heard that Stever Mudge and Morewood are quite popular among 1st years, but don't really know anything else..

A1: Allocation is done in the order of when you submitted your deposit, and not the actual date you applied for housing.

A2: When you apply for housing, you rank a list of dorms and they will try to allocate you to your first/second/... choice dorm.

For location of the dorms: you can refer to <http://www.cmu.edu/about/visit/campus-map.shtml>

For dorm facilities: you can refer to <http://www.cmu.edu/housing/residence-types/index.html>

Q: How is it like to learn driving in Pittsburgh?

A: It will be better to learn in Singapore because you will not really have time to learn here nor are the facilities here as good/convenient as in Singapore. (Ex. No circuits, no brake on instructor side)

That said, it is cheaper to learn over here. It's also pretty convenient for trips and stuff to have a driving license already.

In the US, anyone who is over 21 with a valid license can teach you how to drive on any car. A US driver's license will be really convenient.

Q: Meal Plans Advice?

A: Get the cheapest plan with fewest blocks and the most DINEX. (Red Plan 9: 22 meals per 2 weeks, \$720 DINEX) If that's really too little you can eat from food trucks by paying cash (you'd appreciate the variety, and it's cheaper than a bigger meal plan). Try not to get PLAIDCASH if you can avoid it.

Q: How long can I wait before sending my financial documents for my visa?

A: The school will not issue you your I-20 until they get the documents, and applying for the visa takes time (You will need your I-20 to apply for the visa), and it takes time for documents to travel to and fro halfway around the world. Just keep all that in mind and try to start as early as possible.

It's usually standard that they will grant you a 5 year visa for a Singapore passport. But if you're self-sponsoring, then you'll need to mail in things like bank documents, etc, showing funding for at least the first year, and technically, reasonable evidence for funding for subsequent years.

Q: Do we need to satisfy a foreign language requirement for the freshmen year? Would Chinese language taken at A levels be counted as transfer credits?

A: No. Yes

Q: Just curious, do we need to bring around our laptops frequently in campus? Thinking of what laptop to buy (:

A: You generally won't need a laptop for the first week of school. There are cluster machines available for use for everyone so you won't have a problem surfing the net or doing homework. Do consider purchasing a laptop here because it is much cheaper.

Q: Are there a lot of textbooks and notes to bring around as well?

Regarding textbooks, some courses do give out questions sourced from the textbook, so some do need them. There are 4 options:

1. Buy international edition from Singapore.
2. Buy brand new from school bookshop.
3. Buy used or rent from school bookshop.
4. Offload a textbook from any of the seniors. (Subject to availability)

*(*As a side note, architecture majors have no seniors here. Engineering majors and CS majors are aplenty. Also option 5. Do anything you want but don't get caught. (Aka .pdf))*

All 3 operating systems are very well supported in CMU. If you're taking a bunch of CS courses it might actually make your life easier to use Linux so you can work locally instead of testing everything on the server. For CS students, it doesn't matter because you can install Linux anyway.

Q: 15-251?

A: <http://abstrusegoose.com/474> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=843NC4pvnYg>

Q: Skin Test?

A: CMU website states you will have to do an x-ray only if skin test is positive. If you come to CMU without the skin test or with only the x-ray, you will be asked to do them.

Q: Can I take more than 1 General Education Class for the semester/each semester?

A: Yes.

Q: Where can I find my mailbox number + Will postage office keep packages for you?

A: SIO->My Info-> View and Update My Info (Look under Campus Address). Postage office will generally keep your packages for 10 days upon receipt.

Q: How long does PNC process bank draft/send you your debit card?

A: 3-6 business days to process bank draft. 1 week to send debit card.

Q: Will our schools automatically send A-level results to CMU?

A: It varies for different schools. It is best to check with your school counselor/admin. To be safe, do also bring your A-level results and see your advisor to place out/reflect A-level grades on SIO

Q: Is 76-101 compulsory?

A: Yes. Take one that fits your schedule and sounds interesting to you.

Q: How should we buy plane tickets for our first trip to the US?

A: Consider buying a one way ticket and then buying 2 way tickets from the States for subsequent trips.

Q: Calculus placement test? Should I try to get placed out of 21-122?

A: 21-122 is generally revision for most Singaporeans, except for the last section on series and sequences. The general consensus amongst seniors is to place out of it, simply because it's not really worth the time which can be better spent on other courses.

Try to do well and get placed out of 21-120/122. If not, talk to your advisor. A-level credits should allow you to get placed out of 120/122.

Q: How to pay for fall invoices when it is due when you're not there yet and you don't have a US banking account?

A: Need to pay by end of August latest or will get late fee (as of 2012), which may be waived if you write them a nice email.

Probably wire transfer from Singapore into a new bank account which you set up upon arrival. Or bring bank draft for the new bank account (Do declare it when going on the flight, it will be fine.)

Q: I understand that proof of vaccinations is required for move-in. Will photocopies of health booklets (vaccinations) / suffice? Or do we bring these documents along?

A: There is no formal need to show documentation, photocopies seem to be more than sufficient. Regarding vaccinations, army vaccinations are in ns.sg under eServices > eHealth > eMedInfo. The 3 taken in BMT are Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid.

Other required vaccinations can be done at the TTSH traveller's clinic or other locations.

Q: Where can I purchase Asian products in Pittsburgh?

A: Lotus Food Market (in Strip district); 1649 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA

Not recommended to bus there, as the bus is extremely infrequent and it can take 2 hours or more to bus there and back.

Try renting a Zipcar instead and splitting the cost across 5 people for 2 hours. \$4 each.