

BSTP Incoming Student Welcome Guidebook

Welcome! This Guidebook has been written and compiled by graduate students in the School of Medicine at CWRU for our incoming students. We developed and continually edit this guidebook as an informal way to welcome and help you thrive in the SOM, CWRU, and Cleveland.

(Updated 5-6-25).

Important Contacts / Who to Ask

David Lodowski (dtl10@case.edu) - Director of CWRU BSTP

Debbie Nouredine (dm2@case.edu) - Department Administrator, BSTP

Isaac Anaya (ija5@case.edu) - Student Success Specialist, Office of Graduate Education

Alekhya Kondragunta, Whitney Ward (axk1245@case.edu, wmw42@case.edu) - BSTP First Year Coordinators

Alekhya Kondragunta and Whitney Ward are your first year coordinators and will be your student contacts for all of your more casual questions (ex. How do I navigate to this professor's office? Where do you suggest I park? How do I get student tickets to Guardians games? etc.) as well as help you with your general transition into Cleveland living and graduate school!

Isaac Anaya is a newly appointed Student Success Specialist and is here to help you throughout your PhD with any sorts of issues or questions you come across. He is a great advocate for student needs, so he will be a helpful resource for you as you progress.

Need to contact someone else, but don't know their email address? Most students, staff, and faculty have a three-to-six character Case ID that serves as their university Gmail account, but there is a second email address that will also feed into their university mail as well:

"firstname.lastname@case.edu". (Example: Anna Miller, anna.miller@case.edu).

You can also use the CWRU directory to search someone's first and/or last name to get their email: <https://webapps.case.edu/directory/index.html> (you'll need to enter your Case info to get access).

Moving to Cleveland, Neighborhoods

- ❖ **Downtown** - Downtown Cleveland is located just a few miles to the west of campus, or a short ride on the RTA Red Line or Healthline. Increasingly vibrant in recent years, Downtown boasts the main sports attractions in town with the Cleveland Cavaliers (basketball; The Q Arena), Cleveland Guardians (baseball; Progressive Field), Cleveland Browns (football; Huntington Bank Field), and Lake Erie Monsters (hockey; The Q Arena). This area is also home to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Playhouse Square Theaters, the Great Lakes Science Center, Tower City, and Cleveland State University. Lake Erie is directly north of Downtown, and the quirky neighborhoods of **Ohio City** and **Tremont** are to the West. Downtown has a number of excellent restaurants and great nightlife, which you can explore here. It also offers plenty of student housing options given its proximity to Cleveland State.

- ❖ **Little Italy** - Little Italy is a great neighborhood, there are a number of nice restaurants, bakeries, and living options in this area. It's very close to the Red Line and Campus. Most houses/rental units will be house-type structures converted to apartments, and a large number of the residents in this area are students. Little Italy also borders Lake View Cemetery, which has miles of beautiful walking and jogging trails.
- ❖ **University Circle** - University Circle includes homes and apartments around the Case campus, University Hospital, and the museums. Plenty of fast food can be found around. Bibibop, Mitchell's ice cream, and the Jolly Scholar are some favorites. The Triangle Apartment is one of the most popular on-campus apartments available to graduate students. Uptown Apartments, Abington Arms, and Waldorf Tower on the top of the hill are also popular and within walking distance. Centric and One University Circle were opened in 2018.
- ❖ **Cleveland Heights** - Cleveland Heights is a fairly sprawling area, but has many locations for people who would prefer to walk or drive to campus. Rent here tends to be more affordable than in University Circle. It stretches all the way from Overlook Road to Warrensville Center Road, and reaches as far south as Fairmount Boulevard. Some areas are safer than others, so it's a good idea to talk to current students to figure out which specific area of Cleveland Heights will work for you. Coventry Road, Lee Road, and Cedar Road all have fun places to eat, hang out, and study. Tommy's, Pacific East, and The Fairmount are all popular places in the Heights area.
- ❖ **Ohio City/Tremont** - Ohio City and Tremont are the two closest neighborhoods just west of Downtown, and although students who live here generally drive to campus, there are plenty of advantages to living in these areas. Ohio City is home to the hub of breweries and West Side Market, a bustling open marketplace where vendors sell fresh produce, baked goods, lunch options, spices, and more. Beware the limited hours. Ohio City also has plenty of restaurants and is home to the Mitchell's Ice cream store where they make the ice cream! Tremont is slightly smaller than Ohio City, but is becoming an increasingly popular place to live, with nightlife, dining, and activities like indoor rock climbing available.
- ❖ **South Euclid** - South Euclid is more of a suburban neighborhood that ranges from a 10-20 minute drive to campus. The housing is typically more affordable, with more houses and townhouses for rent. There are many parks and green spaces and you are closer to many grocery stores in Mayfield and Cleveland Heights.
- ❖ **Shaker Heights** - Shaker Heights offers a desirable blend of suburban living and urban convenience about a 10-20 minute drive from campus. It's a popular choice for families and individuals seeking a quality of life that is both appealing and accessible. It can have higher property taxes if you desire to own property.

Keeping an eye out on websites like Zillow and Apartments.com is a great way to familiarize yourself with the area, contact local realtors, book tours, and get an idea for prices. Cleveland is very affordable compared to other cities!

****Proximity to CWRU/Cleveland Clinic campus, as well as good elementary school districts inversely correlates with rent in some places.****

For rental companies/landlords used by current students, contact BGSO(cwrubgso@gmail.com) for the list. This document is not an endorsement for any building; it is solely information given by the current graduate students.

Transportation / Getting Around

The RTA public transportation system is a great option to get around Cleveland but most students choose to have cars for convenient transportation.

RTA Pass - Each student receives an RTA pass, which is \$60 per Fall 2022 and \$65 for Spring 2023 semesters. It gives you access to all public transportation, including trains and buses within Cuyahoga County. Last year, the Graduate School voted to supply all students with these discounted tickets, rather than individuals paying \$95 for their own ticket. If you have a physical card, you must scan it like a credit card at the station closest to the bus driver upon entering the vehicle, or at the gate of certain train stations. If you are using the app, you must activate a valid pass before entering the vehicle and show the bus driver both the QR code and the pass on the app upon entering.

Healthline - This is one of two bus rapid transit (BRT) systems in Cleveland. It connects downtown Cleveland with East Cleveland and it has several stops near campus. It uses Euclid Avenue exclusively. Stops are located approximately every 5 blocks. The frequency of buses is every 10 minutes during business hours and every 15 to 20 minutes in the evening and on weekends. You must have a valid/paid ticket or pass before getting on the bus. Each station has a ticket vending machine.

Red Line - This train connects the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport with downtown Cleveland and East Cleveland. The two stations near campus are Cedar-University and Little Italy-University Circle. Like the BRT system, it requires a valid/paid ticket or pass before riding it. However, the only place where tickets are checked is the Tower City station in downtown. If you have an RTA pass on your CWRU ID, all you need to do is show the ID to the station attendant to both enter AND exit this particular station. Each station has ticket vending machines.

Parking - There are a number of parking options on and around campus. Daily all-day guest rates are \$10 at Veale and Health Sciences garage. You can purchase passes through the Access Services for semesterly parking here. For more details or to purchase a parking permit, visit: <https://caseparking.t2hosted.com/Account/Portal>. Lot 53 (S-53) and Lot 44 are recommended. *[Warning: Permit holders, institutional employees, outside contractors, and students are not permitted to use visitor lots for daily work- or school-related parking. Citations will be issued for this infraction].*

If you choose to park off-campus, Centric (circle and Mayfield) are 8am-6pm for \$4 and 11am-6pm for \$5.

Shuttles - For the icy days, you may want to take the shuttles. Check the map for the routes and stops here: <https://case.edu/access-services/transportation/shuttles>. They are all free and you don't need to show the driver your Case ID. Also, a shuttle tracking app is available ("Rider," available on Apple's app store).

Saferide - The Safe Ride van transports CWRU students, faculty, and staff around the University Circle area during the evening and nighttime hours.

<https://case.edu/access-services/transportation/shuttles/safe-ride-program>

Favorite Restaurants

Downtown

- Butcher and the Brewer: Located on E 6th street, Butcher and the Brewer offers small, shareable plates and a great beer selection. Semi-nice place to take your significant other.
- AdegA: A fancier dinner place located in The Nine, an apartment building Downtown. Great food and drinks! If you go down the elevator, you will find Vault, a cocktail bar themed like the inside of a fancy bank!
- Hofbräuhaus Cleveland: German microbrewery with an on-site restaurant and beer garden, offering traditional eats and live music. It's modeled after the legendary 400+ year-old Hofbräuhaus in Munich, Germany! Named 2024 Greater Cleveland Brewery of the year.

Ohio City/Tremont

- Great Lakes Brewpub: If you are a fan of Great Lakes beer, the food and drinks at their Brewpub are great. You can also take a brewery tour!
- Market Garden: Great beer, good food, and an even better atmosphere! Located on W 25th, Market Garden is next to West Side Market and several other great restaurants and breweries.
- Momochi: One of the best places for TexMex in Cleveland. They do not take reservations, so be sure to wait a bit for a taste of their margarita flights and taquitos. Or, order them for pick up!
- Cloak and Dagger: Looking for specialty-made, themed cocktails? Look no further than Cloak and Dagger in Tremont. This enchanted place feels whimsical, and their drinks change seasonally.

Little Italy

- Etna Restaurant and Wine Bar: The food offered here is always crafted in-house, delicious, and changes constantly. It is within walking distance of campus, but you have to make sure you call ahead for a reservation! If you're into upscale Italian with a heavy seafood presence this is the place to be!"

- Michaelangelo's: One of the best upscale Italian restaurants. It's pretty pricey but perfect for a celebration or fancy date night.
- Mama Santas: The pizza and garlic bread are good. And cheap. Particularly the "classic combination" pizza.
- Presti's: An amazing Italian bakery with great coffee, cookies and food. At the intersection of Mayfield Rd. and Coltman Rd., they're a great place to stop for a snack on the way home."

Cleveland Heights & Cedar Fairmount

- Cilantro Taqueria: A Chipotle-style Mexican restaurant that's significantly cheaper (and better) than Chipotle. They have great happy hour prices on margaritas on Thursday and taco Tuesday deals as well. It's walking distance for many apartment locations in Coventry as well.
- Luna Bakery & Cafe: Delicious coffee shop and brunch place with the best scratch bakery in Cleveland. They have many inclusive options for dietary restrictions as well. There are a few locations around Cleveland, including downtown.

Activities in Cleveland

Through the [Free Access Program](#), CWRU offers many cultural, scientific and educational attractions located near campus for free!

- Intramural Sports. Open to all CWRU grad students. There are no costs associated with participation. Several sports available throughout the year. Please see the website for details: <https://athletics.case.edu/sports/intramurals/index>
- Scene75 is a family entertainment center featuring laser tag, go-karts, mini-bowling, bumper cars, and an arcade. There, you can do laser tag,, bumper cars, arcade games, and blacklight mini golf (all while making stops at the bar). <https://www.scene75.com/>
- Case Western Students have free weekly access to the following with your CWRU ID: Natural History Museum, Modern Art Museum (MOCA), Western Reserve Historical Society, Dittrick Museum of Medical History, Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- The Cleveland Botanical Gardens are amazing and a nice stress-relieving activity. You can get in for free once a week using your CWRU ID! They have indoor and outdoor gardens, and will sometimes have handlers bring out interactive animal exhibits (butterflies, iguanas, etc.).
- The Cleveland Art Museum is enormous! Art, artifacts, and an entire room dedicated to medieval weaponry. The art museum is open to the public and all permanent collections are free to view at your leisure. The museum will also periodically arrange special exhibits that you can view for free or at a cost, depending on the exhibit.
- The Great Lakes Science Center is a fun, interactive science center where you can learn about Cleveland's history with the American space exploration program and other fun aspects of science and learning. Very kid-friendly, but great for adults, too!
- The Holden Arboretum is a lovely park and garden center approximately forty minutes

east of Case Western. Paved and/or fine gravel pathways make it easy to walk or take a stroller. There are two main “attractions” beyond the gardens and forestry: the Murch Canopy Walk and the Kalberer Tower. These attractions are typically closed during the winter for safety reasons due to ice, though the rest of the park is open.

- Lake View Cemetery is a beautiful, enormous cemetery filled with generations of Cleveland's residents. It is a very hilly and lush area, and during the day is visited by runners, hikers, and other visitors. It's a beautiful exhibit of Cleveland's history, and is a very calm and peaceful place. But be prepared to do a LOT of walking!
- Playhouse Square Theater. Largest theater district in the US, outside of Broadway. Located in downtown Cleveland. Easily accessible via Healthline or Red line from University Circle. This past year, students have seen the following shows here: Hamilton, Les Miserables, The Phantom of the Opera, The Lion King, etc. Tickets are affordable and sometimes there are student tickets available
- The Cleveland Orchestra is one of the “Big Five” US orchestras. They offer student discount tickets for \$15 through their Student Advantage Program. Each student can purchase two tickets per concert.
- Trivia: There are tons of places to do trivia around here. The Geeks Who Drink trivia (<https://www.geekswhodrink.com/>) is really fun and you can do it at multiple places around Cleveland. There are independent trivia nights such as at Bottlehouse Brewery, Jolly Scholar, and the Tavern of Little Italy.
- Movies: There are lots of theater options and all Cleveland theaters have \$5 movie specials on Mondays! The Cedar Lee Theater shows a lot of older and indie movies, as well as does a Rocky Horror Picture Show showing monthly. The Shaker Square Theater is good for your everyday movie needs as it is close by and has new movies, but the Valley View theater, which is a little farther, has SUPER comfy reclining seats and a bar.
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park is only about 40 minutes away and has TONS of trails and events. Whipps ledges and Nelson's ledges are also some close parks to do some hiking and climbing on the huge glacial rocks.
- Coventry Village can be found on the stretch of Coventry Rd. between Mayfield Rd. and Euclid Heights. There are several restaurants and shops in the area, as well as a nice playground for kids and the Coventry branch of the Heights Library system.
- Edgewater Park has a great beach, grill/sports areas and trails to walk. It also has many events during the summer.
- West 6th/The Flats are the main hubs for bars, restaurants, and clubs downtown. It is an entire strip devoted to bars and clubs that you can hop from one to another.
- Comedy shows are hosted in various venues around Cleveland! Keep an eye out for affordable tickets and student discounts. CWRU will often bring comedians and artists to perform on campus with free student admission.

Getting Started

Finances

BSTP students get paid on the last business day of every month (or Friday if the last business day is a weekend). To get paid via direct deposit you will need to enroll separately from SIS by the 15th of the month, via HCM (link below). If you are not enrolled in time your check will be

ready for pickup on the date that direct deposit would have gone through at the Student Financial Office in Yost Hall (on the main undergrad campus).

- <https://case.edu/utech/help/knowledge-base/human-capital-management>

Getting your ID

After filling out the paperwork the Graduate Student Office will send you, you need to pick up your ID from Access Services (<https://case.edu/access-services/>). You can do this right after the initial orientation meeting in early July with Debbie Nouredine. You can choose to upload a photo for your ID instead of taking a picture in Access Services. Photo Requirements are here:

- <https://case.edu/access-services/id-cards/photo-requirements>

Classes

Each department has a list of required and elective classes to be taken. If you are entering through the BSTP, you will take the IBMS curriculum for the first semester. The remaining three semesters of classes are determined by the department you will choose. In the later years of your program, Case will cover up to 9 credit hours of classes outside of the department (i.e. Art, Language, History, Computer Science, etc.)

Student Organizations

BGSO: <https://case.edu/medicine/education/graduate-education/student-organizations>

The Biomedical Graduate Student Organization (BGSO) is the student engagement and enrichment group for all biomedical science graduate students in Case Western's medical school. They organize both professional and casual events for students, like going kayaking near Lake Erie in the summer, Dive Bar fundraisers, and taking place in Relay for Life. BGSO is also the voice of SOM graduate students. They attend Graduate Student Council (GSC) meetings, faculty meetings, and Graduate Program Director (GPD) meetings.

GSC: <https://case.edu/gradstudies/student-resources/graduate-student-council>

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is the student governing body for all graduate students attending Case Western. They interact with Case Western faculty and administrators on behalf of students, and also organize campus-wide events, like the yearly Welcome Back picnic, monthly happy hours, and professional development events.

WISHED: <https://community.case.edu/wished/about/>

WISHED (Women in Science and Humanities Earning Doctorates) is an organization for all female PhD students and postdoctoral scholars. The group offers professional development and social events to hone career skills and build support networks. They also host book clubs, happy hours, and seminars - you can choose to go to as few or as many events as you'd like. To learn more, check out their Facebook.

QGrad

QGrad is the official student organization for LGBTQA+ graduate and professional students at Case Western Reserve University. By organizing social, educational, and professional events, QGrad aims to address the specific and diverse needs of LGBTQA+ students here at CWRU.

Contact them to learn about their events and receive their newsletter at ggrad@case.edu.

CWRU Science and Human Rights Coalition

The Science and Human Rights Coalition is a group of scientists and human rights activists dedicated to promoting the intersection of science and human rights and building a bridge of communication between our communities. The Coalition will provide an open forum for educating the community and working for the greater application of these rights through local and international activism such as through Policy Workshops and Sciencepalooza.

Additionally, you will receive email updates from these organizations automatically.

Name	From	Frequency
The Daily	CWRU	Daily (weekdays)
The Huddle	SOM + CC	Monthly
School of Graduate Studies Newsletter		Monthly
The Brief	SOM	Monthly
Graduate Education News	GEO	Monthly (or every 5 weeks)
GSC Newsletter	GSC	Every Tuesday

Other General Advice

Dental Care: The CWRU dental school offers cleanings and general care at a reduced price. Their hours are 8:30-5:00, Monday through Friday. The first appointment is a screening that usually takes several hours. Once you are signed up, the appointments are much faster. <https://case.edu/dental/patients-clinics/becoming-patient>

Health Services: During the regular semesters University Health Services are free to all enrolled students, and many minor appointments can be scheduled and completed on campus right across from 121 Fitness on Adelbert Rd. The link to their website provides comprehensive detail, but services include general clinic, treatment for anxiety/depression, and preventative care. There is no cost for seeing a healthcare provider, but some services have fees associated with them which can be found under the “Price List” tab on the website. While many minor things can be handled by UHS, finding a more permanent provider can be helpful in the long run for students. Both the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals have the specialized services that you may need like optometry, neurology, emergency medicine, and physical therapy. Choose the service provider which is most convenient for you and is covered by your medical insurance. <https://case.edu/studentlife/healthcounseling/health-services>

- **Counseling:** University Health and Counseling Services (UHCS) has both individual and group counseling. They also offer Walk-In visits during all office hours.

Gyms: All CWRU students have access to the gyms Veale and Wyant. Veale is across the street to the School of Medicine and next to the gym One-to-one Fitness which is

\$135 a semester for 70+ FREE group exercise classes, free weight room, many cardio and weights machines, locker rooms with dry sauna, towels, lockers, validated parking, and Babysitting services. Next Level Fitness, \$39 a month or \$6 per class, has a variety of exercise classes including cycling, yoga, kickboxing, barre, and more.

Printing: The department you join and the PI of your lab have access to printing at no cost. These printers are black and white only or color depending on the lab. The libraries on campus print at a cost for paper, photo paper, and posters.

Laundry Services: Not all apartments have available laundry machines, and sometimes apartment laundry systems break down. There is a reasonable laundromat called Heights Laundry Center on Taylor Road, just north of Cedar. The machines take both coin and card payment. Parking is limited.

- The New York Times is free via the Kelvin-Smith Library at CWRU. Details to sign up are in the link.

Grocery stores by neighborhood:

- University Circle: Plum Market, Murray Hill Market, Fairfax Market/Meijer
- Ohio City/Tremont: Dave's Market, West Side Market
- Downtown: Heinen's, Dave's Market, Constantino's
- Cleveland Heights: Zagara's, Whole Foods, Walmart, Giant Eagle, Target
- Hough/Central (between campus and Downtown): Aldi, Dave's Market
- Other: Walmart, Fresh Thyme Market, Costco, Trader Joe's (Mayfield Heights), Heinen's