

## Cell Phones

### [Cell Phones](#) [1]

Selecting a phone plan may require some research. Check with other students and colleagues, particularly those from your home country, for suggestions.

Some international students and scholars keep their current phone and insert a SIM card, which can be purchased from companies like [U.S. Mobile](#) [2].

Others choose to purchase a phone once here in the U.S. You can use the map below to find local cell phone stores in New Haven.

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## Get a U.S. Cell Phone

[Find cell phone providers in New Haven](#) [3]

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## Common Questions

Below are some suggested questions you can ask a cell phone company to help determine if their services are the best fit for your needs:

- Are pre-paid plans available? Is this a good option for the duration of my stay in the U.S.?
  - What are the rates for calls, text messages (SMS), data transfers, and multimedia messages (MMS)?  
*Cell phones in the U.S. may charge for both incoming and outgoing calls, texts, and data.*
  - Is a deposit required to sign a contract? Will it be returned in full at the end of the contract?
  - If there is a contract, is there a penalty or loss of deposit if the plan is terminated early?
  - Can I use a phone I already own?  
*If you plan to use your own phone, be sure to obtain the code needed to “unlock” your phone for use abroad.*
  - Does the new plan require a new phone? Is there a fee or monthly charge for a new phone?  
*Some plans in the U.S. offer phones for \$0 USD down, but may charge a monthly fee for the duration of the plan.*
  - Will my phone be compatible with other international networks ([GSM or CDMA](#) [4])?
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## Terminology

**Airtime:** Actual time spent talking on the cellular telephone. Most carriers bill customers based on how many minutes of airtime they use each month. Airtime charges during peak periods of the day vary from about 20 cents to more than 40 cents per minute, depending on the service plan selected. Most carriers offer reduced rates for off-peak usage.

**Bluetooth:** A wireless method of communications between devices.

**Call Waiting:** If your line is busy, callers are asked to wait while you are alerted to their incoming call.

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