

# Harvard Square

## Student Guide

**2011**



**Welcome to our school**

# Welcome

Welcome to Kaplan. This guide will help you make the most of your chosen course and will give you useful information that you can refer to during your stay.

## So, what's studying at Kaplan really like?

You have probably already imagined what your life will be like at Kaplan International Center Harvard Square. You may have ideas about life in the United States based on films, television or stories from friends and family. This guide aims to make your transition into the USA as enjoyable and easy as possible and will tell you what to expect when you attend a Kaplan school. We hope that this information will help you to form realistic expectations and encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities ahead.

## Will I be able to adjust to a new culture?

At Kaplan we understand that your transition into life in a different culture may be challenging at times – but it will also be fun. You will soon meet people from around the world, try new things, and live in a different culture. One of the best ways to make sure that your transition goes smoothly is to maintain a positive attitude and stay healthy. View your new environment as a place to learn interesting things about yourself and others. Try to get enough sleep, eat right, exercise, and participate in social activities. Take time to observe and enjoy the new things going on around you and appreciate the differences you find in your host country.

## I have more questions...

Please contact your local representative if you have more questions before you depart. After you arrive, Kaplan staff at the school will be happy to help you with any problems that you have or any questions you want to ask.

## Contents

Before you leave	3
Checklist	4
When you arrive	5
Life at school	6
Local information	7
Social activities	7
Homestay accommodation	8
Health and safety	9
Laws and customs	10
Important dates to remember	11
Contact details	11



# Before you leave...

We understand that at times you may feel nervous when preparing for your stay in the USA. There are some important things you need to know before you leave that will make your life easier when you arrive. Use our checklist on the next page to ensure that you do not forget anything and are well prepared for the exciting times ahead of you.

## **Pocket money**

We recommend that you budget USD \$250 for every week of your course. This should cover personal expenses, laundry, local travel and Kaplan activities. You will need additional money if you plan to rent a car, take weekend trips or travel. Bring USD \$150 with you in cash and the rest in traveler's checks. These should be in small denominations, USD \$20 to USD \$50 checks, if possible. You could also bring a debit or credit card. Do not bring foreign currency. It is not wise to carry around large amounts of cash.

## **Clothing**

Students dress casually for classes. You should bring some nice clothes for going out to restaurants, nightclubs etc. You should also bring clothing for sports and outdoor activities. You can usually rent sporting equipment. The climate is changeable and may be very different from your own. While the summer is hot and t-shirts and shorts with a light jacket would suffice, winter is cold with some snow and a heavy winter coat is a must.

## **Bank account**

If you are staying for longer than three months you may wish to open up a bank account. If possible, try to set up your bank account before you arrive as rules, regulations and policies between banks vary, meaning you may be required to bring a wide variety of personal documentation with you. If you decide to set up a bank account after you have arrived, remember that it can take a long time so make sure you are able to access your money at all times. The school staff will be happy to give you banking information and tell you how to set up an account.

## **Electrical current**

Standard voltage in the USA is 110 volts. To make sure that you are able to use all your electrical appliances bring a converter and an adaptor with you.



## Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have packed everything you will need and that you are well prepared for your trip to the United States. Check off each item as you pack it, or complete the task.

- Passport and acceptance letter**  
Remember to bring your passport, driver's license, and Kaplan documentation (given to you by your Kaplan representative) in your hand luggage so that it is easy to access on arrival.
- Student visa and Minor form**  
Ensure that your student visa is with your passport and is stored in your hand luggage. Remember your I-20 form if you have an F-1 visa. Students under the age of 17 need a minor form signed by their parents.
- Homestay/residential address details**  
Pack your homestay or residential address details in your hand luggage so they are easy to access on your arrival. You will have received these details from your Kaplan representative.
- Knowledge of local laws and customs**  
Quiz yourself about local laws and customs in the United States. Talk to your Kaplan representative about what you should expect and how you should behave in North America.
- Proof of Health and Travel Insurance**  
You must bring proof of your Travel Insurance and Health Insurance with you and store this information in your hand luggage. Also leave a copy with your family at home in case you lose any documentation during your stay.
- USD \$150 in cash**  
Store this cash on your body or in your hand luggage. Try to avoid counting or pulling out your money in busy public places. Students should also ensure that they have the USD \$40 book deposit fee with them on the first day of orientation.
- Traveler's checks in low denominations**  
Store these checks on your body or in your hand luggage. Try to avoid counting or pulling out your cheques in busy public places.
- Correct clothing**  
Pack something warm in your hand luggage and ensure that you are wearing layers in case you get hot.
- Adaptor for electrical appliances**  
Remember standard voltage in the USA is 110 volts. Remember that the plugs may differ from your home country so bring an adaptor too.
- Deposit if you are staying in residential accommodation.**  
A housing deposit is usually required if you are staying in a residence. Check the amount with your Kaplan representative or on the relevant residence factfile and have this money handy for when you first arrive at your accommodation.
- Prescription medication**  
Pack medication carefully in full packaging in case you are asked questions in customs on your departure or arrival. Remember to bring enough of your prescription medicine with you as US pharmacists will not fill a foreign prescription.
- Emergency information stored in your wallet or purse**  
This can be found on the last page of this booklet.

### When you arrive

Arriving at the airport of a foreign country can be overwhelming and stressful. You could be feeling very tired and disoriented. To better prepare yourself, make sure that you have followed the checklist and have read the information below about your arrival and how to get to your accommodation. Do not feel shy about asking airport staff for help, most airport staff will be happy to give assistance.

#### Kaplan transfers

##### Airport Transportation Company

The nearest airport is Logan International Airport.

##### Where to wait for airport transportation pick-up?

There will be someone from New England Coach waiting for you outside, after you have claimed your luggage. He/she will be holding a Kaplan sign.

##### What to do in case you cannot find the airport transportation company?

Go to the nearest Information Desk. If you have not made contact with the transportation company after 15 minutes, call the company toll free at:

**+1-800-609-1402**

If you're unable to reach anyone, call the Kaplan International Centers Emergency Contact number:

**+1-800-278-1197 (Toll Free) or +1-916-535-1746**

#### Independent Transfers

The distance from the airport to the center: 15 minutes (by pick up service), 30 minutes (by public transportation).

New England Coach, 1-800-609-1402

### Your first day

On the first day of your course you should arrive at the school at 9:15 am. Your first day will be a Monday unless there is a national holiday on the Monday - in which case your first day will be Tuesday. Your course will begin with an all-day introduction, which will include:

#### Monday

9:30 - 10:00	Check-in & Introductions
10:00 - 11:30	Kaplan Placement Test
11:30 - 11:45	Break
11:45 - 12:00	School & Area Tour
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Academic, Housing and F-1 Visa Talk

#### Tuesday

2:30 - 5:30	GRE/GMAT Orientation
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#### Please bring with you to orientation:

- Your I-20 and your student (F-1) Visa
- Your passport, with the I-94 card attached (this is a small white piece of paper you will receive upon arrival to the US)
- Your course payment/voucher, if available
- Your US address
- USD \$40 book deposit

Please note that classes may begin at 8 am, 1 pm or 2:45 pm.



Boston View

## Center Facilities

### Classrooms

There are 12 spacious classrooms, with access to a projector and other multimedia equipment.

### Multimedia and IT center

There is a media lab with individual cubicles for focused study, and televisions with DVD players for student use. The center offers free wireless internet access and 15 computer terminals for student use in our computer and media labs. The multimedia center is an integral part of your learning.

### Student Lounge

The student lounge includes a refrigerator, microwave, tables and a half kitchen with sink for storing or preparing meals. There are also two vending machines in the center with food and drink.

### Cafeteria

Kaplan International Center Harvard Square is surrounded by many cafés, eateries and parks and we are a short walking distance from many ethnic and American restaurants and diners.

### Sports facilities

There are numerous parks with basketball courts and tennis courts and students are able to play soccer on MIT's fields.

### Gym facilities

There are 4 health and fitness centers within a 5 minute walk of the center that students can join at student rates.

### Activities/Social Program

There is a wide choice of activities available to students that come to study at our Harvard Square center. Popular activities include weekend trips to New York City, ski resorts, beaches, outlet shopping malls, tours of Harvard University and MIT campus, tours of the Museum of Fine Arts, Institute of Contemporary Art, Museum of Science and New England Aquarium, free festivals, free lectures by MIT and Harvard professors and scholars, and outdoor concerts.



Harvard Square School Entrance



Reception

## School Timetable

Your timetable may vary according to the type of course you book and the time of year, but an example timetable is given below:

### Morning Schedule

8:00 - 11:15	Integrated Skills Class
11:30 - 1:00	Electives
1:00 - 1:45	Lunch
1:45 - 2:45	Study Clubs / Q and A

### Afternoon Schedule

11:00 - 12:00	Study Clubs / Q and A
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30	Electives
2:45 - 6:00	Integrated Skills Class

## Local Information

### Transport - buses and trains

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) is an extensive transportation system that encompasses the majority of the Boston and Cambridge area. The Harvard Square center is conveniently located one block away from the Harvard Square train station on the red line. From there students can connect to Boston's Logan International Airport, and North and South Stations, which house the commuter rail trains that can take students as far as Providence, Rhode Island and to Northern Massachusetts.

### Banks and Post Office

There are banks located steps away from the center in the same block, and the post office is a three minute walk from the center.

### Department stores and supermarkets

There are several department stores within walking distance including The Gap, The Tannery, Eastern Mountain Sports, Urban Outfitters, The Harvard Book Store, The COOP at MIT, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Newbury Comics, The Adidas Store, Dickson Brothers Hardware store, CVS pharmacy, the Brattle St. movie theater, the Harvard Square Loews Cinema, and many small boutiques and independently owned stores.

Cambridge is world renowned for great local grocers with an assortment of fresh, organic foods at reasonable prices. There is a 24-hour market in Harvard Square where students can buy meals and groceries that is a 3 minute walk from the center. Harvard Square also has a lively marketplace with an atmosphere wonderfully conducive to the art of shopping.

### Telephone and Internet Café

The Kaplan International Center provides students with wireless internet and nearby cafés and bookstores also have wireless internet capability.

### Cost of Living

#### Approximate prices in USD

Sandwich \$5	Weekly MBTA (subway & bus)
Lunch \$7- \$8	LinkPass \$15
Hamburger \$4	
Meal in restaurant \$10 - \$20	Monthly MBTA (subway & bus)
Tea/Coffee \$1.50	LinkPass \$59
Movie \$8	
Bus \$1.25	



Harvard Square



Kaplan International Center



Boston City

### Sample Activities Schedule

Please note that this is a sample program and activities may change.

#### Week one

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Orientation</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Conversation Club</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Free Yoga Class at MIT</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Baseball Game</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Trip to Cape Cod</b>

#### Week two

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Free Ice Cream trip</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Visit the Institute of Contemporary Art</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Movie Night</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Free Book Reading with an author at the Harvard Book Store</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Tour of Harvard University</b>

# Homestay accommodation

Our homestay families reflect the diversity of life in the United States. They include young, senior and single parent families and couples with and without children. Hosts have varying ethnic backgrounds and different interests and lifestyles. Please refer to the United States of America homestay accommodation factfile for more details.

## Your life in a homestay

Living in a homestay will allow you to practice your English in a real-life setting. It is important to remember that you are both part of a family and a guest at the same time.

You may have to help with household chores, keep your bedroom tidy and make your bed each morning. Make sure that you always ask for permission to bring friends around and let your family know if you will not be at home for dinner or will be going away for the weekend! We want you to be comfortable with your family, but we can not promise a family of a specific, age, gender, or ethnicity. Every family is different and will have their individual lifestyles. Please make sure you understand your house rules upon arrival.

## Meals

Please tell your host if there are foods you like very much or do not like at all. Often, it is common for students to go with the host family to the grocery store to pick out food items. **Breakfast:** Breakfast is usually a light meal consisting of cereal, fruit, toast, juice or coffee. Often these foods will be made available to you and you will prepare your own morning meal. **Lunch:** You will be responsible for purchasing your own lunch at the school, a local restaurant or from the local stores. A refrigerator and a microwave may be available for use at school or you may purchase your lunch in a nearby restaurant or cafeteria. **Dinner:** Dinner may be a shared meal in the evening, or occasionally you may prepare your own meal with food supplied by your host. Leftovers, food remaining from a previous meal, are common to have at least once per week. It is polite to ask for a second helping if you are still hungry.

## What to bring

The US has very diverse climates and weather can range from very hot to very cold, therefore please check the weather in the region you plan to visit and pack accordingly. Your host will provide you with bed linen and towels. You can purchase toiletries and other personal items locally, but you should plan to bring specific items with you such as prescription medications if you require them (in adequate supply).

## Telephone use

Be sure to discuss phone usage with your host family on arrival. Your host's telephone should only be used for local and incoming calls. Remember to notify your family and friends of any time differences to avoid calls in the middle of the night. Students are asked to limit their calls to no more than 20 minutes, as there is usually one telephone line per household. You should purchase a phone card or use a personal mobile telephone for all long distance or international calls since it is very expensive to make international calls from a home line. Nearly all cell phone providers in the USA offer pre-paid cell phones, which are affordable and can also be purchased after your arrive for personal use.

## Internet

Most families have either wireless or DSL Internet in their home. However, you should plan to bring your own laptop since many families will not have a computer for you to share. All Kaplan centers are equipped with computer labs as well, with free Internet access at the center during business hours!

## Laundry facilities

Be sure to discuss this with your host family after you arrive as laundry facilities will depend on your selected homestay option. Your family may have a laundry schedule once per week. If your family does not do your washing, please take it to a laundromat to wash and dry - please do not wash clothes in the bathroom or hang them to dry in your bedroom or on cupboards. The average cost per load of laundry (wash & dry) in an American laundromat is USD \$5.

## Drinking

The legal drinking age in the US is 21 years old; please obey the law and do not drink if you are under-age. It is courtesy to ask your host family for permission to drink in their home even if you are legally permitted based on your age.

## Smoking

When you book your accommodation, please request a family that allows smoking if you smoke. Most hosts will request smokers to smoke outside. In most US cities, it is illegal to smoke inside public places. Please make sure you discuss these rules with your host family. It is also general courtesy to ask someone for permission to smoke next to them (even if you are outside).

## Getting to and from school

Your host will help you find your way to and from school on your first day and also show you how to use public transport. Travel time will depend on the location of your homestay. On average, it takes students about 45 - 60 minutes by train or bus to get from their homestay to the Kaplan International Center.

## Things to remember....

- You are a part of the family as well as a guest.
- You may have to take part in family chores
- Purchase a phone card or a pre-paid cell phone for international calls
- Do not bring or store food items in your bedroom
- Ask permission before inviting guests or friends to your homestay
- Notify your family if you are not coming home for the night or will be away for the weekend
- Ask permission to smoke
- Ask permission to drink alcohol, even if you are above the legal drinking age of 21 years
- Speak with your host family as much as possible to get the most out of your homestay
- Accompany your host on outings and family activities
- Expect cultural and personal differences and be tolerant of them
- Be willing to try new foods
- Ask questions and become familiar with American customs

**Note: For information about residence accommodation, please request the appropriate residence fact file.**

# Health and Safety

If you or a friend is seriously ill and needs an ambulance call 911 (911 can also be used to contact the Police and Fire departments for other emergency situations). Stay calm and describe to the operator on the line what type of assistance you need and your location. You may be required to describe any symptoms. Explain as much as you can, don't worry if you are not confident with your English - say as much as you can, as clearly as you can.

## Medical and Travel insurance

Kaplan offers you a low-cost Travel and Medical Insurance Plan that we advise you to take. If you are not taking Kaplan Insurance you are required to show proof of alternative medical insurance. Travel and Medical Insurance is compulsory at all Kaplan International Centers for the duration of your stay.

## If you get sick

If you get sick while you are in the United States you should visit a doctor. You can ask staff at Kaplan reception or your host family where the nearest doctor is. If you have a minor illness you can often ask staff at a local pharmacy for advice. If you are ill, make an appointment to see a doctor and take any relevant insurance or medical documentation with you. You may be required to register with your local doctor.

Medical costs are at the discretion of your local doctor or hospital. A guide to costs in the United States are as follows:

- A consultation with a doctor (minimum USD \$60)
- Prescriptions at a pharmacy (minimum USD \$25 per item)
- Dental treatment (minimum USD \$150)
- Eye tests or new glasses (minimum USD \$150)

## Protecting your belongings

If you are not using Kaplan Medical and Travel Insurance we strongly recommend that you take out insurance for your personal belongings, especially cameras, mobile devices and laptop computers. Personal items cannot be covered by Kaplan homestay or residence. You can cover these items with your own personal travel insurance. Please ensure that you are properly covered in case of loss or theft.

## ■ Things to remember....

- Call 911 in case of fire, medical emergency or need for the police
- You must have Medical and Travel insurance to attend a Kaplan course. If you do not have Kaplan Medical and Travel insurance, you must provide proof that you are covered by another provider.

# Laws and customs

You may find that laws are enforced differently in the USA than they are in your home country. The USA's traditions of democracy place much responsibility on the individual. This means that you must obey the country's laws and respect its customs. It is important that you understand the laws, rules, and customs that you may encounter.

## Laws

- No one under the age of 21 in the United States may buy or drink alcohol, including beer and wine. It is against the law to buy alcohol for someone you know is under the age of 21.
- Cigarettes are for sale to persons aged 18 and over.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is a very serious crime and police make regular random checks.
- Buying, selling and using drugs is illegal.

The Police and Kaplan are very strict in enforcing these laws.

## Kaplan's rules

Kaplan has rules that must not be broken. These rules may apply to academic work at school as well as life in your residence or homestay.

- If you leave your Kaplan course, Kaplan has the right to revoke your student visa and advise you to return home.
- You must attend all classes. If you do not attend classes your representative and parents will be informed. If you do not then improve your attendance you will be sent home.
- Always tell Kaplan if you are going to be absent from school for any reason and tell your host family if you are going away overnight.
- If you commit a criminal offense or have to be severely disciplined you will be sent home and no refund will be given. We will also inform the immigration authorities.
- Be on time for all your lessons

## Customs

Customs are an accepted way of behavior in a country. You need to know the customs of the USA to help you feel comfortable with people. Some important customs to know include:

**Women:** Women in the United States are equal to men and should always be treated fairly. Men and women share equally in household work and childcare.

**Lines:** Always stand in line and wait your turn when buying tickets, in a bank, post office or waiting for a bus. Keep to the right when standing on escalators.

**Friendliness:** Americans talk to strangers in public areas. This is a great way to practise English but, caution should be taken. You should not give out your address and telephone number, or accept inappropriate invitations. Although most people are friendly, some may be reluctant to speak with strangers.

**Please and Thank you:** These are very important words! Always use them if you ask someone to do something for you, or if they help you or give you information.

## Tipping

People in North America almost always leave a tip for good service in restaurants, hair salons and other places. The tip rate at most restaurants is about 15 - 20 % of the bill and is not usually included. Fast-food service is not usually tipped unless it is delivered. Porters in stations, airports and hotels should be tipped USD 1.00 per bag. Taxi drivers should be tipped by rounding up to the nearest dollar or adding one or two dollars onto the total fare for longer trips.

## ■ Things to remember.....

- If you are under 21 years of age it is illegal to drink alcohol
- Buying, selling and using drugs is illegal
- Notify Kaplan if you are going to be absent from school
- Women are treated equally to men in the USA
- Remember to say please and thank you

# Important Dates to Remember

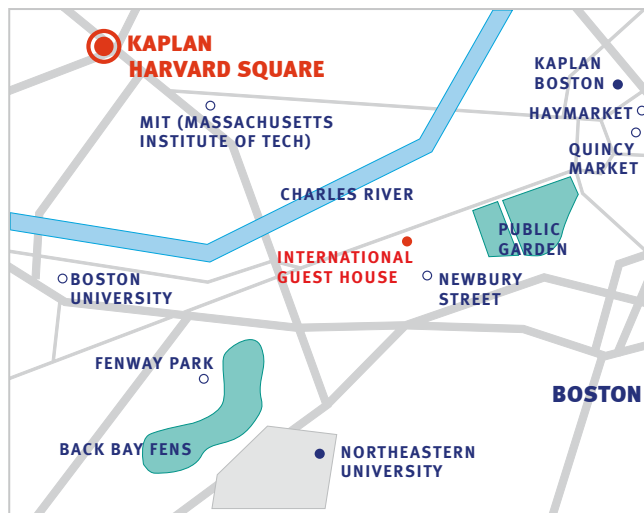
## National Holidays 2011


Dec. 31, 2010	New Year Holiday
Jan. 17, 2011	Martin Luther King Day
May 30, 2011	Memorial Day
July 4, 2011	Independence Day
Sept. 5, 2011	Labor Day
Nov. 24-25, 2011	Thanksgiving Holidays
Dec. 26, 2011 - Jan. 2, 2012	Christmas & New Year Holidays

The dates above are the dates for national holidays for the year 2011. For holiday dates in other years, consult your Kaplan representative. If you arrive on a week where the Monday is a national holiday, your first day of school will be a Tuesday. Students enrolled in the Academic Year Program, or another long-term program, will also have a vacation during their stay. Please refer to the Kaplan brochure, or your Kaplan representative for further details of these holidays.

**We look forward to seeing you at Kaplan International Center Harvard Square. If you have additional questions please ask our staff on arrival.**

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**Keep these numbers with you at all times!**

**Emergency Kaplan Number:**  
1-916-535-1746  
1-888-245-8377

**Emergency Number (Police, Fire, Ambulance):**  
911

Information in this guide is subject to change. Published Sept. 2010.