

The Grad Assistant's Unofficial Guide to Brown 2026

From your International Graduate Student Assistants



Dear Incoming International Students,

Congratulations on your admission and on behalf of the international student community we welcome you to Brown, your new home!

As the International Orientation graduate student assistants, we have compiled this guide to help ease your transition to Brown and life overseas. It contains useful information about getting to the University, tips on finding an apartment or roommates, navigating your way around the city, performing crucial administrative tasks such as opening a bank account and getting a mobile phone, acquainting you with life in Providence beyond your academics, and much more.

Brown has a strong and vibrant international community and we are all here to help you settle in. Take your time to go through the information provided here so that you can make your first few days in Providence feel as familiar as possible. In the meantime, keep an eye on the [Graduate Admitted Students and Orientation Guide](#) (for PhD & MFA students), the [Master's Students Orientation Guide](#), and join the [Brown University International Graduate Students Facebook Group](#) to stay connected with your fellow international students.

Sincerely,

Your IO Graduate Assistants team

**Disclaimer: All prices quoted in this guide are based on the experience of your fellow graduate students and Brown staff members. But please note that they are merely representative and actual prices may vary. We have no financial interest with any of the businesses we mention.*

An aerial photograph of a lush green campus lawn. Several groups of students are scattered across the grass, some sitting and some walking. A winding path cuts through the lawn, and a few trees with vibrant autumn foliage are visible on the left. The scene is bright and sunny, with long shadows cast across the grass.

*Welcome to
Brown*

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Arriving on Campus & in Providence

By Air

Flying into Boston

If you are flying in from outside the United States, the closest major international airport to Brown University is the Boston Logan International Airport, which is approximately a one-hour drive to campus. If you can drive and have a valid driver's license, various rental car options are available at the airport. Alternatively, both Uber and Lyft can be used to travel to campus.

A typical Uber or Lyft ride from Logan to Brown University Campus can cost between \$80 and \$150. Depending on the time of your arrival, this price may increase significantly. There is also an option of scheduling your rideshare in advance, which can be significantly cheaper than ordering on the day of your ride, especially from the airport. Although costly, this mode of transportation can make traveling with a lot of luggage easier, and you can avoid the hassle of lugging it to a bus or train, which are otherwise more affordable options.

Alternatively, it is possible to get a free shuttle bus (the Silver line) from Boston Logan to South Station Train station in Boston. From there, it is possible to take the [Amtrak](#) (American national rail) or [MBTA \(Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority\)](#) to Providence. The Amtrak ride from Boston to Providence is around 45 minutes long and typically starts at around \$15 if you order at least two weeks in advance; however, prices increase closer to the date. The MBTA has a flat rate of \$12.50 and takes about 80 minutes. Tickets for the Amtrak should be purchased before boarding but tickets for the MBTA can be purchased on the train.

Another option is to take a bus. [Peter Pan Bus Lines](#) operate directly from the Logan International Airport terminals to downtown Providence and the Providence bus terminal (located off I-95). The ride takes about 1 hour and 10 minutes, with tickets costing between \$10 and \$27 depending on when you book. You can also purchase your tickets online in advance.

Once at Providence train station/bus terminal, it is quickest and easiest to use either Lyft or Uber to get to your apartment/Airbnb. The ride will cost around \$8-\$12.

Flying into Providence

Rhode Island T.F. Green Airport can be a convenient option for those who don't mind an additional layover. It is located in Warwick, RI, about 10 miles south of Providence (approximately 15-20 minutes by car or 40 minutes by bus). Rideshare and car rental services



are available directly from the airport. Bus routes 1, 14 and 21 also pass by the airport; the fare is around \$2 for 1 hour of unlimited rides. To ride RIPTA, you should either have the [Wave app](#) or pay in cash on the bus (exact change only). After getting your Brown ID on campus, you will be able to ride RIPTA for free anytime.

Immigration at Airport

The typical immigration experience for students at the airport should be rather straightforward. Make sure you have all the required documents at hand, especially your passport (with valid US-Visa) and a valid Form I-20. At the beginning of the semester, there is a large influx of students into the United States, so expect the airports to be busy and the immigration lines to be long; it may take up to two hours or more to process a given flight.

By Train

The [Providence Amtrak/MBTA train station](#) (100 Gaspee St, Providence, RI) is located very close to the Brown Campus (less than a mile). However, the campus is located on College Hill, and the incline can prove to be a challenge if you intend to walk all the way with heavy luggage. Taxi pick-up and drop-off are available at the station to travel to the main campus or to Providence locations; however, rideshare services like Lyft or Uber are generally cheaper.

Pro Tip: Once you have arrived on campus and picked up your student ID, for future travel, if you return after 6 pm (7 pm in the summer) you can also use [Brown onCall](#) (a free shuttle that Brown University provides to travel around Providence after dark). The average wait time for the on-call shuttle is 15 to 30 minutes. Shuttle times may vary during University breaks (Brown ID required).

ISSS Check-In (mandatory)

One of the most important things you must do upon arriving in the U.S. is complete your immigration check-in with [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS). This is a legal requirement for all international students on an F1 or J1 visa – failure to check in on time can jeopardize your immigration status.

Check-in is completed online through the [ISSS portal](#); they will contact you with detailed instructions. You must check in within 30 days of your program start date, but we strongly recommend doing so within your first few days on campus. Visit the ISSS website or contact them directly at iss@brown.edu for specific deadlines and instructions each semester.



Living in Providence

Accommodations

Accommodations are plentiful in the greater Providence area, although the majority of options are not owned by the University. Brown offers housing through the [Brown University Auxiliary Housing Service](#). Monthly rental costs are usually higher with Brown-owned housing and range from \$1300/month to \$1400/month for a studio or one-bedroom apartment, respectively, and \$1200/month for a two-bedroom apartment (shared occupancy). Although expensive, this is a relatively hassle-free option for incoming first-year students. Brown does not run a credit check before offering you the apartment or require you to pay separate utility bills and the apartments can be available immediately upon arrival on campus.

Please contact [Auxiliary Housing](#) if you are interested in living in Brown-owned housing. The application process opens in April for leases that start the following summer, so we encourage students to apply early in future years. A limited number of units may be available for a spring move-in date each year.

Pro Tip: Many landlords, rental property agents, and graduate students looking for roommates on FB or GSBB can offer virtual tours of apartments if requested.

The [International House of Rhode Island](#) is a non-governmental organization that often works with Brown. Its primary focus is to help build community for international students, their families, and the wider international community of Providence. They often have rooms to rent in their building for long term rentals, with each room being large and en suite with shared kitchen facilities. The International House also has contacts with other housing options in the community around College Hill.

Many students, however, prefer to live in private rental properties in the Fox Point, Mount Hope, or Wayland Square neighborhoods, all of which are located within a 10-15-minute walk from the College Hill campus. Fox Point and Wayland Square neighborhoods offer a collection of restaurants and shopping areas.

[Zillow](#), [Craigslist](#) and [Apartments.com](#) are other useful resources for searching for apartments online (or download their mobile apps). Alternatively, you can join the [Brown University Housing, Sublets & Roommates Facebook group](#) for information on off-campus housing. Another very useful resource is the Graduate Student Bulletin Board (GSBB) email listserv, where graduate students place all kinds of announcements including apartment listings and roommate searches. Once you have your Brown email activated, you can put an ad there or track the ads by other students, who are looking for roommates. The format of the GSBB will be changing mid-summer, be sure to look for details on the [Graduate Student Council Mailing Lists webpage](#).



Also, be sure to check out:

- [Guide to Off-Campus Living](#) from the Brown Real Estate Office
- [2026 Incoming Graduate Student Housing Webinar](#) (recording from May 6, 2026)
- [Brown University International Graduate Students Facebook group](#)

Other areas to consider: Pawtucket, Federal Hill, West End, North Providence, Cranston, Elmwood, Pawtuxet Village, East Providence, Johnston, and Seekonk are all within a 10-minute drive. Rent there is noticeably cheaper, however, you will need a car or take the bus to commute to campus.

Where to stay when you arrive to Providence

Some students prefer to rent a room/apartment in advance, but finding a permanent place after you arrive is also an option. It usually takes 5-7 days when there are many open rentals with August 1 and September 1 move-in dates. It may take slightly longer to find a place to live if you are starting in the spring, but there are always available rentals. The best option to find accommodations for the first several days is [Airbnb](#). It typically costs less than a hotel, however, check the hotel options as well – they might have deals on week days. The only option even cheaper than Airbnb is GSBB: usually, when you put an ad asking for a 5-7 day sublet, you get a lot of responses very fast. You may even find a free couch to crash on for a couple of days. We also recommend asking your advisor/chair or other graduate students in your department for a piece of advice. Sometimes your advisor or a fellow graduate student can offer you a couch to crash on.

As with any larger city, Providence has crime, and students should be aware and mindful of their surroundings at night. We recommend the Fox Point, Wayland Square, Mount Hope, Downtown, and Federal Hill neighborhoods, but there are many other safe neighborhoods and areas.

Furnishing your apartment

Most apartments in Providence are not furnished. [Brown University Auxiliary Housing](#) does provide some basic furnishings (check their website for specifics) but in most cases you will need to buy basic amenities such as a bed, mattress, bedding, study table and chair, (and others depending on your taste or requirements) so it is crucial to budget for this expense.

Pro Tip: Furnishing an apartment to your taste takes time and can be expensive so start with the basics first and build (and spend) slowly to avoid a financial crunch early on.

The most affordable way to buy furniture and other necessary amenities is directly from your fellow Brown students. At the beginning and end of every semester, and throughout the year, students (especially those graduating or relocating) use the GSBB mailing list to advertise items at excellent prices. For additional second-hand furniture options, you can also check out the local Savers located at 201 Branch Ave. Alternatively, Walmart (51 Silver Spring St, Providence) and Target (79 Commerce Way, Seekonk, MA) are popular retail stores with dedicated sections for students that provide budget furnishing options. You can use the RIPTA bus service (see below for details) to travel to these stores.

Parking on Campus

For Visitors

Visitors may find parking in Lot 68 Upper, also called the Power Street Parking Garage, located at 111 Power Street. The garage entrance is located at the intersection of Power and Thayer Streets. The garage has two gate arms that are left open. Please enter via the right lane and exit via the left lane. The Lot 68 Upper garage contains two pay stations, which are located at the front and rear of the garage. Please locate an empty parking space, purchase your visitor parking permit via a pay station, and place your permit receipt on your vehicle dashboard.

For Students

Students can apply to reserve a spot in a Brown parking lot through the [Brown Transportation Office](#). Both daytime and overnight parking are available; annual rates are around \$600. Although pricey, it can be a convenient option for those who have to drive to campus every time, since street parking on and near campus is tight; after 9 a.m. it can be difficult to find a spot that is closer than a 10-15 minute walk away, plus most of the convenient blocks are metered, and overtime meter tickets are \$25 or more.

Parking in Providence

Many apartment buildings and houses in Providence include parking spaces; also it is generally quite easy to find off-street parking in most neighborhoods where graduate students typically reside. Another option is to rent a parking space nearby. Typical costs for monthly parking can vary from \$100 (a private lot on the east side) to \$400 (downtown parking garage). A Providence city ordinance prohibits parking on the street between the hours of 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. Overnight parking permits may also be purchased from the [City of Providence](#).

On campus, Brown overnight parking is only available to graduate students who either live on campus or in Brown owned housing.



Because of the scarcity of parking spaces around Brown, all members of the Brown community are encouraged to find alternate means of commuting to and from campus.

Traveling Within & Outside of Providence

Local Buses

[Rhode Island Public Transit Authority](#) (RIPTA)

RIPTA operates buses in Providence and throughout the state. Service is dependable and all Brown students ride free by swiping their ID. The central bus depot for Providence is located in the center of the city at Kennedy Plaza, a 10-minute walk down the hill from College Hill. Buses also run frequently with many stops along Thayer, Hope, and North and South Main Streets to many of the nearby neighborhoods. Check schedules and maps at www.ripta.com and the Transit app on your phone.

Interstate Buses

[Peter Pan](#) and [FlixBus](#) buses run regularly to most points out of state, including Boston, and New York. They have stops in downtown Providence and at Exit 39B off I-95.

Train

Rail service to Boston, New York, and points in between operates through the Providence Train Station, located next to the State House. [Amtrak](#) serves both Boston and New York and the [MBTA \(Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority\)](#) offers commuter rail service connecting Providence to Boston and T.F. Green Airport.

Pro Tip: On weekends, MBTA offers the [\\$10 Commuter Rail Weekends](#) that allows for unlimited travel on the Commuter Rail. See [schedule](#).

Brown University Shuttles

The [Brown University Shuttle](#) (BUS) is a free transportation service for the Brown community (students, faculty, and staff with a Brown ID). There are several routes that run Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and in the evening from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. (Sun. - Wed.) and 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. (Thurs. - Sat.). Shuttle stops include the Rockefeller Library, Nelson Fitness Center, South Street Landing, the Alpert Medical School, and several other locations. An easy way to track the hours and shuttle locations is by downloading the BrownU app, then clicking the shuttle icon or by directly accessing the TransLoc app (for [iOS](#) or [Android](#)).

Pro Tip: Download the BrownU app from your app store - just search BrownU. There are quick links for the shuttle, food, Canvas & more!

On-call shuttle

The [on-call shuttle](#) is a free service available after hours (after 7 p.m. during daylight savings time and after 5 p.m. in winter). A valid Brown ID is required to ride. Requests can be placed through the Transloc app. The on-call shuttle is a great option to travel within the east side of Providence and the downtown area at night. See [a map](#) of the covered areas.

Bicycle

Cycling is another option for commuting locally in Providence with dedicated bike lanes on roads. Cycling is a very popular activity during the summer and a fun way to explore Providence and its surrounding areas as RI boasts a lot of scenic bike routes and trails to enjoy (Blackstone River Bikeway and the East Bay Bike Path).

Pro Tip: All Brown graduate students are eligible to register their bike and get a free U-lock from the [Department of Public Safety](#). Check their website and look for U-Lock or U-Loose events.

Buying a new bicycle and its accompanying gear (helmet, bike lights, mudguards etc.) can be expensive (\$400-500+), so it is possible to buy a used bicycle from either a fellow Brown student (using the GSBB mailing list or the Brown University Buying and Selling Facebook page), online or from a bike shop near campus:

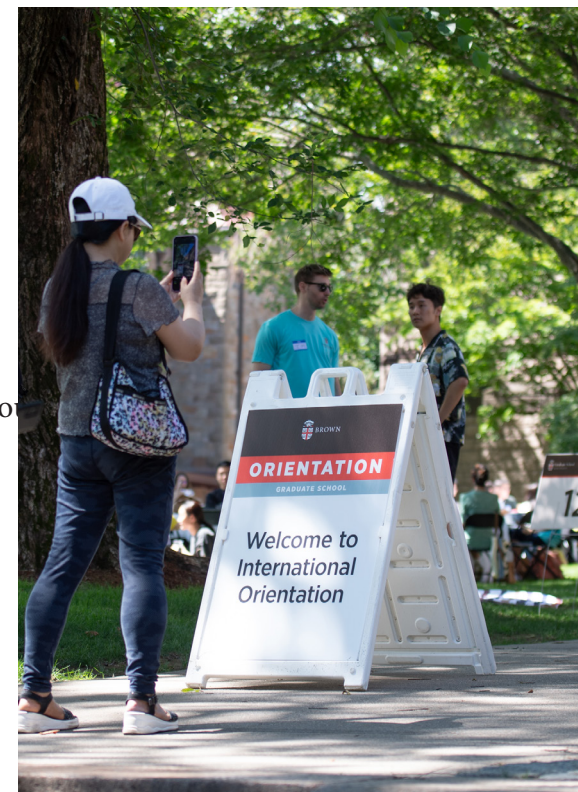
- [Pratt Frameworks](#), 409 Wickenden St, Providence | (339) 223-7703
- [Dash Bicycle](#), 230 Broadway, Providence | (401) 453-3274
- [Friendly Bicycle](#), 83 Ives St, Providence | (401) 441-7818
- [Mission Electric Bike](#), 181 Brook St, Providence | (401) 423-4400

Rideshare: Uber/Lyft

Uber and Lyft are available in Providence and most of Rhode Island for commuting within and out of town.

ZipCar

If you already have a valid U.S. driving license or plan on getting one after arrival, then [Zipcar](#) is also a very popular and useful commuting option (annual student fee is \$35, and hourly rates range from \$9-\$13 depending on the type of vehicle reserved). Keep in mind that with a foreign license, approval time for your application can take up to 3 business days. Car availability can vary depending on how far in advance you reserve, so planning accordingly. You are eligible for free gas with your student membership, and you can pick up and drop off a Zipcar from various stations in and around campus:



- Lower level of Lot #68, the Power Street garage (entrance on Brook St. across from the fire station)
- 217 Bowen Street, Lot #7
- 20 Olive Street, Lot #77
- Young Orchard Ave, Lot #54 (next to Orwig Music Library)
- Page-Robinson Hall, Lot #17
- Richmond Street, Lot #105, across from the front entrance of the Alpert Medical School

Getting a mobile phone line

There are a couple of things to note before buying a SIM card in the U.S. First, if you intend to use your existing phone, make sure it's unlocked and compatible with U.S. carriers. Most modern smartphones from overseas are compatible with U.S. networks, as all major carriers, Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile, have transitioned to 4G LTE and 5G standards. However, some older phones may not support all U.S. frequency bands, which can affect call quality or data speeds. You can check compatibility on your carrier's website before arriving. If your phone is not compatible, you can purchase a new one directly from a carrier or from retailers.

Mobile phone plans in the U.S. are generally expensive. Many mobile phone carriers offer both prepaid and mobile plans that are billed monthly; however, most monthly plans require a credit check and a Social Security number. Therefore, upon arrival, many students choose to enroll in a prepaid plan until they build up a credit history and are issued a Social Security number. Prepaid plans usually range from \$40-\$65 a month, depending on the carrier and the amount of mobile data you wish to use. A great option is a family plan, since prices are usually lower if you sign up for two or more lines together with your friends. Family plans often have streaming and media services like Netflix and Spotify included, which makes them even more attractive.

All three major carriers have retail shops in the [Providence Place Mall](#) (1 Providence Pl, Providence), which is about a 15-minute walk from campus. Alternatively, there is a Verizon (Authorized Retailer) at 229 Waterman St, Providence (401) 206-4066.

Opening a Bank Account

It is very important that you start the process of opening a bank account as soon as you arrive in Providence, especially for supported students who will be receiving a stipend and want to set up direct deposit. Otherwise you will receive your stipend or other payments



Pro Tip: If you have a compatible mobile phone then it is a good idea to buy a prepaid SIM from the airport upon your arrival. You might be charged more, but this will allow you to immediately have phone and internet connectivity upon arrival. You can always change your carrier or mobile plan after settling in.

via check, which can take a couple of days to clear. Moreover, a bank statement will include your address and can also serve as a ‘proof of residence’ before you acquire a state ID or a driving license.

Please note that supported students will not receive their first stipend payment until the end of September.

There are several options available for choosing a bank but a useful tip for choosing a bank is to open your account in a branch that is in close proximity to your residence. Additionally, remember that you incur an additional transaction fee if you withdraw cash from an ATM that is not from your bank.

A (basic) list of documents required for opening a bank account:

1. Identification (passport)
2. Proof of address (Your lease agreement)
3. Proof of employment (admission letter from Brown)

Banks near campus

- [Chase Bank](#), 234 Thayer St, Providence | (401) 824-0706
- [Citizens Bank](#), 120 Waterman St, Providence | (401) 456-7050
- [Santander Bank](#), 131 Elmgrove Ave., Providence | (401) 521-4633
- [Bank of America](#), 100 Westminster St, Providence | (401) 228-0128 (there is also a location at 271 Thayer St that offers video banking)

Digital Payments: Venmo and Zelle

Two free peer-to-peer payment apps are widely used for splitting rent, utilities, groceries, and social expenses:

Venmo is the most popular among students. You can link it to your bank account or debit card and send or receive money instantly. It also has a social feed feature, which you can set to private in your settings if you prefer. Download the app and sign up with the US phone number once you have one.

Zelle is integrated directly into most US bank apps, including Chase, Bank of America, and Citizens, and transfers money directly between bank accounts, usually within minutes. It is slightly more formal than Venmo and is often preferred for larger payments like rent.

We recommend setting up at least one of these as soon as you have a U.S. bank account, as many landlords, roommates, and student groups use them exclusively.

Pro Tip 1: The first days in any new country can be expensive. We recommend bringing enough cash with you to tide you over the first month. You can use your existing credit card, but note that in most cases you will be charged a bank transaction fee as well as a currency conversion fee (especially if you have a non-USD account).

Pro Tip # 2: Please note that supported students will not receive their first stipend payment until the end of September/January. Additionally, expect taxes to be withheld from your stipends, and plan your budgets accordingly.

Pro Tip #3: If you are an iPhone user you should ask your bank to sign you up for Apple Pay so that you can have immediate access to your account without waiting for a debit/ATM card to arrive via mail. Similarly, check with your bank to see if Google Pay or other mobile wallet platforms are available.

Obtaining a RI Driver's License or State ID

You may consider applying for a RI Driver's License or State ID, which can serve as proof of identification so that you do not need to carry your passport with you and allows you to more easily rent a car, get into bars, and buy liquor. In the U.S., it is common for bars and restaurants to ask for IDs in order to sell alcoholic drinks. Please note that at the [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (RI DMV) waiting times can be long. Another option is applying for a [Providence City ID](#), which is a valid form of identification within the city. Applications can be submitted online and require a visit to the City Hall, located downtown. However, not all establishments in Providence accept the municipal ID, so we recommend getting an RI Driver's License or a State ID.

Pro Tip: If you do not wish to physically go to a store you can also buy your groceries online or via mobile apps from Instacart, Whole Foods (via Amazon) and Walmart.

Meals & Groceries

Campus options: Brown has several large [dining halls](#) located on campus such as the [Sharpe Refectory](#), [Andrews Commons](#), and [Verney-Woolley](#) that are open to all Brown students, but they are mostly used by undergraduates. However, the [Blue Room](#) and the [Ivy Room](#) are popular places for lunch and dinner. Typical prices per meal range from \$10 - \$15. [Meal plans](#) are also available for graduate students. The BrownU app offers up-to-date information on hours and food offerings each day on campus.

Thayer Street, which runs right through campus, has a large collection of restaurants and shops that serve a variety of food options such as pizza, burgers, Chinese, Thai, Korean and Indian food. Typical prices per meal range from \$15 - \$25.

Most graduate students prefer to cook at home since it is usually cheaper than eating out. You can buy groceries from several supermarkets located near campus. Whole Foods Market (two locations), and a Trader Joe's are located within walking distance of campus. If you prefer to shop at night, the On-Call shuttle can take you to these grocery stores below for free upon request. Another affordable option is Market Basket; two larger chain grocery stores are Stop & Shop and Shaw's. They all are located within a 10-20-minute drive from campus or 30-60 min bus ride. Sharing an Uber or a Zipcar with other students is another way to get there.



Grocery Stores

- Whole Foods Market (~1.1 mi), 261 Waterman St, Providence & 601 N. Main St., Providence
- Trader Joe's (~0.6 mi), 425 South Main St., Providence
- Stop & Shop (1.8 mi), 333 W. River St., Providence

- Shaw's (4.2 mi), 15 Smithfield Rd., North Providence
- Market Basket (5.4 mi), 1300 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI

Asian Markets

- Asiana Food Market (2.7 mi), 92 Warren Ave., East Providence
- Good Fortune Supermarket (3.2 mi), 101 Cadillac Dr., Providence
- V-Mart International Market (5.4 mi), 176 Narragansett Ave., Providence

Halal Markets

- Foodland Farm International Halal Market (2.3 mi), 638 Charles St, Providence
- Price Rite Marketplace of Providence (Halal meat available) (2.3 mi), 325 Valley St, Providence
- Apna Bazar Food Mart LLC (Halal Meat) (2.9 mi), 282 East Ave, Pawtucket

Popular Restaurants in Providence and the Surrounding Areas

Providence offers a range of food options for all palates. As you settle in and get comfortable with your surroundings we highly encourage you to venture out and take advantage of the cuisine that Providence and the surrounding areas have to offer. Some of our favorites include:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Jacky's Waterplace (Sushi/Cantonese) | • Pizza J |
| • Pho Horn's (Vietnamese) | • Sicilia's Pizzeria |
| • Bee's Thai Cuisine | • The District (Pizza) |
| • Y Noodle Bar | • Rosa Mia (Pizza) |
| • Chengdu Taste (Chinese) | • Not Just Snacks (Indian, Halal) |
| • Chef Yao (Chinese) | • Rasoi (Indian) |
| • Champa Thai + Lao Restaurant (Thai/Lao) | • Rong Chic (Chinese) |
| • Apsara (Cambodian/Thai) | • Taste of India |
| • Wara Wara (Japanese) | • India Restaurant |
| • Heng Thai | • La Gran Parada (Dominican) |
| • Khaosan Thai Street Food | • Los Andes (Peruvian) |
| • Den Den Café Asiana | • Machupicchu Restaurant (Peruvian) |
| • Venda Ravioli | • Mala Noodles (Chinese) |

- Mokban Korean Bistro (Korean)
- SOTT (Korean)
- Suya Joint Providence (West African)
- Tallulah's Taqueria (Mexican)
- Mike's Calzones and Deli (Chicken shawarma and lamb gyro Halal)
- Kabab and Curry (Indian)
- Kolachi Restaurant (Halal)
- Nazis Halal
- Tribos Peri Peri (Portuguese-inspired restaurant, Halal)
- Track 15 Food Hall (different options)
- Jahunger (Uyghur restaurant, Halal)
- Abu Yarub Al-Shami (Middle Eastern food, Halal)

Pro Tip: If you would like to explore different cuisines in the area, Providence has Restaurant Week 2-3 times per year!



Student Health

Student Health Services

[Student Health Services](#) is located centrally on campus (450 Brook St. in Providence) and should be your first stop for health-related issues. Students should call Health Services at 401-863-3953 to make an appointment or discuss any questions or concerns (walk-in appointments are not currently available). Prior to arrival, BUHS requires you to complete a medical history form online. This determines if you require any vaccinations or medical tests (typically for tuberculosis) upon arrival.



For medical emergencies, please contact EMS at 401-863-4111 if you are in the Providence campus community. If you are out of the area, please call 911 for emergency services in your area.

Nursing advice is available 24/7 by calling 401-863-1330. Our nursing staff will follow-up on all after hours calls during regular business hours.

Brown Health Services cover a wide range of medical issues but sometimes you may need to be referred to a specialist out of campus. In these cases, you will need to look for a specialist through your UnitedHealthCare insurance and get a referral from a Brown doctor.

[Pharmacy](#): Student Health Services also has a pharmacy where you can order prescription drugs and sexual health supplies. Besides Health Insurance, students also have access to dental and vision insurance. Nevertheless, dental services can be more expensive in the U.S. than in most countries and coverage is more limited than health insurance. Expect to spend more on dental co-pays.

Pharmacies in the Nearby Community:

- CVS Pharmacy (located in Wayland Square), 481 Angell St., Providence | 401-521-4340
- CVS (open 24/7), 640 Warren Ave., East Providence | 401-438-2272
- Walgreens, 35 Pitman St., Providence | 401-861-4846
- *CVS also has a location on Thayer Street where you can purchase over the counter medicines, but they do not have a pharmacy.

Mental Health

Moving to a new country to start a fresh academic adventure is certainly an exciting opportunity, but it can also be a stressful experience since settling into a new cultural environment takes effort, patience and a certain period of adjustment. Additionally, graduate degree programs are typically more rigorous and time consuming than undergraduate programs. Thus, the 'culture shock'

together with added academic responsibilities can often result in stress and, in the worst cases, lead to burn-out. However, please know that you are not alone, Brown has a thriving international community that serves as a fantastic support structure. We encourage you to reach out to your peers, Brown faculty and staff in times of stress or need.

Additionally, Brown's [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers support regarding a host of issues and is particularly useful if you wish to discuss matters privately. Brown students also get free access to online therapy through [TimelyCare](#) while in the U.S.

Places to Visit in Providence and the Surrounding Areas

- [Blackstone Boulevard and Park](#)
- India Point Park
- [Roger Williams Park Zoo](#)
- [WaterFire](#)
- [RISD Museum](#)
- [Ladd Observatory](#)
- [Farmer's markets](#)
- [Providence Athenæum](#)
- [Providence Flea](#)
- [Rhode Island State Capitol](#)
- [Governor Henry Lippitt House](#)
- [Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy](#)

Also check out the [Providence, RI](#) page on the Graduate School website for more information about the city and greater RI area.

10 Things I Wish I Had Known Sooner

1. Rhode Island ID

In the U.S., international students are eligible to get a state ID in the area where they reside. You don't need to have a citizenship or a green card for that. This way, you don't need to carry your passport around. To obtain that, go to the DMV website and make an [appointment](#).



2. **Brown On Call Shuttle**

Evening On-call shuttle is a great service, but not everyone knows it goes beyond College Hill, East Side, and Fox Point. You can call it to/from Downtown, Train station, Providence Place Mall, Whole Foods, Walmart and many other places, where an Uber ride would cost around \$10.

3. **ZipCar**

It is great if you need to rent a car. Zipcar has student discounts (\$35/year) and accepts foreign driver's licenses for up to a year.

4. **Amazon Prime Student**

If you don't have a car, Amazon is helpful in a small city. It is also cheaper than many stores. Registering with your Brown email address will give you a 6-month free trial of Prime. A Prime account gives you the option of one- and two-day delivery and free returns as well as discounts at Whole Foods. Students pay \$7.49 per month.

5. **Mobile family plan**

All carriers offer discounts when two or more people use one plan. The price can go down from an average of \$70 per month to \$30. A good way to find people to join a family plan would be to cooperate with incoming students in your department

6. **\$10 MBTA weekend pass**

The closest big city is Boston, where you may want to visit rather often for cultural events, walks or libraries. MBTA offers a weekend pass for local trains that you can use as many times over one weekend as you want. It doesn't have your name on it, so it is a good way to share costs too. You can purchase it on the MBTA mobile app.

7. **CAPS + therapy**

You will be under a lot of pressure your first year, so it's very helpful to know that Brown insurance covers a lot of treatments that help you to complete the transition successfully. CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services), and TimelyCare are free; psychological therapy (most therapists in the area take our insurance) is about \$30 copay per session; prices are similar for nutritionists and chiropractors who take the Brown insurance; physical therapy and acupuncture usually requires \$300 deductible, with all sessions free until the end of the insurance year.

8. **UFunds & the Graduate School Forms Portal**

Check UFunds for opportunities for scholarships and research funding. See the Graduate School Forms Portal for Conference and Travel Funding (PhD & MFAs only).



9. Building your credit history

If you are planning to stay in the country after graduation, it may be helpful to obtain a credit card. It will take time but talk to your bank about your options right away.

10. Today@Brown and GSBB

Never ignore the daily email because all information on professional development and campus life is there. Another rule of thumb is: in any difficult situation ask the GSBB listserv; you can literally find answers to all your questions there if you ask our amazing community. The format of the GSBB will be changing mid-summer, be sure to look for details on the [Graduate Student Council Mailing Lists webpage](#).



Student Government & Advocacy

Graduate Student Council (GSC)

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is Brown University's student government, and aims to foster a sense of community among graduate students across departments. They are a voice for the graduate community and are invested in facilitating collective action on graduate student-related issues. The GSC also hosts events and offers other resources to support the academic and social lives of graduate students. You can learn more about them on the [GSC website](#) or Instagram, [@brown.gsc](#).

Graduate Labor Organization (GLO)

GLO, established in 2019, is the labor union for all Brown graduate employees on campus. While in many countries student labor unions are a common practice, this is not the case at private universities in the United States. The union negotiates monthly stipend



amounts in its contract with Brown University and advocates for pay, benefits, and material working conditions. GLO also has a grievance committee, where you can turn for help and register any workplace injustice; it also has many committees you can join depending on your interests. GLO member dues rate is 1.65% of the stipend while a member (deducted pre-tax). You can learn more about them on the [GLO website](#) or Instagram, [@gradlabororg](#).

A more comprehensive list of [graduate student groups](#) can also be found through the Student Activities Office.

Weather and What to Pack

Providence experiences all four seasons, and the weather can be quite extreme.

- Fall (September-November): Mild at first but cooling quickly. Bring light layers, a windbreaker, and a light jacket for early fall. By November, temperatures can drop to near freezing, so a heavier coat will be necessary.
- Winter (December-March): New England winters are harsh. Temperatures regularly drop below freezing and snowfall is common.

If you are coming from a warmer climate, do not underestimate the cold – invest in proper winter gear early. You can often find affordable options at Target, Walmart, or through the GSBB listserv.

- Spring (April – May): Warming but unpredictable. Rain is frequent, so a waterproof jacket and umbrella remain essential.
- Summer (June – August): Warm but humid, with temperatures ranging from 20-32°C (68-90°F). If you are arriving in late summer, light clothing is fine for your first weeks.

Key items to bring with you (or purchase):

- Warm, insulated coat
- Gloves
- Winter hat
- Scarf
- Umbrella + Rain Jacket/Coat:
- Waterproof boots

What else you might need:

- Toiletries: It is a good idea to bring useful items such as shampoo, body wash, conditioner, toothpaste, etc. to tide you over for the first few days.
- Power Adapter/ Travel Adapter: The U.S. uses type A and B power sockets. If these are different from your country then be sure to bring appropriate power adapters so that you can charge and operate your electronic devices.



Brown University Lingo

- Main Green = Officially College Green, a grassy quadrangle in front of the Stephen Robert '62 Campus Center
- Quiet Green = A grassy area between the Van Wickle Gates and University Hall
- GBC = [Global Brown Center](#)
- BBC = [Brown Business Center](#)
- GCB = Graduate Center Bar
- GSC = The [Graduate Student Council](#)
- The Sci-Li = [The Sciences Library](#)
- JCB = [John Carter Brown Library](#)
- The Rock = [The Rockefeller Library](#)
- B&H = Barus and Holley
- CIT = Thomas J. Watson Sr. Center for Information Technology
- The Watson = [Watson School of International and Public Affairs](#)
- WC = The [Writing Center](#)
- The Ratty = [Sharpe Refectory \(Dining hall\)](#)
- V-Dub = [Verney Woolley \(Dining hall\)](#)
- Page-Robinson = [Page-Robinson Hall](#)
- OMAC = [The Olney-Margolies Athletic Center](#)
- The Pitz = The [Paul Bailey Pizzitola Memorial Sports Complex](#)
- ISSS = [International Student and Scholar Services](#)
- RISD = The [Rhode Island School of Design](#)
- Nelson = [Nelson Fitness Center](#)



Useful Websites and Resources

- [Office of Global Engagement](#)
- [ISSS](#)
- [Academic Calendar \(Registrar's Office\)](#)
- [Libraries](#)
- [Campus Maps](#)
- [Courses at Brown](#)
- [Canvas](#)

Safety & Emergency Contacts

Providence is generally a safe city, but like any urban area, it's important to be aware of your surroundings, especially at night. Here are key contacts and tips:

Emergency Contacts:

- Providence Police, Fire, Medical Emergency: 911 or 401-272-1111
- Brown Department of Public Safety (Non-Emergency): 401-863-4111 (4111 from any campus phone)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) 24/7: 401-863-3476
- Sexual Assault Response Line 24/7: 401-863-6000

Safety tips:

- Use the on-call shuttle at night instead of walking alone
- Share your location with a friend or a roommate when going out late
- Useful emergency phone numbers are available on the back of your Brown ID
- Brown's DPS offers a [Safe Walk](#) escort service on campus. Call 401-863-1079 to request one

Taxes

Tax filing is one of the most confusing aspects of life in the U.S. for international students, but it is important to get right. Almost all international students are required to file a federal tax return each year, even if they have no income.

If you received a stipend, fellowship, or any other form of payment from Brown, you will need to report it. The federal tax filing deadline is typically April 15.

Look out for more information from ISSS in the early spring semester for information on software and support to help you file taxes.

