

BUYING A CELL PHONE IN THE U.S.

Buying a cell phone is more than just choosing a handset; you also have to pick a service provider. There are two types of cell phone service plans: contract or prepaid plans.

Contract Plans

- With a contract plan, you will get very low prices on new phones compared to prepaid plans, however they come with higher monthly rates. A typical contract will last two years for cell phone service. Terminating the contract early may require the customer to pay a large penalty fee.
- To qualify for a contract plan, a cell phone provider may review the customer's credit history. This is challenging for international students who do not have a Social Security Number or credit history in the U.S. Cell phone providers may require a security deposit instead, which can cost up to \$400-\$500.
 - AT&T and T-Mobile do not require a Social Security Number or security deposit to open an account. Students will need to show two photo IDs (i.e. passport and student ID), plus a copy of an apartment lease, a bank statement, or a utility bill.

Prepaid Plans

- Prepaid plans are easier for new international students to obtain because they do not require a Social Security number and/or a credit history check. These "pay-as-you-go" plans use the same cell phone networks and offer the same services as contract plans do, generally at lower monthly rates. Other advantages of these plans include no long-term contracts, security deposits, or penalties for cancellation. However, you will likely have to pay full price for your phone itself.
- It may be possible to use a cell phone from your home country if it uses a SIM card and has been unlocked. However, ask a technician to confirm if the phone is compatible with that company's network.
 - CampusSims can ship you your SIM card to your home so you will have it before you arrive in the U.S.
- Examples: Boost Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Cricket, and more (offered by most major companies (AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint, Verizon) and are also available through electronic retail stores (Best Buy, Radio Shack)

Messaging Apps

- Apps are another way to stay in contact with your friends without paying fees
Examples: WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, WeChat, GroupMe and more

Please see other side for links, locations, and phone numbers of companies.

Do your research before buying a phone and don't forget that besides technology, there are other factors that should play into your service provider decision:

- 1) Which carrier has the most economical service plans?
- 2) Which carrier has the most attractive selection of phones?
- 3) Which carrier has the best reception?

Company	Links	Location
<p>AT&T</p> 	<p><i>Best service on Wellesley campus!</i></p> <p>Website: https://www.att.com/wireless/</p> <p>Prepaid Plan Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.att.com/shop/wireless/gophone.html 	<p>Natick Collection 1245 Worcester Street Natick, MA 01760 508-650-6970</p> <p>699 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 617-369-9000</p>
<p>T-Mobile</p> 	<p>Website: http://www.t-mobile.com</p> <p>Prepaid Plan Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.t-mobile.com/shop/plans/ 	<p>1245 Worcester Street Natick, MA 01760 774-330-5439</p> <p>1084 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02215 617-536-0138</p>
<p>Sprint</p> 	<p>Website: http://www.sprint.com</p> <p>Sells prepaid phones by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.virginmobileusa.com • www.boostmobile.com 	<p>1245 Worcester Street Natick, MA 01760 508-975-4258</p> <p>422 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 617-747-1300</p>
<p>Verizon Wireless</p> 	<p><i>2nd Best service on Wellesley campus!</i></p> <p>Website: http://www.verizonwireless.com</p> <p>Prepaid Plan Information: https://www.verizonwireless.com/prepaid/</p>	<p>1245 Worcester Street Natick, MA 01760 508-647-4008</p> <p>745 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 617-266-9000</p>
<p>CampusSims</p> 	<p>Website: https://www.campussims.com/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service works with any unlocked GSM phone • Select monthly plan • Order SIM online, ship to college or home residence, insert SIM into phone, and activate. 	<p>Contact 1-800-746-7087 support@campussims.com</p>