International Student & Scholar Handbook

The University of Texas at Arlington

2013-2014

This Handbook contains detailed information about many aspects of studying and living in the United States, Arlington, and the University Community and is intended for international students and scholars at The University of Texas at Arlington.

Emergency Telephone Numbers
(Available 24 hours a day)

Police, Fire, Ambulance .................................................................................................................................................. 911

UTA Police from on-campus (Emergencies Only) ........................................................................................................... 3003

Poison Control Center ....................................................................................................................................................... 1-800-764-7661

Crisis Intervention (urgent personal counseling service) ................................................................. 817-927-5544
See Also "Crisis Intervention Services" in Telephone Book Yellow Pages

If you need to contact the Office of International Education (OIE) regarding an emergency and the OIE is closed, call the UTA Police Department at 817-272-3003.
For non-emergencies you can leave a message on the Office of International Education voicemail.

Useful UTA Telephone Numbers

Campus Operator (switchboard) ...................................................................................................................... 817-272-2011
Hours: M-Th 7:30 am – 5:30 pm, F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Campus Police (non-emergency) ....................................................................................................................... 817-272-3381
(Available 24 hours a day)

Inclement Weather Information (university closings due to severe weather) ....................... 866-258-4913

Office of International Education ......................................................................................................................... 817-272-2355
Hours: M-F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Student Health Services ................................................................................................................................. 817-272-2771
Hours: M-F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Sat 10:00 am-1:00 pm
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Introduction

Welcome to The University of Texas at Arlington! The University is pleased to have a part in what will probably be one of the most important experiences of your life. While you are here, you will learn not only from your academic work but also from your contacts with American people and institutions as well as other international students and scholars. We hope that you will take maximum advantage of this opportunity to learn about a new society and culture, and also teach others about your background and culture.

The University established the Office of International Education in the mid-1970's and made it responsible for the encouragement, coordination, and administration of international activities on the campus. We are the University’s focal point for international information, services, programs and activities.

This International Student & Scholar Handbook reflects the Office of International Education’s responsibilities and concern for international students and scholars in a variety of areas including: social and academic adjustment, University regulations and procedures, immigration regulations, emergency financial assistance, aid to faculty in situations that involve international personnel, and the development of programs in intercultural education.

While the primary purpose of the Office of International Education is to help the approximately 3,000 non-immigrant students at UTA, it is also involved in many efforts to internationalize the University. Your presence and the presence of other international students and scholars on the UTA campus are an important part of a valuable resource in accomplishing this goal. In addition to immigration advising, the Office of International Education staff seeks to initiate activities and events that encourage interaction between international students, U.S. faculty and students, and the surrounding community. We hope you will join us in these mutually beneficial intercultural activities as your time permits.

The Handbook is prepared and updated yearly to give you basic information about life at the University, in Texas, and in the United States. The information in the first section of the Handbook is about "getting settled." It will be helpful, particularly during your first few months, as you look for housing and necessary household goods. Portions of Chapter Four (“Education and Student Life at UTA”) also deserve your immediate attention. Other parts of the Handbook will be helpful after you’ve settled in and we urge you to become familiar with the information contained herein. The table of contents and index will help you locate specific information.

For information not found in the Handbook, please note the many references to other sources of information. The International Student and Scholar Handbook is meant to be a supplement to -- not substitute for -- the UTA Mav Dates and Data (Student Planner) book and the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

Some information in the Handbook will inevitably change after it is printed. You may also find some practices or activities described which are not new to you, but may be new to other students. If you feel something needs correction, or if you have an idea for additions or changes, please let us know.

Office of International Education Staff

Jay Horn, Executive Director
Satu Birch, Director, International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
Christina Spicher, Assistant Director, ISSS
Austin Perry, International Education Advisor II
Leah Collum, International Education Advisor
Joanna Ng, International Education Advisor
Maral Khaghani, International Education Advisor
Kelli Anderson, Director, Study Abroad
Courtney Bauman, Study Abroad Advisor
Josh Boggs, SEVIS Coordinator
Ariella Chi, International Programs Coordinator
Beth Woodlee, Administrative Assistant II
Desiree Usher, Administrative Assistant
Catalina Rosquero, Sr. Office Assistant
Danny Lippert, Sr. Office Coordinator
Shruthi Shirol, Graduate Research Assistant
Chapter 1

Getting Settled
Housing

Off-Campus Housing

Apartments
An apartment is a complete, private living unit, sharing only laundry machines and perhaps recreational facilities.

Types of Apartments
- **Efficiency** - 1 large living area and 1 bathroom.
- **Multi-bedroom apartments**
  - **Unfurnished apartment** - contains only refrigerator, stove, and window coverings
  - **Furnished apartment** - includes furniture, but not linens or kitchen utensils

In addition to the cost of rent, an apartment renter or "tenant" usually has to pay **Utilities, Application Fees and Damage or Security Deposits**

- **Utilities** - electricity, telephone, gas, water (see "Utilities," page 4).
- **Application Fees** - application processing fee ranging from $25-$50 that is generally non-refundable
- **Damage or Security Deposit** - fee typically equivalent to one month's rent that is returned when you move out if the apartment is clean, undamaged and you haven't been evicted. NOTE: If the landlord does not return all of your deposit, he or she should give you, within 30 days, a written statement explaining why some or all of the deposit was withheld.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of unfurnished apartment</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>efficiencies/one bedroom</td>
<td>$500 - $700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two bedroom</td>
<td>$600 - $900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three bedroom</td>
<td>$800 - $1,000</td>
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</tbody>
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Finding an off-campus apartment
- visit apartment complex offices to inquire about availability, quality, and prices
- search newspapers for advertisements
- read the yellow pages in the telephone book
- browse through free advertising magazines given away in grocery and drug stores
- read the *Apartment/ University Guide* that lists advertisements from local apartments, also online at: [www.collegeapartmentguide.com](http://www.collegeapartmentguide.com)
- check out the bulletin boards on campus; students often post flyers looking for roommates
- use an Apartment locator agency which provides a free service for apartment searches

Houses
Some students may be interested in renting an entire house, and share it with several friends. Houses may be furnished or unfurnished. The tenant is usually responsible for paying all utilities (including electric/gas/water/garbage removal) and caring for the area outdoors. Rental houses can be found through newspaper advertisements and generally range from $600-$820 per month.

Individual Rooms
Although rarely done in the U.S., sometimes a single "room" is rented out for student use in a private home. Bathrooms may be shared with other residents and "kitchen privileges" (access to cooking facilities) may or may not be included.

On-Campus Housing

Residence Halls
- Close, convenient, good way to meet other students
- Sometimes noisy, closed during Christmas break
- Meal plan options (required in some halls, optional in others)
• Card access security system on each of the residence halls to limit entrance to residents

Information about the residence halls, including rates, floor plans, visitation hours, furnishings, activities and optional services, is available from the Housing Office, located in the University Center and at www.uta.edu/housing/. Residence Hall space assignment is made May through August for the fall semester and in December for the spring semester. No deposit is required to apply, but a deposit is required after a room contract has been offered.

Apartments

- All UTA apartments are air-conditioned and include kitchen appliances, carpeting and blinds.
- All UTA apartments are unfurnished
- Availability of pools, laundry facilities, and dishwashers vary
- Pets and smoking are prohibited

Centennial Court is a privately-managed University apartment complex. Rooms are assigned like dormitories and every person has a private, individually locked bedroom. Leases are signed individually, rather than by all occupants. If a roommate moves out, the remaining residents are not responsible for his or her portion of the rent. Centennial Court is now offering Summer Guest Housing and may allow international students an earlier move-in date.

University Houses

The Housing Office owns and leases about 50 two and three bedroom houses in addition to dormitories and apartments. Houses are reserved primarily for students with children. They are all unfurnished and include a refrigerator and a stove.

The Lease

A lease is a written agreement between a tenant and landlord, describing the rights and responsibilities of each. It is a binding legal document which makes the tenant responsible for minimal care of the rented property and for the monthly rent of a stated amount for a stated period of time such as 3, 6, or 12 months. There are also leases called month-to-month leases that you can cancel at any time as long as you give a 30-day notice before moving out.

For more information on leases read the pamphlet entitled "Important Facts for Renting Off-Campus".

Renting Without a Lease

Some landlords may not require you to sign a lease. The advantage is that you may vacate by giving the landlord 30 days' written notice. There are disadvantages though. A lease prevents the landlord from raising the rent for the duration of the lease. According to the standard lease, the landlord must also maintain the unit and be responsible for any repairs on structural elements or appliances provided (this includes plumbing, heating equipment, appliances, and so forth). Without a lease, the tenant does not have these guarantees. The landlord, like the tenant, can end a verbal rental agreement by providing 30 days' written notice to the tenant.

Utilities

Once you have your housing, you may need to contact public services that provide utilities such as gas, electricity, and water. Ask your landlord which services are included in the rental costs.

• TXU Electric & Gas Energy provides electricity. To get service, call 972-791-2888. You will be billed a deposit of about $150 which is due within the first 16 days of service. This deposit, plus interest, will be applied toward your bill after you have had electricity for one year and have paid your bills on time. You can pay your bills through the mail or at stores that act as TXU Electric agents such as Kroger's.

• SBC along with several other companies provide local phone service in Arlington. For service call 1-800-585-7928.

• Atmos Energy provides service for residences using gas for heating and/or cooking. For service call 1-800-286-6700. Deposits range from $30 - $120. This deposit, plus interest, will be applied toward your bill after you have had gas for one year and have paid your bills on time.

• The City of Arlington provides water, sewer, and garbage pick-up service to city
residents. For service call 817-275-5931. This service will also require an $80 deposit and a non-refundable $12 activation fee.

Renter's Insurance

Renter’s Insurance protects against losses caused by fire, theft, or vandalism. This kind of Insurance covers personal belongings in your room or apartment as well as damages for which you would be legally liable if a fire or other accident that was your fault damaged the building or the property of others.

Shopping

Most items are purchased in stores (rather than from markets, street stalls, or individual vendors). You can find a variety of things at stores such as Walmart and Target. Prices in stores are fixed. Bargaining is only used for automobiles and large appliances. “Coupons” from advertisements are used for a certain amount or percentage off the purchase price.

When you buy something, it is advisable to keep the receipt you get when you pay for the item. The receipt proves you made the purchase and is required when returning items.

Sales Taxes

A sales tax is added to the cost of most purchases, however, not on groceries or prescription medicines. Sales taxes are added on to the amount you owe when you pay for the item at the cash register. Income generated from sales taxes is used to support various state programs, such as highway maintenance, public education, and law enforcement. Texas and Arlington sales tax total 8.0% of the value of goods purchased.

Food

- Supermarkets- large store that sells not only groceries but also paper goods, kitchen supplies and health and beauty aids (Kroger, Albertsons, Tom Thumb, Super Walmart)
- Convenience stores- usually sell gasoline, some automobile supplies, limited range of foods, generally charge higher prices for food than supermarkets (7-11 east of the University Center)
- Specialty food stores- stores that sell international foods
  - Halal Import Food Market (701 E. Pioneer Parkway)
  - International Food Land (1729 S. Cooper between Park Row and Pioneer)
  - Hiep Thai Market (2430 E Pioneer Pkwy)
  - Hong Kong Market Place (1816 E. Pioneer Parkway)
  - Bombay Bazaar (Fielder and Randol Mill)
  - Dana Bazaar (751 W Lamar, Lamar & Cooper)

Alcoholic Beverages

- You must be 21 years of age to legally purchase or drink alcoholic beverages in Texas.
- If you are over age 21, it is a crime to purchase alcohol on behalf of someone who is not 21.
- In Arlington you may buy canned or bottled beer at grocery stores, but you cannot purchase other types of alcohol by the bottle.
- Individual drinks are served at establishments with the appropriate licenses.

Health Products

“Drug stores” and pharmacies sell both prescription and over-the-counter (i.e. no doctor’s prescription required to purchase) drugs. Drug stores are often found in conjunction with supermarkets such as Albertson’s, Tom Thumb, and Kroger. Eckerd, CVC and Walgreen’s are primarily drug stores along with various convenience items.

Furniture

Furniture stores, department stores, and second-hand stores all sell furniture. In addition, used furniture is often available from private individuals.
who have "garage sales" at their homes or who advertise the items they wish to sell in the classified section of newspapers or signs placed along the street.

Household Goods

Items such as small appliances, kitchen utensils, and cleaning equipment are available at many places, including department stores, drug stores, hardware stores, second-hand stores, garage sales, and from private individuals selling through the "want ads."

Clothing

Clothing is for sale in specialty clothing stores, department stores and at second-hand ("thrift") stores such as the Salvation Army. Clothing and department stores are often found under one roof in indoor malls. The Parks Mall (Cooper St. and I-20) is an indoor mall, and Lincoln Square is an outdoor mall on N. Collins.

Textbooks

The main supplier of textbooks is the University Bookstore. Used textbooks are sometimes available at these places for reduced prices. Other bookstores are listed in the yellow pages of the phone book.

Safety and Security

People coming to the United States from abroad bring with them many impressions of life in America, including impressions of crime and violence. Although the impressions may be exaggerated, there is problem with crime. Crimes such as murder, rape, armed robbery and auto theft do occur. Vandalism and petty theft also occur. In addition, there are a disturbing number of assaults on women in the U.S. It is wise to take precautions to protect yourself and your property.

Personal Safety

For your safety, observe the following suggestions:

- Keep your doors locked even when you are at home.
- If someone knocks at your door, do not open the door until you confirm who is there. You do not have to open the door just because someone knocks.
- Leave an outside and inside light on if you will be away from your room or apartment after dark.
- Use caution when crossing the street.
- Bars or Pubs are the scene of considerable "disorderly conduct," especially on weekend nights. Use caution if you go to such places.
- Follow the guidelines in the front of the telephone book if you receive obscene/threatening telephone calls.
- Women are advised to be particularly cautious. Avoid walking alone at night, especially in areas of town or campus that are not well lit. Walk with a companion, or get a ride with a friend. If you must walk, vary your route so others do not observe your pattern. You are more easily attacked if someone knows you always follow the same route at the same time every night. Be aware that the UTA Police Department provides an escort service if you do not feel comfortable walking across campus alone.
- Remember to dial 911 in case of an emergency. From on-campus dial either 911 or 3003.
- There are also Emergency Assistance Call Boxes placed around campus that will immediately contact the UTA police and notify them of your location by pressing the button.

Protecting Valuables

To protect your possessions, it is advisable that you:

- Lock the doors to rooms, apartments, and cars.
- Do not leave valuable objects visible in your car, even if it is locked.
Do not leave valuables unattended, even on campus. Take your backpack, coat, or other valuable possessions with you or remove them from your backpack if you are going to be away from your table. Items left unattended are one of the easiest targets for campus thieves.

At bookstores: Some bookstores ask patrons not to take a backpack or other bag into the store. (The bookstore does this to reduce shoplifting.) These stores provide a place for you to leave your bag or backpack while you are shopping. Do not leave valuables in your backpack. Take them out and carry them with you.

Mark your books so they can be identified if they are stolen and someone tries to sell them back to one of the local bookstores for money.

Bicycles: If you park a bicycle outdoors, be sure you secure it to a bicycle rack with a sturdy lock. Contact the UTA Police Department for information on recommended locks.

Garments: Winter coats, hats, and scarves are sometimes stolen from coat racks in libraries or restaurants. If you own expensive winter clothing, you may wish to keep it within your sight in public places.

If you take a vacation away from Arlington, make arrangements with a trusted friend and/or the local police to check your home every day. Many burglaries occur during the semester breaks when thieves notice that no one is at home. The Post Office will hold your mail while you are away if requested. You can also buy a timer to turn lights on and off in your home while you are gone. If you own many valuables, buy household insurance.

Dealing with "Culture Shock"

Culture shock is the name given to a feeling of disorientation or confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one. Coming to Arlington from another country, you will encounter a multitude of new things. Not only do the buildings and streets look different, but so do the trees and the birds. The food is not the same and the people look, speak, and act differently from the people at home. Even the smells are different. Your English might not serve you as well as you expected it would. You might not be able to convey your full personality in English, with the result that you think other people see you as a child. And your family and friends are far away. As a result of all this you may feel confused, unsure of yourself, and you may have some doubts about the wisdom of your decision to study in the United States.

Symptoms

- Feelings of helplessness, withdrawal or nervousness
- Irritability and hostility toward Americans
- Tiredness, loneliness, isolation, disorientation
- Stress, slight headache, upset stomach, sleeplessness
- Dependence on fellow nationals who are also new here to use the English language
- Lack of confidence with English speaking abilities

Coping with Culture Shock

As mentioned, different people react differently to culture shock. Some become depressed, or even physically ill. Others are stimulated by the new experiences that are open to them. Following are some ideas that might be helpful as you go through culture shock.

Maintain your perspective. Try to remember that thousands of people have come to Arlington from other countries and have survived. Evaluate your expectations. Your reactions to the United States, Arlington and the university are products both of the way things are here and of the way you expected them to be. If you find yourself feeling confused or disappointed about something, ask yourself, "What did I expect?" "Why?" "Was my expectation reasonable?" If you determine that your expectations were unreasonable, you can do much to reduce the amount of dissatisfaction you feel.

Keep an open mind. People in Arlington might do or say things that people at home would not do or say. But people here are acting according to their own set of values, not yours. Try to find out how they perceive what they are saying and doing, and try to avoid evaluating their behavior using the standards you would use in your own country.

Learn from the experience. Moving into a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. There is no better way to become aware of your own values and attitudes and to broaden your point of view. Ask yourself questions about how and why Americans do what they do. You can compare the answers you get to the answers you would get to the same questions in your country, and you can thereby help yourself develop a
better understanding of your own society and of the one where you are living now.

**Visit the Office of International Education.** A conversation with one of the international student advisors can help in achieving a useful perspective on culture shock and the learning possibilities it implies.

**The Office of Counseling Services** also offers one-on-one counseling along with other services at no cost to UTA students. For more information call 817-272-3671.

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**Adjusting to a New Culture**

When you are in a new setting, you have to make certain adjustments or adaptations in your usual behavior and attitudes. Many factors influence the way different people adjust to a new culture:

- self-confidence
- sense of humor
- ability to interact with other people
- ability to tolerate ambiguous or frustrating situations
- nature and quality of differences between their own culture and the new one
- the comparative status of their own country and the new one
- the nature of the person's past experience in other cultures
- the nature of the particular setting in which the newcomer to a culture is situated

Social scientists who have studied the phenomenon of adjusting to a new culture have identified four phases of adjustment. As summarized by Marjorie Klein, those phases are as follows:

- **Spectator phase**: The new person is excited and optimistic.
- **Stress and adaptation**: Problems, disappointments and internal conflicts emerge. Feelings of sadness, depression, anger, hostility, or rebellion might result.
- **Coming-to-terms**: Increasing involvement with the host society reduces the international visitor's generalized hostility and disappointment, and helps him or her find a relatively comfortable or at least acceptable position in the society.
- **Decision to return home**: This is a period of excitement and self-examination. If the international visitor has become detached from his or her own society, this phase brings about tension and feelings of ambivalence; if the visitor still identifies strongly with his or her home country, this phase brings a feeling of release and pleasant anxiety.

"Adjustment" in a new culture has three aspects, according to psychologist Richard Brislin.

1. A general feeling of satisfaction
2. Feeling accepted by the host society
3. Having the ability to carry out daily activities without stress.

Following are some practical suggestions intended to help you adjust to your new situation:

**Learn local English.** The better you can express yourself and be understood, the better.

**Realize that you will often be treated as a stereotype.** Foreigners anywhere are treated (at least at first) not as individuals but as representatives of groups to which they are perceived to belong. Remember that you also have your own stereotypes about the host nationals.

**Learn the local criteria for success.** Find out what is considered a good performance in studies, research, social relations, and other aspects of your life here. Ask your teachers, native students, and neighbors.

**Learn how to get things done in organizations.** Many of the things you want to accomplish will be accomplished through organizations -- academic departments, other units of the University, businesses, government agencies, and so on. It is therefore helpful to learn how those organizations work.

**Realize how the status of your role here compares to the status to which you are accustomed.** Different societies attach different importance to different roles or positions in the society. In many countries, the role of "university student" is accorded more respect than it is in the United States. It can be difficult to adjust to having a lower social status than you are accustomed to; it helps to recognize that you personally are not being downgraded, but that you happen to be in a society where less value is attached to people in your situation.

**Avoid being excessively influenced by particular dramatic events.** This suggests that if you have a dramatic experience which you find influencing your opinions or feelings about the local people, you would be well advised to discuss the experience with other people and get an idea whether it is typical or unusual.
Try to understand other people’s situations. People do the things they do in part because of their own individual characteristics or interests, and in part because of the situations they are in. In the same way, the local people may understand little about your situation as a newcomer from abroad, and they may misunderstand the reasons for some of your behavior. For example, they may assume that your limited English proficiency or unfamiliar accent is a product of lack of intelligence, rather than a product of inadequate opportunities to practice the language with native speakers. Experienced international students have found it more helpful to think positively in these situations, rather than assume the natives are deliberately being inconsiderate or unkind.

Get involved. Participate in UTA and community events and organizations.

Thinking About Going Home

When you first arrive in a new country, it is natural to spend much of your time thinking about the new country and your reactions to it. However, you will probably be going back to your own country after a certain period of time. Remember that you will change while you are in the new country. You will learn new ideas, adopt new attitudes, and begin to behave in new ways. And while you are changing, things will be changing at home also. This means that when you go back home, things will not be as you remember them. You will have to adjust again, this time to your own culture. This readjustment can be more difficult than coming to the United States ever was. It is easier, however, if you realize it is going to be necessary, prepare yourself for it, try to keep your expectations realistic, and try not to pass judgment on the people you encounter when you get back home.

When your time at The University of Texas at Arlington is over and you prepare to go home, you may be overwhelmed by the many things that need to be done. You will need to face many of the same cultural issues you faced when coming to the U.S. Generally one expects everything will be like it used to, but that may not be the case. Plus you will also be saying farewell to many new friends in the U.S.

In addition to the cultural issues, there is a myriad of practical things that need to be taken care of before your return.

Leaving School

- Make sure that arrangements have been made for approval of your graduation and file for graduation.
- Check with the graduation desk to make sure that you have met all the requirements of your degree.
- Clear your student accounts at the Bursar’s Office so your diploma and transcripts can be released.
- Return any books to the library and pay any unpaid fines.
- Make sure to leave your permanent home address with your department, faculty advisor, and the OIE.
- Return any departmental keys that may have been issued to you.
- Have your diploma and several official copies of your transcript mailed to you.

Leaving your Residence

- At least thirty days before checking out of your residence/apartment notify the management that you will be leaving.
- To avoid losing a part of or all of your deposit, clean your apartment thoroughly and make sure it is in the same condition as when you moved in.
- Make an appointment to return your key and give a forwarding address to your residence manager.
- Notify your utilities and services (electricity, water, telephone, cable, etc.—those that you pay directly) of the day that you will be leaving and make arrangements to settle any unpaid accounts.
- Complete the “change of address” form at the post office and notify people of your new address.

Shipping and Packing

- Decide what items you would like to take home with you.
- Make an inventory of your things, listing the model and serial numbers.
- Contact your country’s consulate concerning customs regulations to consider when taking your belongings home.
- Check with shipping and packing companies and compare prices and services. Many shipping companies
now have a websites such as Vanpac at http://www.vanpac.com/ and Crown Pacific at http://www.signet.com.sg/~'crownsin/.

- For shipped items, try to avoid bulky and heavy articles, as well as valuable and fragile ones. You can use the U.S. Postal Service to mail boxes of household items, clothing and books. They have an especially low rate for the shipping of books.

Financial Concerns
- Call your consulate or embassy to check your country's customs and currency restrictions.
- Decide whether to change your U.S. currency here or at home.
- Close out bank accounts and purchase travelers checks if needed.
- Clear all credit card accounts.

Immigration Concerns
- If you plan to return to the United States to study in a new program, you should obtain new entry documents. Entering the US on entry documents (I-20 or DS-2019) for a program you have already completed is considered a fraudulent entry.
- If you have children born in the US, they are US citizens and are entitled to a US passport. Applications for passports can be submitted at the Arlington Main Post Office at 300 E. South St. Passports for children under the age of eighteen are $40 and usually take from four to six weeks to process. To apply you must bring a certified original birth certificate and two passport photos. Children under the age of thirteen need not be present.

Travel Plans
- Reconfirm your flight plans
- Ask your airlines about baggage restrictions. Requirements for checked baggage vary per airline.
- Make a folder of important documentation you will want to carry with you in your carry-on.

Saying Goodbye
Don't forget to take time to say good-byes. It is easy to be caught up in exams and packing and forget to say good-bye to friends and the people you have met while here in the US. They will want to say good-bye, too.

Additional Checklist for Returning Home
- File any medical insurance claims that are still outstanding. Pay the balance that you owe.
- Note when your health insurance expires to see if you are leaving the U.S. after this date.
- If you are taking a computer, find out details about export regulations.
- If you worked, leave your forwarding address with your employer so they can send you the W-2 forms for tax purpose.
Chapter 2

Living in Arlington
Management of Money

Most international students, like large numbers of American students, live on limited budgets. It is important to be cautious about spending money until you have become accustomed to the value of the dollar and have developed a thorough realization of what your living expenses will be.

You may come from a background where your parents’ income was fairly large compared to your fellow countrymen. When converted into dollars, however, your resources may not go as far as they did at home. While in the United States, you will likely be the one who must take responsibility for your own spending and management of resources.

Banks and Banking Services

It is not wise to carry large amounts of cash with you, or to keep it at your residence. Instead it is better to deposit it in a bank. There are different types of banking services available in Arlington:

- full-service banks (offer services such as safe-deposit boxes, int’l currency exchange, etc.)
- savings and loan associations
- credit unions (member-owned, require employment at select businesses)

Their services are similar in that they all offer savings and checking accounts and loans to qualified customers. The interest rates for these services may be somewhat more competitive at credit unions and savings and loans, but they generally vary only slightly.

Opening an Account

- Select the bank of your choice.
- Meet with a personal banker to discuss different account options.
- Discuss opening a “joint account” if you are married.
- Transfer money to the account to activate the account.

Checking Account

There are three kinds of checking (sometimes called ‘current’ in other countries) accounts. The kind of account you open will depend on the estimated number of checks you plan to write each month and/or the amount of money you plan to retain in your checking account. The three kinds of accounts (sometimes given different names by different banks) are described below.

Special checking account
- "service charge" of 50-75¢ for each check you write above a certain number per month
- no minimum balance
- no interest paid on deposits

Regular checking account
- no service charge if you keep a "minimum balance" in your account ($100-$500)
- service charge or $5-$10+ per month regardless of the number of checks you write
- no per check use fee
- no interest paid on deposits

Checking with interest
- no service charge if you keep a larger minimum balance in your account ($1,000-$1,500)
- interest paid on money deposited

It is very important to keep a running balance of your account each time you write a check. A charge is levied each time you write a check that is not covered by the amount you have deposited in your account.

Most people pay their bills by means of personal checks, usually sent through the mail. Your canceled checks are retained by your bank after they have been cashed by the persons to whom you wrote them. Canceled checks are legal receipts for payments you have made. You should therefore retain the monthly statements from your bank for record-keeping, and perhaps income tax, purposes. Some banks allow you to view a canceled check online or you can request a copy of a particular check.

Personalized Checks

Nearly every banking customer uses personalized checks. Personalized checks have your name, address, and account number printed on them. You may also have your Driver’s License number, telephone number, or other information printed on them.

You will likely pay $8-$14 for a set of personalized checks, so it is wise to wait until you have an address before you have your checks printed. In the meantime, the bank will issue you a temporary supply of blank checks with your account number, but not your name, printed on them.
Instructions for Writing a Check
1. Write the date on which you are "issuing" the check.
2. Write the name of the person or business to whom you are making the payment.
3. Write the amount of the payment in Arabic numerals. Put the first numeral directly after the dollar sign. Do not leave any space, as another person could alter the amount of the check by writing in an extra numeral.
4. Spell out the number of dollars included in the payment, and write the number of cents in the form of a fraction (e.g., 50/100 means 50 cents out of the 100 cents in a dollar). Begin writing on the far left end of the line, and fill the entire line with your writing. If there is space left over, draw a line through the blank area so it cannot be used by someone else.
5. Sign your name as it is printed on the check.
6. Note the purpose of the payment on the line marked "memo," if you need the information for budgeting. If you are using a check to pay a bill, use the memo line for your account number.

Immediately after you write a check you should record all the information from it on your check register. This record includes the check number (personalized checks are numbered consecutively), the date the check is written, the name of the payee (that is, the person or business to whom the payment is being made), the amount of the check, and the fee for the check, if there is one. Then calculate the balance remaining in your account. When you add money to your account ("make a deposit"), you should of course record that also.

Each month your bank will send you a statement of your account, along with the canceled checks (if returned) you have written and that have been paid. You should make sure your record of the amount remaining in your account coincides with the bank's record. The statement will reflect amounts subtracted from your account by the bank for service charges or for printing personalized checks. You should enter these amounts in your check register.

Check Cashing
If someone has written a check to you in payment for something, you should have that check deposited into your account. If you need to have cash instead of a check, you may request that as well. You can also write a check just for cash at many locations, including the UTA Bursar's Office (Davis Hall).

Savings Account
A savings account earns interest at relatively low rates. If you have several hundreds of dollars above the minimum balance in your checking account and above your routine living expenses, a savings account is a safe way to invest it. You can withdraw any amount from a regular savings account whenever it is necessary. If you have a Savings and a Checking account in the same bank, you can telephone and ask the bank to transfer funds from your savings to your checking account. Some banks also offer the option to transfer funds at an ATM or online. You are, however, often limited to a certain number of withdrawals per month from savings accounts.

Banks also offer "savings certificates" and "money market certificates" which require specified minimum deposits and earn higher rates of interest than regular savings accounts. Certificates generally require a designated length of time before they can be returned or cashed. A savings certificate or money market certificate is a prudent investment if you are certain that you will not need the money until the designated time period has elapsed (which can be 90 days, six months, one year, or more). This is usually called a "certificate of
Automatic Teller Machines (ATM)

The automatic teller is a computerized device through which bank customers can make deposits or withdrawals at any time of the day or night, any day of the week. To operate an ATM, the customer needs a particular plastic card and a Personalized Identification Number (PIN) that the bank provides. Sometimes you may choose your own PIN. Instructions for operating the automatic teller are given on the machine itself.

Automatic tellers are located at banks and at some other locations, including supermarkets, shopping centers, and on the UTA campus. Note that not all ATM cards will work at all ATM machines as there are different systems in use. Your bank can provide information about which ATM machines will accept your card. There is usually a fee of about $1-$3 assessed every time you use your ATM card at a machine not operated by your bank.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks provide a safe way to carry money when traveling in the U.S. and abroad. They can be replaced if they are lost. Be sure to record the check identification numbers and store them separately from the actual checks, in the event of theft or loss. Banks sell traveler's checks for a small fee. Personal checks are often not accepted outside the city of your residence.

Cashier's Checks and Money Orders

If you do not have a checking account or are making payment to someone who will not accept a personal check, a bank, post office or even convenience stores will write a cashier's check or money order for a fee.

Credit and Charge Cards

Credit or charge cards can be used in place of cash at many businesses. Many credit card companies welcome student applications. If you decide to get a card, however, be sure you understand the charges and payment terms. In general, they all have a high interest charge for any amount not paid by the bill's due date. As many Americans have learned, it is easy to get into serious trouble with debt by using a credit card indiscriminately without thought as to how the bill will be paid.

Arlington Banks and Other Banking Institutions

There are many different banks in the Arlington area with branches around the metroplex. National banks provide more direct international services (international currency exchange and foreign drafts). State banks must go through a national bank. Several of the larger banks located in Arlington are listed below. The Office of International Education does not recommend any one bank or type of account.

Bank of America 925 N. Collins, 1206 S Bowen Road bankofamerica.com
Chase Bank 500 E. Border St, 1600 E Pioneer Pkwy chase.com
Educational Employees Credit Union (EECU) 2212 Southgate Street eecu.org
If you are employed by the University, you may be eligible to become a member of EECU.
Washington Mutual 2535 E. Arkansas (inside the Kroger's grocery store) wamu.com
Wells Fargo Bank (inside UTA University Center) www.wellsfargo.com

Money Management Hints

1. Budget carefully. You know how much your income and basic expenditures are, so pay all bills immediately at the start of each month and you will know exactly how much money remains.

2. Keep accounts. Keeping track of expenditures in various categories (food, books, etc.) can help to pinpoint areas of heavy spending that might surprise you.

3. Transportation. Recognize that a few extra dollars for a near-campus apartment can save hundreds of dollars each year on a car.
4. **Credit.** For many students this is the first exposure to credit purchasing on any scale. While it is tempting to carry large credit card balances forward, beware of getting into too much debt. Some cards charge 10% to 25% interest!

5. **Buy Second-hand.** Garage and yard sales advertised in newspapers are frequent events and you can buy used appliances and household goods at very reasonable prices. Consignment shops and thrift stores also offer cheaper items.

6. **Eating out.** Eating in restaurants can double or triple your food bill compared to preparing your own food.

7. **Take advantage of “sales.”** Newspaper ads will tell you when a store is having a “sale” on something, meaning a product is being sold at a lower than usual price.

8. **Comparison shop.** Stores are highly competitive. Generally, discount department stores (Walmart, K-Mart, Target, etc.) will carry merchandise at a lower price than regular department stores.

**Medical Care and Expenses**

**General Nature of the U.S. Medical Care Delivery System**

The medical care delivery system in the U.S. has two characteristics that distinguish it from many others in the world. First, it devotes considerable resources to prolonging the lives of people with serious illness or unusual injuries through research, medication, and technology that is required to make this type of care available. Second, there is no general, government-supported system for paying individuals’ medical costs, such as a national medical care program or national insurance program.

The result of these and other factors is that medical costs in the U.S. are very high and must be paid by the individual incurring them. Individuals can buy health insurance that will pay some of their medical expenses. No health insurance plan readily available to students covers all medical expenses.

**Health Insurance**

**Need for Health Insurance**

To avoid paying high medical bills that result from illness or injury (the bill for a few days of hospital care can be in the thousands of dollars), it is necessary to buy health insurance. Insurance protects against the need to meet the entire burden of high medical expenses by spreading the cost among a group of people, all of whom will not suffer injury or illness resulting in medical bills.

**Health Insurance Requirement**

The University requires all international students to have health insurance before they can register for classes. **International students are also strongly urged to provide insurance coverage for their dependents.** The policy offered through the University is specifically designed for UTA students and their families. In designing this policy, the University has tried to strike a reasonable balance between cost and comprehensive coverage. **International students are automatically billed for the cost of the UTA student insurance policy unless they choose to waive the student insurance and show proof of an outside coverage.** New students must show proof of coverage at New International Student Orientation. Proof of coverage must include an insurance card with the student’s name clearly identified and a summary of benefits in English which must include the following information: 1) $50,000 medical benefits PER accident or illness; 2) deductible of $500 or LESS per PERSON, per accident or illness; 3) minimum of $10,000 for medical evacuation benefits; 4) minimum of $7,500 for repatriation of remains; and 5) must cover the entire period to be waived. If the insurance policy does not include medical evacuation/repatriation, a supplemental policy covering those items must be purchased. There are no exceptions to the required minimum coverage. Continuing students may come during posted days and times to provide the required documentation for waiver for the semester.

It should be noted that insurance companies often require you to use certain doctors or hospitals if you want to maximize what they will pay for your treatment. For the UTA student policy, the local hospitals designated are Arlington Memorial Hospital and Medical Center of Arlington. Those covered by the student policy also have their deductible waived and do not have to file any paperwork if they visit the UTA Student Health Services. Additional information on employee insurance is available through the Office of Human Resources at 212 JD Wetsel Service Bldg (tel. 817-272-5554).
Coverage Provided by Health Insurance

Health and accident insurance does not cover all medical expenses. In general, it covers higher costs that result from accidents and serious illness, with accompanying hospitalization, medical tests, and the services of doctors and nurses. Health insurance may not cover the costs of:

* Routine dental work
* Eye glasses
* Vision exams
* Emergency room visits for non-emergencies

The costs mentioned above must usually be met by the individual even if he or she has health/accident insurance. Coverage varies by health insurance policy. Literature accompanying each policy describes what it covers. Policies that are more comprehensive in their coverage are more expensive.

Health Insurance for International Scholars and Their Dependents

Scholars on the University payroll (half-time or more after 90 days of employment) can participate in insurance plans available to University employees. Scholars who are not on the University payroll (and are not enrolled students) that do not have insurance provided by a sponsoring agency should purchase the student health insurance policy or find similar coverage elsewhere.

Common Misconceptions about Health Insurance

Students and scholars from other countries often have difficulty understanding how the health insurance system works. Here are some misconceptions people from other countries sometimes have about health insurance in the United States:

· If I have health insurance, all my medical expenses will be covered. They will not. See the section above called "Coverage Provided by Health Insurance."
· Any visit to the hospital emergency room will be paid for if I have health insurance. An emergency room visit is covered only in case of a genuine emergency.
· The insurance company's job is to help me meet my medical expenses. Yes and no. The insurance company's job is to fulfill the terms of the contract it has with you. However, insurance is a business; insurance companies operate in order to make a profit (by investing the money people pay for insurance). The doctor or hospital considers it your responsibility to pay your bills.
· If I look carefully, I can find a cheap, very comprehensive health insurance policy. Most likely not. The more comprehensive the coverage an insurance policy offers, the more costly it will be.

Student Health Services

· The Student Health Center is located at 605 S. West Street (tel. 817-272-2771).
· Any emergency should be reported via "911," not Student Health Services.
· All students registered in the University are eligible to use the Student Health Center.
· Students' spouses and children are not eligible for these services.
· Students must have their current identification (ID) cards with them.
· Students have to pay for tests, medication prescribed by Student Health physicians, and vaccinations.
· Full-time physicians, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, and clinical psychologists are available.
· The Immunization Clinic, substance abuse specialist, and HIV testing available.
· Student Health Clinic and Pharmacy are open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays.
· The Immunization Clinic is open Monday through Friday from 9am to 4:30pm. The pharmacy is not open on Saturdays.

Medical Care for Families

Finding a doctor or dentist for your family

· Ask the Student Health Center or friends for recommendations.
· Look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory
· Your health insurance company may require you to choose from their list of doctors for full payment of benefits.
· Always call a doctor or dentist to make an appointment.

Pre-Natal and Maternity Care and Family Planning (Birth Control)

· Woman usually have regular checkups during her pregnancy
· The doctor generally delivers the baby in a hospital.
· The total cost of a normal delivery in a hospital ranges from $5,000 to $7,000. If the delivery has complications, the costs can increase greatly -- a cesarean section, for instance, may cost a total of $12,000.
· Student Health Services can help a student in choosing a method of birth control (or "contraception").
Counseling, videos, and brochures are also available.

**Services**

**Transportation**

**Bus Service**

Metro Arlington Xpress will open August 19, 2013. MAX is an express bus that runs from College Park at UTA to the TRE CentrePort Station just south of the DFW airport. Once there, passengers can take public transportation to Ft. Worth or various stops in DFW. A round trip student pass is $2.50. For more information, check out www.ridethemax.com.

There is no other public transportation system in Arlington. Therefore, the University has initiated a Saturday shopping shuttle service called the **Mav Mover**. The cost $1.00 each way. **CASH ONLY**

The Dallas area is serviced by bus transportation through DART, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit authority. This bus system operates in and around the Metroplex area, but does not provide service to Arlington, except for direct buses to Ranger Stadium during the baseball season. The Fort Worth public bus system is known as the "T."

**Taxicabs**

Taxicab service is very expensive. Taxicabs have meters to register the fare a passenger must pay (generally by the mile). It is customary to pay an additional 15 percent of the fare as a "tip."

**Inter-City Buses**

The Greyhound-Trailways Bus Station at 2075 E. Division Street tel. 817-461-5337 provides inter-city bus transportation, generally through connections in Dallas. Greyhound offers special tickets that permit unlimited travel in the U.S. for periods of 7, 15, or 30 days. Such a ticket is called an "Ameripass" or "USApass." If you wish to travel to Fort Worth or Dallas through Greyhound, an R-T ticket to either city is $10-$13 and it takes approximately 20-30 minutes in each direction.

**Air Travel**

DFW airport is located just north of Arlington in the heart of the Metroplex. American Airlines, based in Fort Worth, is the main airline which operates out of DFW and offers the most non-stop and direct flights. You can make reservations for air travel directly with an airline, online, or through a travel agency.

**Airport Shuttles**

One of the next best ways to get to the airport is the 817-329-2000 or 1-800-258-3826. This service provides transportation from your advance notice. No just call the Super Shuttle UTA campus to DFW the same pick-up are $8

**Train**

Travel by train is best arranged directly through Amtrak - tel. 800-872-7245. Union Station, in downtown Dallas across from Reunion Tower and the Hyatt, is where most trains will arrive and depart. Train service in the U.S. is not of the high quality found in Japan or Europe, but it can be an interesting way to see the country.

**Car Rental**

Cars may be rented by the day, weekend, week, or month by any licensed driver who is at least 25 years old. Agencies require the use of a major credit card. Prices vary, so you should call a number of agencies and ask about their charges.

**Hitchhiking**

Hitchhiking is illegal in many states, particularly on major roads and interstates, and is considered to be very
Mass Communication

Newspapers

Newspapers are available at coin-operated dispensers on sidewalks outside stores, apartment complexes, and around campus. You can also subscribe to papers and have them delivered to your door by calling the paper's subscription department. The UTA main library subscribes to a wide variety of newspapers, including some papers from other countries. They can be found in the periodical section. Some foreign newspapers can also be purchased from local bookstores, however, the most up-to-date 'issues' are best found on the internet.

Some of the major local papers you are likely to find around UTA are listed below.

- The Shorthorn (free), Tuesday through Friday during school year, www.theshorthorn.com
- Dallas Morning News, daily paper which includes Arlington news, also online: www.dallasnews.com
- Fort Worth Star-Telegram, daily paper which includes Arlington news, also online: www.star-telegram.com
- USA Today, daily national paper with regional editions
- Dallas Observer (free), weekly entertainment tabloid with music, art, museum announcements

Radio

Most radio stations in the U.S. are commercial stations supported by advertising. Public stations are supported by government funding and voluntary listener contributions. An example of public radio is:

90.1FM NPR National Public Radio (mix of international and national news, feature stories, discussions, worldbeat music, comedy programs, etc.)

Television

Television is one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the United States.

- Basic television - Use a small antenna inside your home you can receive all of the major U.S. networks
- Cable service - receive many more channels; requires installation plus a monthly charge (Comcast)
- Satellite service - receive many more channels; requires installation plus a monthly charge (Dishnetwork)

Telephones

Most people have a telephone in their apartment, dorm room or home. Telephones can be installed easily and quickly. Most people also have cellular phone service in addition to their home service, or simply by itself. For information on initiating telephone service and home telephone service options, refer to Appendix IV.

Telephone Directory

A telephone directory is very useful and can be accessed in print or online. The most popular directory version is published by SBC. Directories include:

- name, address, and telephone number of each telephone customer
- emergency telephone numbers and instructions for making various kinds of telephone calls
- pages with community information (local attractions, the history of Arlington, etc.)
- local street and ZIP code maps
- residence customers (white pages)
- business customers (usually white with some distinctive edge marking)
- government (blue) All these are listed alphabetically
- local service and business advertisements, classified according to the kind of service or business involved (yellow pages)

The University publishes a telephone directory known as the "Maverick Connection" in the Fall Semester with the names and addresses of all students, faculty, and staff.

Using Telephones

Telephone numbers in the U.S. generally have seven digits. In larger cities, such as the DFW metroplex, ten-digits are required even for local calls.

To call from one on-campus telephone to another, you only need to dial the last five digits of the number.

Calling from on-campus to off-campus: Dial 9 and then the number you wish to reach.

Public Telephones (called "pay phones")

Pick up the receiver, deposit the amount of money the instructions on the phone says is needed -- usually 35 or 50 cents -- and wait for the dial tone (a humming sound), then dial your number.
CHAPTER TWO

In the east end of the UTA University Center, there is a University metro phone (beige colored) near Bowling and Billiards. A metro phone is also located just west of the Food Court in the University Center and in the student organization area in the basement of the University Center. Unlike most public telephones, these phones allow you to call free of charge within the metro calling area. The metro calling area includes numbers with the following prefixes: ‘817’, ‘214’, ‘972’, ‘469’ and ‘682’.

Direct Dialing within the United States
Dial 1 + the three digits area code + the seven-digit number.
It is possible to direct-dial calls to many other countries.
Dial 011 + the country code + the city and local numbers. Country codes can be found online at http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/

Calling Cards
When you are making a call away from home it is a good idea to use a calling card. International calling cards are available through many long-distance companies, at the The Market located in the University Center and from several area stores. Consult the issuer of the card on how to use your card.

Telephone Answering Machines
Most residences, businesses, and government agencies use telephone answering machines to take messages, give information, or act as a receptionist to transfer your call. There are even many offices on the UTA campus that use such systems to answer their telephones. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is another place that uses an automated answering system. If you dial the USCIS office, you will hear a recorded voice. Most automated answering systems allow you to speak with a person only after you have listened to a long series of taped directions. They may ask you to press the pound sign which looks like ‘#’ or the star key ‘*’.

If you choose to have an answering machine in your home, you should not state that you are out of the house or on vacation. That would give others the impression that your residence is unattended and an easy target for theft.

Special Notes
- Toll free numbers are non-local calls at no cost to the caller. These calls use “800” or “877” in place of an area code
- Be wary of sales solicitations by phone.
- Never give your checking or credit card numbers out over the telephone unless you initiate the call.
- Beware of computerized sales pitches whereby a machine calls you to sell their service.
- Dial 911 to quickly report an emergency and summon help. This is a free call and you do not need change to make this call from a pay phone.
- If you are dialing from a campus telephone you can also dial 2-3003, the UTA police extension reserved for emergencies.

Mail

Pick-Up and Delivery
Mail is delivered to residences Monday through Saturday, once daily. Outgoing mail can be put in your mailbox for the mailman to pick up only if you live in a house. In other instances it should be deposited in one of the blue mailboxes located around town or taken to the Post Office.

Change of Address
You should notify the Post Office, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the UTA registration system whenever you change your address. If you change your address frequently, it may be a good idea to rent a “post office box” to use as a permanent mailing address. This can be done for a small fee by going to the “Mail Box” in the UTA University Center. USCIS requires the University to have a record of each student's residence address within 10 days of moving, so you will also need to report it to the UTA registration system (online or on the phone by calling SAM).

ZIP Codes
The United States Post Office requires a ZIP (Postal) Code on every letter with a U.S. destination. The zip
code is a five or nine-digit number indicating what section of the U.S. the letter is going to. Arlington ZIP codes all start with “760.” There is a map in the Arlington telephone book showing where the ZIP code boundaries are located.

Post Office Locations
The Post Office most convenient for UTA students is located in the west end of the University Center. The main Arlington Post Office is located at 300 E. South Street, just a few blocks east of the University.

Rates
Postal rates change periodically. To get information about them, call the Post Office. If you are unsure of the weight of a letter or card, it is best to visit a post office and attach adequate postage to better ensure that it’s delivered.

Mailing Parcels Overseas
Different countries have varying regulations governing the parcels they will receive and handle in their mail. To avoid delays, it is wise to call the Post Office and request information about the requirements for mailing any package you wish to send outside the U.S.

Laundry Services
Students usually wash their own clothes. There are washing machines (“washers”) and drying machines (“dryers”) in every dormitory and in most apartment buildings. People who live in places without washing machines take their clothes to “laundromats,” where large numbers of washing machines and dryers are available.

Using Laundry Machines
Instructions for using washing machines and dryers are usually posted in the laundry room of the dorm or apartment, or in the laundromat. You must provide your own laundry detergent. If you have never used such machines before, it is a good idea to read the instructions on the clothes label or ask someone which of your clothes can safely be put into washing machines, how they should be sorted (by color and material), how much to put into a machine, and how much soap to use.

Dry Cleaning
Articles of clothing that cannot be washed in water can be taken to a “cleaner,” where they will be cleaned with a solvent. You can drop off your clothes one day, and return to pick them up in 1-3 days. Costs of drying vary, depending on the type of fabric and garment. Shirts to formal dresses tend to range from $1.00-$12.00 per article so you may want to discuss prices in advance.

Hair Cutting and Styling
Traditionally, men got haircuts at barber shops and women went to beauty salons for styling, coloring, etc. Now, many are called Hair Styling Salons and offer services to both genders. The cost of a haircut will vary significantly based on the type of salon. Haircut prices range from $10 to $50.

Religion
Religion is generally considered a private matter and does not play a pervasive role in the U.S. Though the major tradition in America is Christian, there is no official religion or established church that is supported by the government. Indeed, strong efforts are generally made to prevent any open governmental support for religious activities.

Visitors from abroad will find a wide range of religious practices in Arlington. Everything is acceptable.

Religious Organizations
Places of Worship
Arlington has many churches. Although Catholic and Protestant churches are the most prevalent, many other religions are represented. The names and addresses of Arlington
churches are in the yellow pages of the telephone book under "churches." A few of the places of worship of major world religions are listed here for your reference.

- Buddhist Center of Dallas -- 8350 Floyd Lake Dr, Dallas, TX
- Hindu Temple- 1605 N Britain Rd, Irving, TX (972) 445-3111
- Islam -- mosque at 100 Medinah Drive (off Center St. south of Park Row) tel. 817.461.8415
- Jewish -- synagogue at 1210 Thannish Drive (off Center St. north of Randol Mill) tel. 817.860.5448

Campus Ministries

Some churches have "campus ministries" with their own buildings next to the campus. The ministries pay special attention to the religious needs of college students. Such groups may put on special programs for international students and spouses. There are also religious student groups registered with the UTA Office of Student Governance and Organizations.

Cults

The word "cult" generally refers to a religious-oriented group that may have no affiliation with an established church. They often have a leader who is considered god-like and who has an exalted position. Their members' personal possessions sometimes become the group's property. They operate in a secretive way; they are unclear about their purposes. They often believe they are being persecuted by the general society. They sometimes require complete obedience from their members.

Cult members try to recruit other members by offering friendship, help, and answers to problems. They often choose people who appear lonely or confused, because such people are considered more vulnerable to cult members' ideas. They often do not make clear their goals. Be careful of these groups.

International Visitors and Religion

If you want to see what happens in an American church you can simply attend a service. Times and places for some nearby religious services are given in The Shorthorn each Friday. You may also want to go with a friend or acquaintance who attends a church.

If you meet someone who tries to persuade you to join his or her religious organization and you are not interested, you can simply say so. You need not listen or reply to someone who does not respect your right to have your own religion.

Housekeeping

Suggestions

- It is highly acceptable for men and women to shop for groceries, cook, wash dishes and clothes, clean house, and take care of children.
- It is important to keep one's living area reasonably clean. UTA apartments are inspected around the middle of the Fall and Spring semesters. Apartments that do not pass the inspection, must be cleaned and re-inspected.
- You can purchase cleaning supplies at supermarkets. Ask someone who lives here, and whose living quarters seem clean, to help you select the supplies you will need if you have any questions.
- When using any specialized cleaning product, read the label carefully and follow instructions. The label will tell you how dangerous the product is and how to use it safely. Many cleaning products are harmful if inhaled or allowed to touch your skin and can cause toxic reactions if mixed. Mixing products containing bleach (NaOCl) and ammonia (NH₃), for example, can be deadly.

Disposal of Trash and Garbage

- Ask your landlord what you should do with trash and garbage. In most apartment complexes, you put your garbage in a large dumpster near your apartment which is then emptied several times a week by the City of Arlington.
- A garbage disposal is a machine that grinds food waste and allows it to be washed down the sink drain. Usually only small quantities of non-greasy foods can be disposed of with a garbage disposal, for example carrot peelings. Cold water must also be turned on any time the garbage disposal is turned on (usually through a switch near the kitchen sink). Other items should be thrown away in a trashcan or
dumpster.

Keeping the Kitchen Clean
- Keeping crumbs off the counters and the floors swept will avoid attracting insects and rodents. Roaches are a big problem in Texas and many apartment complexes will spray insecticide regularly to help keep them away.
- Kitchen stoves may be gas or electric. In either case, it is important to keep the burners and oven clean so they will work safely and effectively. You should wipe the burners after each use to keep soiled food from hardening on them. If you use the oven often, clean it periodically using ammonia or a special oven cleaner.

Keeping the Bathroom Clean
- Bathrooms should be kept clean and free of odors. This means regular cleaning of toilet bowls, bathtubs, sinks, shower stalls, and bathroom floors.
- Products for cleaning toilet bowls, porcelain (with which sinks and toilets are made), tile, and glass are available at grocery, department, and discount stores.
- A word about toilets. People in many parts of the world do not use the type of toilet on which a person sits. Instead, they are accustomed to the type on which a person squats. Unfortunately, the practice of squatting on a sitting-type toilet will eventually cause damage to the toilet by loosening its connection to the sewer pipe that goes into the floor. People who are accustomed to squatting on a toilet are well-advised to learn to sit on the toilets used in the U.S.
- Two points about toilet etiquette: 1) Flush the toilet after each use; 2) Men should raise the toilet seat before urinating into the toilet so they do not splash urine on the seat. When finished, put the seat back down.

Coping With Texas Weather

Hot Weather
Texas heat can be almost unbearable if you come from a cooler climate. Temperatures above 100°F Fahrenheit (38°Celsius), sometimes with high humidity, are not uncommon in the summer and air-conditioners are found cooling almost every building and automobile. During extremely hot, sunny weather you should take the following precautions:
- Wear loose, light colored clothing if you will be outdoors in the sun for extended periods of time. You should also wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your eyes, face, and neck.
- Use a sunscreen with a SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15 and re-apply frequently if you will be out in the sun for very long. This protects from the dangerous sunrays.
- Wear protective eyewear. Look for sunglasses that not only darken the light, but protect against dangerous ultraviolet rays as well.
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. This is when the sun's rays are the strongest and most dangerous.
- Drink plenty of liquids, especially water (approx. 64oz per day). If you are doing a lot of work outdoors in the heat and you stop sweating, you have high potential for heatstroke.

Cold Weather
The winter season in Texas is not as severe as it is in many parts of the U.S., but may still come as a shock to visitors from warmer countries. When it gets really cold, or if you visit any of the northern states or Canada during the winter, keep the following in mind:
- Wear several layers of lighter clothing rather than one or two very heavy layers.
- Choose warm fabrics. More absorbent fabrics, by allowing perspiration and body moisture to evaporate from the skin, keep you warmer. Natural fibers such as cotton and wool are the most absorbent and therefore the warmest fibers.
- Select clothing designed for cold weather use. Tight clothing does not keep you warmer. It actually inhibits blood circulation.
- Leave as few areas of the body exposed as possible. Wear pants, a long coat, gloves, a hat and scarf. Ears are especially susceptible to frostbite (skin tissue damage due to freezing).
- There is also a danger in cold weather of water pipes freezing. If your apartment or house is not well insulated against the cold, you should let your faucets constantly drip a little bit so that the water does not freeze and cause the pipes to break.
Tornados

Tornados are powerful, twisting, wind storms that produce winds of more than 300 m.p.h. These storms usually occur in the spring and early summer and can be very destructive. When the National Weather Service issues a tornado "watch", it means that weather conditions are reasonably likely to produce tornados. Tornado watches are broadcast on all radio and television stations. A tornado "warning" means that a tornado has actually been seen. The sirens of the Arlington Severe Weather Warning System will sound continuously for several minutes following issuance of a tornado warning. If you hear a tornado warning,

- Immediately seek shelter in lower corridors or other areas without windows or outside doorways
- Go to the nearest large, sturdy building
- Avoid locations below heavy appliances
- Go to a lower floor closet in the center of the building or lower floor bathroom without windows
- Covering yourself with a mattress, can help protect you from flying debris.
- Always abandon your car. Take cover in a ditch or low-lying area.

Recreation

Things to Do in Arlington

Social and recreational activities on the campus and in Arlington are far too numerous to mention in detail. They include movies, concerts, art exhibits, sports, and museums. Considerable socializing takes place in the various bars in Arlington. In addition, there are a wide variety of student organizations that hold social events throughout the year. The Shorthorn and the Dallas Observer are the best sources of information about social and recreational opportunities in the Metroplex.

Recreation Facilities

The major recreation facilities on and near the University campus include the following:

- **Activities Building** This facility houses racquetball courts, two gyms, weight rooms, an indoor jogging track, and a lounge. For information call Recreational Sports (tel. 817-272-3277). Recreational Sports offers a wide variety of sporting, leisure, physical fitness, and wellness activities to enhance a student’s college experience. These activities are offered through the following programs: QUEST Student Wellness Program, Intramural Sports, Sports Clubs, Informal Recreation, and the Outdoor Adventure Center.
- **P.E. Building** has a swimming pool and several gyms. The gyms are generally used for organized group reservations.
- **Tennis Center** These courts are lighted and available for 1½ hours per reservation. No charge for student use.
- **City Parks and Recreation Centers** Outdoor parks in Arlington provide sites for picnics, outdoor barbecuing, jogging, volleyball, and many other activities. Some parks include swimming pools. In addition to these facilities, there are also several "Recreation Centers" found around the city. They are open during certain hours to the public and other times they provide recreational programs for youth or other groups. A particularly nice park for walks, rollerblading and cycling is Legacy Park located in north Arlington. For more information, call the Arlington Parks & Recreation Dept. tel. 817-459-5467.
- There are also several museums in Arlington, as well as much larger ones in downtown Dallas and Ft. Worth. You will also find opera, ballet, concert, and dramatic performances in many different places around the Metroplex. If you don't have transportation or money to attend Dallas and Fort Worth events, watch for local campus activities sponsored by the Theater/Music Departments or EX-CEL/Campus Activities.

Cars and Bicycles

Owning and Operating a Car

Owning a car is expensive so unless you have an ample supply of money, it is advisable to be cautious about buying a car. Costs include:

- Maintenance and repair
- Gas
- License plate registration
- Insurance
If you purchase a vehicle, be sure to read and be familiar with required maintenance procedures (oil changes, tire rotation, etc.). You should also remember to use coolant/anti-freeze in your radiator as specified in your owner's manual. Coolant/anti-freeze not only keeps your radiator from freezing in cold weather, but keeps it from overheating during the hot summer.

Driver's License
- You may use an international driver's license for up to one year after your date of entry to the US while you are in Texas, after which time you must obtain a Texas driver's license.
- You may drive legally in Texas with a current out-of-state license if you are a resident of that state and a full-time student. Under all other circumstances, you have thirty days in which to get a Texas driver's license.
- To get a Texas driver's license:
  - Go to the Texas Department of Public Safety (3901 W. Arkansas; open 730am- 5:00pm, Monday & Tuesday through Friday, Tuesdays open 8:00am- 7:00pm). [www.txdps.state.tx.us](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us), 817-274-1818.
  - Take your passport with you.
    - Take a copy of your lease and/or utility bills to show that you are Texas Resident.
  - Take a computer-led examination concerning driving laws and practices.
    - Lines for written test and photographs are long.
    - Test takes 30-45 minutes.
    - If you fail the test, it may be retaken.
    - Study the booklet, Texas Drivers Handbook (free of charge at DPS Office).
  - Take a driving test whereby you will be asked to drive your car while accompanied by a driver's license examiner.
    - Furnish your own car or that of a friend.
    - Show evidence of liability insurance, for the test.
    - Driving tests are given on an appointment basis only (make an appointment in person the morning of the day you wish to take the test).
    - You may not make an appointment for a driving test until you have taken and passed your written test.
  - Your vision will be tested, your picture will be taken and you will pay a fee.
  - A temporary license will be issued and your permanent license will arrive in the mail within four to six weeks. The permanent license is good for six years.

- Instruction permits allow you to practice driving while accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 18 and has one year of driving experience.
  - You only need to take a written test.
  - Cost for an instruction permit is $5 and it is valid until your next birthday.

Texas' Safety Belt Law
- Texas law requires the use of seatbelts by the driver and front-seat occupants
- Children under two years of age must be secured in a child restraint system that meets federal safety standards.
- Children two to four years of age may be secured in safety seats or belts.
- Motorists can be fined for not "buckling up" or wearing a seat belt.

Buying a Car
- Buying a used car is significantly less expensive compared to a new car.
- You may buy either from a car dealer or from a private individual who has advertised a car for sale.
- Take an American acquaintance with you who is both knowledgeable about cars and buying cars in the US.
- "Certificate of Ownership" or "Certificate of Title" must be transferred to you from the previous owner.

Automobile Registration
- You must register and obtain license plates for your car.
- Arlington residents may do this at the Southeast Sub-Courthouse, 700 E. Abram St., tel. 817.548.3935.
- Prior to submitting your application for registration, you must have your car inspected at an auto repair shop. State inspections, including the emissions test generally cost $35-50.
You will also need to show proof of car insurance when you register.
If you brought the car to Texas from out-of-state you must also bring your out-of-state title with you.
Your registration and license plates must be renewed once a year. You may do this by mail (you will be mailed a reminder if your address does not change) or in person.
All car owners are required to carry liability insurance. Insurance is mandatory because you are financially responsible if you cause your car to injure another person or damage someone else's property.

Automobile Insurance

Liability insurance is the most basic type and is required by law. It protects you if your car kills or injures someone else, or damages someone else's property. You are considered legally liable if a car you own (whether you or someone else is driving it) causes injury or death to another person or damage to someone else's property, unless the accident is clearly not the fault of the person driving your car. If you are legally liable for injuries, death, or damages resulting from an automobile accident, you could face payments of tens of thousands of dollars. If you do not have liability insurance to help pay those costs, you will have to pay them yourself.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE COVERAGE

I. There are four (4) types of coverage available to you
A. LIABILITY COVERAGE
   1. State laws of Texas require you to have this protection.
   2. Liability insurance pays for damages to the other car, if you are at fault.
   3. Minimum coverage required:
      - BODILY INJURY
        - $20,000 Protection per individual
        - $40,000 Protection for a group of individuals
      - PROPERTY DAMAGE
        - $15,000 protection

B. COLLISION COVERAGE
   1. Pays for damages to your car if you are at fault.
   2. Pays for damages to your car if you hit an object such as a wall, tree, building, etc.
   3. Pays for damages to your car if you are in a collision, it is not your fault, and the other driver has no liability coverage.
   4. Is written with full coverage or deductible amounts ($100, $200, $300, $400, $500, etc.). The deductible is the amount you must pay before insurance coverage starts.

C. COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE
   1. Pays for damages to your car resulting from theft, fire, vandalism, glass breakage, mischief, etc.
   2. Is written with full coverage or deductible amounts ($50, $100, $200, $300, $400, $500, etc.)

D. UNINSURED/UNDERINSURED COVERAGE
   1. Protects you or your passengers injured by a driver who does not have enough insurance or has no insurance.
   2. It also offers you protection if you are riding in someone else's car and that driver has inadequate insurance.
   3. It is recommended that you at least purchase coverage similar to that listed under liability (A.3.) above.

II. You must submit proof of automobile liability insurance when:
   A. Obtaining a driver's license.
   B. Obtaining a vehicle inspection sticker.
   C. Obtaining automobile license plates.
   D. Applying for initial automobile registration.
   E. Renewing your driver's license (drivers who don't own cars can secure a driver's license without showing proof of insurance by obtaining an affidavit from a Department of Public Safety Office).

III. You must be able to show proof of insurance when requested by a police officer. Driving without liability coverage (proof of insurance) is a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine.
   A. First offenders are subject to a $175 to $350 fine.
   B. Subsequent offenders can be fined $350 to $1,000 and face the possibility of having their vehicle impounded (taken away) for six months.

IV. Automobile insurance rates are set by the State Board of Insurance. Rates can vary from as much as 30 percent below to as much as 30 percent above the benchmark rate and are largely contingent on the insured's driving record, use of the auto, and to some extent on the age of the driver as well as the age of the automobile. The benchmark rate is a reference point used by insurance companies to charge rates within a range established by the board. To get the best possible rate for your car the following suggestions are given:
   A. Avoid shopping by phone.
B. Make personal appointments with more than one agent (salesperson). They are listed in the yellow pages under "insurance." Shop for the best coverage at the best price.
C. Try to buy only the coverage you need.

Driving during Winter
Winter often brings dangerous driving conditions. If you plan to operate a car during the winter, there are some things you should remember:

- **Get your car "winterized"** (especially if you will travel north of Texas). Make sure your tires are not worn smooth. Put anti-freeze into your radiator to keep it from bursting in freezing weather. Change to a lighter weight oil. Make certain your brakes, windshield wipers, turn signals, and headlights are in good operating condition.
- **Drive carefully in wet or icy conditions.** Start slowly, using second gear. Do not follow other cars closely. Drive slowly. To stop, pump your brakes, rather than pressing steadily on the brake pedal. If your car starts to spin, turn your wheel in the direction of the spin. Watch other cars very carefully, and assume that their drivers are having difficulty controlling them. Be particularly careful to obey all traffic regulations.

Bicycles

- You do not need to license a bicycle in Arlington.
- It is recommended, however, that you have your bicycle’s serial number registered with the UTA or City of Arlington Police Department. There is no fee for this service. Having the serial number registered can help police recover your bicycle if it is stolen.
- It is important to lock your bicycle securely whenever you leave it. You should lock your bicycle into a bicycle rack, not to light poles, trees, or posts.

Bicycle Safety
When you are riding your bicycle on a street or road, you must be very careful. There are hand signals you should use to let motorists know when you plan to make a turn:

- Holding your left arm straight out from your side signals a left turn.
- Bending the left arm upwards at the elbow or extending your right arm indicates a right turn.
- If you are riding your bicycle in the dark, you must have a headlight visible from a distance of at least 500 feet, as well as a rear light visible from at least 300 feet or a reflector.
- Wear light-colored or reflective clothing when riding at night.
- When on the road, you should stay as near as possible to the right edge.
- Texas also required cyclists to wear a helmet at all times.

Police and Law Enforcement

Local Police
The police have different roles in different countries.

- Police can open a car into which you have locked your keys.
- Police give parking tickets to people who have parked their cars illegally.
- Ask for police help with such matters as lost or stolen property, noisy neighbors, and suspicious activity you witness in your neighborhoods (such as someone peeking in other people’s windows).
- Police also enforce Arlington's ordinances (local laws). Some of the ordinances that are most strictly enforced (and most often violated) in Arlington are those concerning alcohol and driving.

Area police agencies work in conjunction with one another. They cooperate with and assist U.S. government agencies such as the CIA and Immigration but are not a branch of any U.S. government agency.

If a person is convicted of violating a law, a police record is created in that person’s name. A person will have a police record for committing minor violations as well as criminal violations. A person's police record can be obtained by government authorities if requested.

Federal Law Enforcement Agencies
The federal law enforcement agency responsible for enforcing the immigration laws is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Federal regulation requires non-immigrants to answer any questions asked of
Another federal law-enforcement agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), has responsibilities that sometimes lead their agents to question international students and scholars. International students and scholars are not required to answer any questions addressed to them by an FBI agent unless the agent has obtained a court order (called a “subpoena”) mandating a reply. If an FBI agent asks you to answer some questions and does not have a subpoena you can, if you wish, simply say that you prefer not to answer any questions. Doing so will not affect your immigration status. If you are contacted by the FBI and are uncertain how to respond, you may want to consult with an international student adviser. You have the right to have a lawyer accompany you while you answer questions from law enforcement officials if you so choose.

Identification Documents

It is important to carry some kind of identification document with you at all times.

- Most Americans use a driver's license as an ID card. This is the most accepted form of identification when cashing a check or making a purchase with checks.
- If you will not be driving, you can get a photo identification (I.D.) Card from the Texas Department of Public Safety.
  - You may apply for an ID at the DPS Office located at 3901 W. Arkansas (Arkansas and Park Springs), in Arlington.
  - You will need to bring your passport to show proof of your date of birth along with your I-94 card. The card will be mailed to you within six weeks.
- Your passport can be offered as proof of identity, but may not be accepted by all stores and places of business.
- As a UTA student you will also have a MAV EXPRESS student identification card, but it is rarely accepted as proof of identification or age outside of the University.
  - The MAV EXPRESS card may be obtained one day after you have successfully registered for classes. The ID is a permanent document with a magnetic strip on the back.
  - The card can be used as debit cards at several points around campus, including campus dining and vending machines.
  - It also acts as an access card for computer labs, dormitories and to check-out library materials or sports equipment.
  - For more information, visit the MAV EXPRESS office near the north entrance of the University Center.
Relating To Americans
American society includes people representing a wide variety of ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, age, occupational, and other types of groups. People in any of these groups are likely to have ideas and opinions that differ from those of people in other groups. Even with this diversity, it is possible to mention certain characteristics that, in general, describe attitudes and practices that are common among Americans and that tend to distinguish Americans from people who have grown up in other cultures. Keep in mind that the following remarks are generalizations, and that you will find individuals who are exceptions to any or all of them.

### Notable Characteristics of Americans

#### Individualism
Americans generally believe that the ideal person is an autonomous, self-reliant individual. Most Americans see themselves as separate individuals, not as representatives of a family, community, or other group. They dislike being dependent on other people, or having others dependent on them. Some people from other countries view this attitude as "selfishness." Others view it as a healthy freedom from the constraints of ties to family, clan, or social class.

#### Equality and Informality
Americans are taught that "all men are created equal." They treat each other in informal ways, for example, in the presence of great differences in age or social standing. From the point of view of some people from other cultures, this kind of behavior reflects lack of respect. From the point of view of others, it reflects a healthy lack of concern for social ritual. Note that on professional and academic levels, there is no need to distinguish between how you interact with a female and how you interact with a male.

#### Time Consciousness
Americans place considerable value on punctuality. They tend to organize their activities by means of schedules. As a result they may sometimes seem harried, always running from one thing to the next, and not able to relax and enjoy themselves. Observers from the outside sometimes see this as being "ruled by the clock." Other times they see it as a helpful way of assuring that things get done.

If you are not punctual for appointments, you may find that you will have to re-schedule since people will not wait for you. When you go to the doctor or dentist, for example, you should arrive well in advance. Not only may there be paperwork to complete, but if you are not there when the doctor is ready, you will have to be scheduled for another time. You may find that you have to wait for the doctor, but the doctor will not wait for you.

#### Materialism
"Success" in American society is often marked by the amount of money or the quantity of material goods a person is able to accumulate. A person accumulates money and goods by means of such valued qualities as hard work, cleverness, and persistence. Some visitors, and Americans as well, see all this as a "lack of appreciation for the spiritual or human things in life." Others recognize it as a way of assuring a comparatively high standard of living in the country.

### Americans' Communication Style

When people with differing communicative styles interact, they frequently misjudge or misunderstand each other. To help understand and reduce the communication problems that can arise, it is helpful if international visitors know something about the communicative style of the local people, and the way it compares with their own communicative manner. With that knowledge, the visitors will be better able to understand what is happening when they are dealing with the local people, and will know some of the ways in which the local people are likely to misunderstand or misjudge them. Below are some generalizations about the communicative style of Americans.

#### Preferred Topics
In casual conversation, Americans prefer to talk about the weather, sports, jobs, people they both know, or past experiences, especially ones they have in common. Americans generally do not discuss politics or religion, which are considered controversial topics. Sex, bodily functions, and perceived personal inadequacies are considered very personal topics, and are only discussed between good friends. By contrast, people in some other cultures are taught to believe that politics and/or religion are good conversation topics and they may have different ideas about what topics are too "personal" to discuss with others.

#### Favorite Form of Verbal Interaction
In the typical conversation between Americans, no one talks for very long at a time. Participants in
conversation "take turns" frequently, usually after the speaker has spoken only a few sentences. Americans prefer to avoid arguments; if argument is unavoidable, they prefer it to be restrained, carried on in a normal conversational tone and volume. Americans are generally rather impatient with "ritual" conversational exchanges beyond introductions and farewells.

People from other countries may be more accustomed to speaking and listening for longer periods when they are in a conversation; they may be accustomed to more ritual interchanges (about the health of family members, for example) than Americans are. They may enjoy arguing, even vigorous arguing, of a kind that Americans are likely to find unsettling.

**Depth of Involvement Preferred**

Americans do not generally expect very much personal involvement from conversational partners. "Small talk" -- without long silences is enough to keep matters going smoothly. It is only with very close friends that Americans generally expect to discuss personal topics.

Some people from other countries prefer even less personal involvement than Americans do, and rely more on ritual interchanges. Others come from countries where much more personal involvement is sought, as one wants to learn as much as possible about another person and keep open the possibility of developing a relationship of mutual interdependence.

**Channels Preferred**

The ideal in the U.S. is to be somewhat verbally adept, speaking in moderate tones, using relatively few and restrained arm and hand gestures. They do not touch each other very often.

By contrast, others might prefer even quieter conversation, less talking, and even more restrained gestures. Or they might be accustomed to louder voices, many people talking at once, vigorous use of hands and arms to convey meanings or add emphasis, and/or more touching between conversation partners.

**Level of Meaning Emphasized**

Americans generally tend to look for specific facts and physical or quantifiable evidence to support viewpoints. They believe in the existence of an objective "truth".

Compared to Americans, people from some other countries might pay more attention to the emotional content or the human feelings aspects of a message, and be less concerned with what Americans would call facts. They may not assume the existence of an objective "truth," but may suppose that "facts" are relative, depending on who is observing them.

**Nonverbal Communication**

When we think about communicating with people from another country we think first about their language. But a lot of communication between people is nonverbal, involving dress, ornaments, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and body position.

**Eye Contact**

When they are talking to someone, Americans alternate between looking briefly into the listener's eyes and looking slightly away. When they are listening to another person, they look almost constantly at the speaker's eyes. Americans tend to distrust people who do not look into their eyes while talking to them.

**Touching & Personal Distance**

People in some countries touch their conversation partners far more frequently than Americans; conversely, people in some countries touch each other even less often than Americans. American men rarely touch each other, except when shaking hands. Women touch each other somewhat more often but they don't walk hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm the way women in many countries do. Some Americans periodically touch their conversation partners lightly on the arm or shoulder while talking. If one does so with you, you can do likewise.

**Hygiene**

Americans are taught that the natural smells of people's bodies and breath are unpleasant. Most Americans bathe or shower daily, use an underarm deodorant to counteract the odor of perspiration, and brush their teeth
with toothpaste at least once daily and perhaps more often. In addition, they may rinse their mouths with a mouthwash or chew mints in order to be sure their breath is free of food odors. It is very common for women to shave their legs and underarms and to use a small quantity of perfume each day; many men use a scented cologne or after-shave lotion. Most Americans will quickly back away from a person who has “body odor” or “bad breath.” This backing away may be the only signal that they are “offended” by another person's breath or body odors. This topic is so sensitive that most Americans will not tell another person that he or she has bad breath or body odors.

Some international students and scholars come from places where the human body's natural odors are considered quite acceptable, and where efforts to overcome those odors, at least on the part of men, are considered unnatural. Still other students and scholars come from places where personal cleanliness is considered more important than Americans consider it to be, and they may view most Americans as “dirty.”

Other Guidelines
In a thoughtful and concise introduction to American society and culture, Cornelius Grove in “A Fondness for Icewater: A Brief Introduction to the U.S.A. and Its People,” AFS International/Intercultural Programs, 1984, offers these ten points:
1. Americans have no taboos of any kind associated with the left hand; they are as likely to touch you or to hand you objects with the left hand as with the right hand.
2. Americans have no negative association with the soles of the feet or the bottom of the shoes; they do not feel it necessary to prevent others from seeing these areas.
3. A common way to greet small children in the U.S. is to pat them on the top of the head.
4. People in the U.S. often point with their index finger and wave it around in the air as they make especially important points in conversation.
5. One beckons another person to come closer with the hand with palm and fingers up, not down.
6. Americans show respect and deference for another person by looking him or her in the face, not by looking down.
7. Informal, relaxed postures are commonly assumed by Americans when they are standing or sitting, even when they are conversing with others; lack of formal posture is not a sign of inattention or disrespect.
8. Americans are uncomfortable with silence; they expect to talk rather constantly when in the presence of others.
9. In the U.S., room doors are usually left open unless there is a specific reason to close them.
10. Punctuality--being on time--is important to many Americans; they are likely to become quite annoyed if forced to wait more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time for meetings or appointments.

Guidelines for Practical Situations
Shaking Hands
Men usually shake hands with each other the first time they meet. Some men might not shake hands with women unless the woman extends her hand first. After the first meeting, shaking hands is relatively rare. If someone offers his or her hand to you, though, you should shake it. When Americans shake hands, they normally exert a small amount of pressure on each others' hands, move their clasped hands a bit upwards, then a bit downwards, then release their grip.

Names and Titles
American names generally have three parts: first (or given) name, middle name and last (family) name. In most cases, the first name appears first, then the middle name or initial (if it is used) and finally the last name. On many forms and applications, though, the last name is listed first, followed by a comma and then the first and middle initial.

First names are used in the U.S. more frequently than elsewhere. People may call each other by their first names immediately after they have met. These general rules apply:
• Address people of your own approximate age and status by first name. This would apply to fellow students.
• If the other person is clearly older than you, you should use Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. and the last name. The older person will probably address you by your first name from the start. Ms., pronounced “Mizz,” is for unmarried and married females.
• If the other person has a title such as “Ambassador” or “Dean,” use that title and the last name. Any faculty member can be addressed as “Professor.” “Mister” or “Ms.” is equally acceptable. You may use “Dr.” if the professor has earned his or her doctorate.
• If someone asks you to address him or her by first name, you should feel free to do so.
The use of "nicknames" is fairly common among Americans. A nickname is not the person's real name, but a shortened version or a name assigned because of certain physical characteristics, behavior patterns, or other factor. International students often get nicknames if their own names seem long, unpronounceable, or just unusual to Americans. Being called by a nickname is normal and acceptable.

If you are in doubt about what to call a person, ask the person, "What should I call you?"

If a married woman takes her husband's last name, she may keep her former (maiden) name as a second middle name or even replace her middle name. She or her husband may also form a new last name by combining their former last names. The husband may also keep his name as is and the wife hyphenates hers.

Relationships in the Workplace

Cultural differences are reflected in the workplace as in other parts of society. But even with these differences, there are guidelines international students and scholars will want to follow if they want to be accepted by the Americans around them, and if they want to get promoted:

- Arrive at work punctually. If you must be late, or miss work, notify your supervisor as soon as you can.
- Ask questions about anything you do not understand. Make sure you understand what you are expected to do before you start to do it. Don't say you understand something you do not truly understand.
- If you encounter difficulties in carrying out an assigned task, tell your supervisor immediately.
- Carefully follow any safety and health rules that pertain to your workplace.
- Be neat and clean.
- When appropriate, offer to help other employees with their tasks.
- Avoid treating your supervisor with what Americans would consider excessive deference or respect. Notice how other employees at your level address the supervisor and how they treat him or her, and try to follow their example.
- Be friendly and sociable with fellow employees. Watch how they interact with each other. If you have opportunities to participate in outside-of-work social activities with co-workers, try to do so.
- Treat subordinates, including secretaries, with respect.
- Treat females with respect.
- Ask your supervisor how you can improve from time to time.
- Show a “positive attitude.” That is, avoid complaining and gossiping, and be cheerful and constructive in your dealings with people.
- Consistently practice and improve your English.

Sometimes workers encounter problems associated with their jobs. For example, they might believe they are being treated unfairly or unreasonably, or that another employee’s behavior is making it difficult for them to carry out their responsibilities. When this happens, the general expectation is that the worker will first speak directly with the person with whom he or she has the problem. The next step is to talk to the supervisor, and then, if there is still no resolution, with the supervisor's supervisor, and so on.

Sexual and Racial Discrimination

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to the principle that its environment will provide equal opportunities for all students and staff without regard to national origin, age, gender, race, color, disability, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or veteran status. All such discrimination is unlawful and inappropriate, and will not be tolerated.

UTA is also committed to an academic environment that is free of sexual harassment. UTA workers seeking outside help for resolving workplace problems related to sexual harassment or racial discrimination can turn to the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office. University policies on discrimination can be viewed at http://www.uta.edu/eoaa/.

You may be a victim of sexual harassment if:
1. Unwelcome sexual advances and/or comments interfere with your work or study.
2. Acceptance or rejection of sex affects your status as a student or employee.
3. Submission to sexual advances is a condition of your employment or education.
4. Sexual harassment may involve sexually degrading comments, insults and gestures, or blackmail and assault.

If you feel that you are a victim of any of these types of discrimination, immediately contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs (710 S. Davis Street, 103 Office and Classroom Building, tel. 817-272-2106) where a trained professional will answer questions, review your situation, and if you choose, assist you in filing a complaint and conduct a full investigation as confidentially as reasonably possible.

EO/AA does not take sides in an investigation. It is a neutral party that will investigate both sides of issues
related to specific charges. International students and scholars can also feel free to talk with an international student advisor for suggestions and assistance with workplace problems.

Ritual Greetings

- When two people are first introduced, the dialogue goes, "How are you?" "Fine, thank you. How are you?" "Fine, thanks. Nice to meet you."
- After the first meeting, there are two kinds of greetings. The more formal is "Good morning," "Good afternoon," etc. The less formal is simply "Hello" or just "Hi." Any of these may be followed by "How are you?"
- The American ritual parting remarks, "See you later" or "Stay in touch," means "goodbye," and does not mean that the person has a specific intention to see you later.

Social Gatherings

You will probably have opportunities to visit an American home for dinner or parties. The invitation may come about through The Link: International Friendship Program (see Chapter 4, page 61), through someone you have met in a class, or elsewhere. The following paragraphs give a general idea of the behavior that is appropriate in formal and informal social gatherings. Americans usually want their guests to "feel at home," which to them means to feel relaxed.

Americans do not generally regard social gatherings as opportunities for hosts to display their wealth, generosity, or good breeding.

- **Formal social gatherings:**
  - A written invitation will include the date, time, place, and a description of the occasion.
  - If it says, "R.S.V.P.,” you should phone or write as requested to say whether you plan to be present. If it says, "regrets only," reply only if you do not plan to be present. When replying to an invitation, you should never say that you accept an invitation unless you truly plan to attend.
  - Tell the host or hostess about any dietary restrictions you have.
  - If you are unsure how to dress you can simply ask: "What should I wear?"
  - Arrive on time for a meal or a cocktail party.
  - After the party a telephone call or a personal comment expressing appreciation for an invitation is appropriate.
  - At a cocktail party, alcohol is usually served. If you do not drink alcohol, it is perfectly appropriate for you to ask the host or hostess which drink contains no alcohol.
  - Many dinners are served buffet-style, where the food is put on one table and the guests serve themselves and eat while standing.

- **Informal parties are likely to be quite casual.**
  - Invitations are often given over the phone or in person.
  - Guests might bring some portion of the meal after asking the host what would be appropriate to bring.
  - "Potlucks" (meals where every guest brings a dish to share) are common for larger groups. Often people bring special dishes they like to cook. You may be asked to indicate in advance what type of food you plan on bringing.
  - Feel free to ask for anything that would make you more comfortable.
  - Guests may offer to help clean up afterwards.

- **Student parties tend to have gatherings with music and beer.**
  - They are often held on porches or in backyards during the summer.
  - Guests come and go whenever they want.

Keeping Appointments and Dates

It is very impolite and extremely inconsiderate to fail to keep an appointment or "date" without giving prior notice to the other person. It is acceptable to decline an invitation by giving a vague excuse or avoiding commitment. If you do not want to accept an invitation, you should decline the initial invitation or request. You should not accept and then just not appear at the appointed time.

Sometimes after an appointment has been agreed upon, a conflict of schedule arises. In such circumstances, notice should be given as soon as possible and you should call to apologize.

Gifts

In different societies there are different customs concerning the giving of gifts. Here are some general ideas about gift-giving customs in the U.S. Knowing them can help avoid awkward situations.

- **To whom are gifts given?** Gifts are given to relatives and close friends. Gifts are not usually given to teachers or others who hold an official position. The offering of gifts in these situations is sometimes
interpreted as an improper effort to gain favorable treatment from that person.

- When are gifts given? Christmas is the only national gift-giving day, when most Americans give gifts. Otherwise, gifts are given on occasions that are special to the recipient—birthdays, graduation from high school or college, weddings, and child-births. If you have visited several times for dinner, you may wish to bring a small token of appreciation for the hostess. Always bring a small gift when you are invited as a houseguest for a visit lasting a day or more.

- Cards are given to acquaintances who are not close friends. This is especially true at Christmas. It is common at Christmastime for people to send cards to their acquaintances and colleagues.

- What gifts are appropriate? An effort is made to select a gift that the giver knows or supposes is one the recipient needs, wants, or would enjoy. The amount spent on the gift is something the giver can afford. Expensive gifts are not expected.

- How are gifts acknowledged? If a gift is opened in the presence of the giver, a verbal expression of thanks is appropriate. If a gift is opened in the absence of a giver, a thank-you note should be sent. The note should make specific mention of the particular gift that has been sent.

### Tipping

Tips, or service charges, are not added to the bill in U.S. restaurants unless you are dining with a large group. Nevertheless, tips are often expected and needed by employees. It is customary to tip the waiter or waitress in a restaurant 15 or 20 per cent of the amount of the check, if the service is satisfactory. Tips are not expected in cafeterias or “fast food” establishments. You should also tip bellhops and taxi drivers if they assist with your luggage.

### Body Noises

Body noises are usually frowned upon in the United States. Belching, for example, is considered rude. Hacking, spitting, farting, etc. is also not appropriate in public places. Blowing your nose is certainly acceptable, but should be done as quietly and discreetly as possible.

### Time Schedules

#### Individuals and Families

In general, you can telephone individuals or families between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. without awakening them. Americans eat breakfast shortly after arising, a small meal or sandwich called "lunch" at or near noon, and a large meal called "dinner" or "supper" sometime between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. The meal schedule may vary on Sundays, when all meals may be taken later and the large meal may be in the afternoon rather than the evening.

#### Business Hours

University business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Most businesses open at 9:00 a.m. Closing hours vary. Many businesses close at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. Businesses in shopping centers are usually open until 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Most businesses are open on Saturday, with varying hours. Some are open on Sunday afternoon or evenings. Many grocery stores and gasoline stations are open 24 hours a day.

With such a variety of operating hours, it is always a good idea to call a business to ask its hours of operation.

#### Daylight Savings Time

In order to have daylight further into the evening in spring and summer, the United States uses "daylight savings time" between the first Sunday in April and the last Sunday in October. Newspapers and television will remind people to set their clocks forward one hour before going to bed on the first Saturday night in April, and to set their clocks back one hour before retiring on the last Saturday night in October.

### Relationships with Americans

#### Meeting and Getting Acquainted with Americans

It is normal to have difficulty establishing relationships with the local people in the country you are visiting. The following paragraphs offer some explanations of the difficulties and suggestions for overcoming them.

Assumptions and values about relationships differ markedly from culture to culture, so misunderstandings can easily arise. A particular area in which assumptions and values differ between cultures is that of friendship. Friendships among Americans may appear to be shorter and less intense than friendships among people from many other cultures. Because Americans are taught to be self-reliant and live in a very mobile society, they tend to avoid deep involvement with other people. Americans tend to "compartmentalize" their friendships, having
their “friends at work,” “friends at school,” a “tennis friend,” and so on. Americans often seem very friendly, even when you first meet them. This friendliness does not usually mean that the American is looking for a deeper relationship.

The result of these attitudes and behaviors is sometimes viewed by international visitors as an “inability to be friends.” Others see it as a normal way to retain personal happiness in a mobile, ever-changing society.

Stereotypes can also cause problems. Stereotypes are based on limited and incomplete experience and information, but they shape people’s thoughts and expectations nonetheless. Americans have many stereotypes about international students in general (they are very hard working, intelligent, and rich; they only socialize among themselves; they do not speak English well, etc). International students have their own stereotypes of Americans (they are generous, but also arrogant, rude, and outspoken).

There are two incorrect stereotypes that often afflict male-female relationships involving U.S. and international students. The first is the idea, held by some foreign males that American females are invariably willing to have sex. The second common stereotype, held by some American females, is that male international students have no interest in American females other than having sex with them. The existence of these and other stereotypes can give rise to considerable misunderstanding and can block the development of a mutually satisfactory relationship between particular individuals. Stereotypes are probably inevitable, given the way the human mind seeks to categorize and classify information, so it is not realistic to suppose people can “forget their stereotypes.” But they can be aware of their stereotypes and try to find exceptions to them.

The Situation in Arlington

- Most UTA undergraduate students come from the Dallas/Fort Worth urban area.
  - Most have had little experience with international students. They may even be a bit afraid of international students.
  - They do not want to reveal their ignorance of other countries and cultures.
  - They imagine that language problems make communication with international students almost impossible and do not know how to initiate conversations or relationships with people who are very different from themselves.
  - They may see no reason why they should be interested in learning about other countries and cultures.
- Graduate students and faculty members may have more cosmopolitan backgrounds, but their commitments to study and research may severely restrict the amount of time they are willing to devote to social activities or even conversation.
- What about the international students?
  - International students are often rather fearful of encountering U.S. students or other Americans.
  - They fear that language barriers will prevent them from understanding or being understood.
  - They do not know what to talk about with the natives.
  - They don’t know how to establish close relationships in the US culture.
  - Often the international students feel angry towards the native students because they ask them the same questions again and again: “Where are you from?” “How long have you been here?” And, “Do you like it here?”
  - International students also have heavy demands on their time, especially during their first semester, when there are so many new things to learn.

Suggestions for Starting Friendships

What can international students do in these circumstances?
- Take the initiative in meeting U.S. students.
- First, large-scale activities such as nationality group social or educational programs serve to acquaint large numbers of local people with certain aspects of other cultures.
- Second, smaller scale activities such as picnics, parties, or athletic activities can include U.S. students and give them an opportunity to have closer involvement with international students. International students can invite native students they know to parties, sports events, and so on.
- Third, on the level of individuals, international students can show initiative by starting conversations or joining activities with U.S. students. They can join student organizations that are based on common interests or they can volunteer to help in any of the UTA or Arlington organizations that rely on volunteer assistance from community members.

A group of experienced international students from another university talking about making friends with Americans offered these suggestions:
- Be patient with the Americans’ ignorance of your country and their stereotypes about you.
- Seek out Americans who are at leisure -- eating in a cafeteria or sitting in a lounge. Do
not try to start conversations with people who are obviously busy.

- Commit yourself to spending time away from your compatriots and with Americans.
- Be persistent. Persevere through the disappointments with superficial interactions.
- Learn what Americans talk about in different situations. And learn what they do not talk about.
- Observe their focus on themselves, rather than on their families.
- Have a list of topics you are ready to discuss. Examples: the insides of your house; secondary school; how Sundays are spent; differences in classroom behavior; slang terms; roles of various family members; wedding customs; and gestures.

The fact is that U.S. students are at home here and there is no particular reason for them to adjust their behavior to accommodate international students. International students, by contrast, are the minority and the ones who have an interest in helping to broaden the horizons of the domestic students. Thus international students may need to take the initiative.

However, international students should not avoid each other or stop having activities that are for international students only. Such activities are very necessary to any group of foreigners anywhere, if they want to maintain their ties to their own countries. It is simply to say that, by trying to be patient with the U.S. students and by taking the initiative in meeting them, international students can make their own stays in the U.S. more beneficial for themselves and for the natives. With initiative, patience, and persistence, international students can establish rewarding relationships with people from the U.S.

Gays/Lesbians/Bisexuals

Gay men and lesbian women are persons who are sexually attracted to people of the same sex. These men and women are sometimes referred to as homosexuals. Persons who are sexually attracted to both sexes are called bisexuals. There are many organizations and services that specifically address the needs of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Listed here are some resources at UTA and in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. These individuals and organizations can provide information on special events and give referrals to health, counseling, legal services, special-interest clubs and organizations. It is not necessary for a caller to reveal his/her identity when contacting any of the following resources. UTA: Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association (GLBA); FORT WORTH: Tarrant County Lesbian/Gay Alliance, (817) 877-5544; Health Education Learning Project, (817) 332-7722; DALLAS: Gay & Lesbian Community Center, (214) 521-5124; Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance (DGLA), (214) 528-4233.

Romantic Relationships

General Comments

Generally, in the United States, young, unmarried people associate with members of the opposite sex more freely and casually than they do in many other countries. The relationship between two people of opposite sexes might be a casual acquaintance, a brother-sister type of relationship, an acquaintanceship with romantic overtones, or a passionate involvement. In the U.S., there is a sizable homosexual (or "gay") population, so same-sex couples, although not common, are becoming more visible in today's society.

It is normal to be unsure about how to meet another person who is interested in romance, how to find out what the person thinks or feels, what kind of relationship the other person is looking for, and what kind of behavior the other person expects in particular situations.

Starting Romantic Relationships

The social rules governing romantic relationships in the United States are loose and unclear. Going somewhere together to do something is traditionally called a "date". Dates can be initiated by either person and do not necessarily lead to a romantic relationship with the other.

Relationships usually begin through mutual attraction, often communicated by "flirting." There are few rules about dating. Arrangements for transportation are generally based on convenience. The matter of who pays for the activity should be clarified. Traditionally the male would pay for the entertainment, but nowadays each person might pay his/her own way. If the other person wants to pay, you might plan another evening to reciprocate.

After a few enjoyable evenings or outings together, continuing the relationship is easy and may be effortless. If you get the idea the other person is not interested in continuing the relationship, simply withdraw. It should be emphasized that if you and the other person agree to a date or invite one another into each other's home this is not a commitment to any sexual involvement.
Sexual Involvement

The question of sexual involvement is problematic in any society. In the US there is a wide range of attitudes and practices. The American media tend to convey the inaccurate idea that all Americans are readily available for sexual activity. Some may be interested in sexual activity, but many are not.

Americans generally follow their personal values, their personal feelings, and their thoughts about other people's reactions when considering whether to become intimate with another person. The situation is entirely the personal and private business of the people involved in the relationship. Most people who share a bed with someone do so because they genuinely like the other person and they have come to regard sexual activity as a natural way of showing their affection for each other.

Some people have negative opinions about individuals who engage in sexual activity before marriage. Thus, people's sexual involvement is not usually a matter of widespread knowledge. Somewhat of an exception to this is the case of two unmarried people who are living together. Such arrangements are not uncommon. They almost always involve couples who are committed to a continuing relationship with each other, and their relationship is often known to many people.

Concerning the relationship between dating and sexual activity, the following ought to be kept in mind:

- When an American woman accepts a date or, after accepting it, indicates additional interest in a man, she is not necessarily expressing a commitment to sexual involvement with him.
- When an American man asks a woman for a date or responds to her indications of interest in him, he is not necessarily expecting any sexual involvement.
- A date implies no commitments of any kind other than the basic one of the individuals' meeting at the prearranged time and place.

If a sexual relationship develops, it is important to take steps to prevent disease and unwanted pregnancy. Birth control information and contraceptives are available at Student Health Services. Furthermore, the possibility of contracting the AIDS virus is a growing concern. The number of people affected by this disease is increasing yearly and warnings from medical institutions are frequent. The primary recommendations are to choose partners carefully and use condoms during sex. For more information, consult UTA Student Health Services and other medical facilities for free literature on the subject.

Rape and abuse have received increasing attention in the United States in the last several years. It should be clear that when someone says they are not interested in sexual involvement that you respect those wishes. If one clearly says "no" verbally, but implies otherwise with their body language, it is probably best to believe what you hear and not become involved sexually with that person. It is NOT appropriate for you to become sexually involved with someone under the age of 18. You can be found guilty of "statutory rape" if you are involved in such a relationship.

American Society's General View of Children

The general objective of child-rearing for most American parents is to prepare their children to be independent, self-reliant individuals who will be able to manage their own lives by the time they reach 18, the age at which children are legally "on their own." Training for independence starts very early. Infants and young children are given choices to make, asked to express their opinions, and encouraged to do things for themselves. Parents will praise and encourage their children: "There, you see? You can do it!"

The problems of cross-cultural child rearing are many and vexing. Children have their own adjustments to a new language and culture, and parents need to keep that in mind so they can be as helpful as possible.

What Do Parents Want for their Children?

To give their children the best possible chance to have a good life, many parents will invest considerable time and money into a child's improvement and instruction. This includes such things as dental care, medical care, pre-school, lessons, classes, and practices for learning to draw, play a sport, dance, sing, or play a musical instrument.

Parents want their children to be "happy and healthy." At a minimum this means they want their children to be free of significant health problems (physical and emotional), well educated, able to find employment suited to their interests and talents, and reasonably prosperous. Parents are concerned for their children's safety and will try to protect them from injury by, for example, watching them closely when they are on a playground, and by using seatbelts as required by law when in a car.

While they are concerned with their children's well-being, American parents have their own personal interest in having a meaningful and productive life. In many cases, that means both parents will be employed, and children will be left during working hours in some form of "childcare" -- perhaps with a babysitter, or in a nursery school.

Where Do Parents Take their Children?
Getting Along with Americans

- Sports events, social events, and performances are acceptable places to take children.
- The exceptions are to expensive restaurants and live theater performances. If they do take them to such places, they will leave if the child becomes noisy.
- Invitation to another person’s home does not normally include children unless it explicitly states that children are invited. If you have doubts about whether your children are invited, ask in advance.
- Americans generally have the idea that parents need some time away from the children. So parents often arrange for someone to "babysit" for the children so they themselves can go out.

Noise and Physical Freedom

- Some amount of noise on the part of children in public places is tolerated.
- But children should not be touching or damaging anyone’s property or unduly disturbing other people.
- Children can be more noisy and active in a park than on a downtown sidewalk, and more noisy and active on a sidewalk than in their apartment, where the noise they make might disturb neighbors.

Male versus Female Children

- There is no open, general preference for male children.
- If there is a general preference, it is for "one of each," a child of each sex.
- Educated Americans usually try to avoid conveying the idea to their children that males are naturally more dominant, and females more submissive, and that certain social roles are only for males while others are only for females.
- Visitors from abroad will notice considerable debate and comment on the status of women in American society.

What Forms of Punishment Are Acceptable?

- Some parents try to emphasize rewarding ("reinforcing") good behavior, rather than punishing bad behavior. Depriving a misbehaving child of something the child wants is acceptable.
- Physical punishment is acceptable, but only within certain limits. "Spanking" a child by using an open hand on the buttocks is the conventional way of inflicting physical punishment. Punishment that leaves a mark or causes a wound or injury, however, is not only unacceptable, but is also illegal. Parents who harm their children, even though the purpose is to discipline them, can be arrested for child abuse.
- A parent or guardian who abuses a child or does not provide adequate care or supervision can be reported to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Neglecting a child's basic hygiene or feeding can also be reported by neighbors or teachers as an offense called "denial of critical care." Inadequate supervision (such as leaving a child alone for long periods of time) that might result in injury or damage to property can also be investigated. Financial responsibility for any damages caused by a child fall on the parent or guardian.
- Teach your children to stay away from streets and parking lots when playing, to respect other people's property, and to obey laws.
- Teach children not to talk to strangers or to get in cars with people they do not know, since this is how many children are abducted.

How Children Are Expected to Treat Adults and Other Children

- American parents try to teach their children to be polite to their elders (for example, by not interrupting them, not making too much noise in their presence, and refraining from negative or critical comments), but the children are not expected to defer to adults simply because the adults are older.
- Older children are expected to treat younger children with consideration and perhaps even helpfulness, and are expected not to injure them, force them to do things they do not wish to do, or otherwise "bully" them.
- Male children are expected to treat female children just as they treat other males, since there is no assumption that male children are superior.

The Role of Adults Who Are Not a Child’s Parents

- A child's behavior is considered to be the business of the parents alone, or of the babysitter or other person left in charge of the child while the parents are away.
- Two exceptions: An unrelated adult might intervene when a child is doing something that seems dangerous (for example, playing with a sharp object, or getting to a place where a fall might result), and when one child is physically mistreating another. Punishing is left to the parents.
- It is generally not a good idea to become too friendly and excessively touch a child whose parents you do not know. If you are offering assistance to a lost child, it would be wisest to contact the customer service department of the store you are in or call the police from a public telephone so as to avoid the appearance that you are doing anything inappropriate with the child. Accusations of physical or sexual abuse against children are taken seriously and it is best to avoid even the appearance that an opportunity existed for such an encounter.
Chapter 4

Education and Student Life at UTA
Keys to Academic Success

Listed below are some suggestions that you should keep in mind as you begin your studies. You will learn more of the informal rules for academic success as you undertake courses and have the opportunity to talk with experienced students in your field of study. The more you discuss such topics with experienced students, the sooner you will be able to develop a helpful understanding of the way your academic department functions.

Understand the Student’s Goal

In the American educational system, the best student is the one with the highest grade point average. Getting the highest possible GPA means getting the highest possible grade in each class. Academic success in the American system requires consistent, disciplined studying for all assignments, examinations, and courses, as well as participation in class discussions.

Evaluate Your Expectations

Keep in mind that a period of adjustment to a new educational system is necessary before you will be able to perform to the best of your ability. International students sometimes earn lower grades than they expect during their first semester in this country. Then, as they become accustomed to the system and their English improves, their grades improve.

Select Your Courses Wisely

Especially during your first semester, do not take more courses than necessary. Make sure you have a combination of more demanding and less demanding courses. When arranging your course schedule, consult not only with your academic advisor, but also with experienced students. You may be tempted to take more courses than necessary in order to try to earn your degree faster. The result of taking too many courses could be discouragement, poor academic performance, and a subsequent failure in competition for financial assistance. You should be familiar with the “pass-fail” grade option and the procedures for dropping and adding courses (see UTA Catalog). If your English reading abilities need to be improved, it may be a good idea to put off classes which require a lot of reading (history, literature, etc.) until your second semester if possible.

Work Hard from the Beginning

It is generally not possible in the American system of higher education to wait until the end of the semester to study. If you do not begin studying on the first day of classes, you are likely to get behind and experience academic difficulty as grades are based on a series of tests, papers, presentations, and projects instead of one final exam.

Know How to Study

The study habits that were appropriate for the educational system in your country may not be appropriate here. You may have to learn to approach your studies in a different way while you are in the U.S.

With Your Professors

Professors here expect students to ask questions in class or immediately following class. They expect students to see them in their offices when the students are having problems in class. If you are not doing well in a class and you do not see the professor to discuss the situation, the professor is likely to assume that you are not really interested in his or her class.

Ask Questions

Any time you feel unsure of what is expected of you in a class, or of some aspect of the material being presented, ask the teacher and some of your fellow students about it. If you do not ask, it will be assumed that you understand everything or that you are not interested.

Understand the Assumptions Underlying the Educational System

In the U.S. educational system you will find that education is viewed as an effort to acquire more information about and a greater understanding of things that are not necessarily known or completely understood by anyone. You may find that being able to memorize material is less important than being able to synthesize (that is, bring together and mix in a new way) material from many sources, developing your own ideas and viewpoints. U.S. faculty members tend to agree that learning how to approach studies independently and to develop one’s own approaches and ideas is the most difficult task facing new international students, especially at the graduate level.
Understanding the Academic System

Goals of the Academic System

Broad Education

The American academic system, as a whole, is intended to provide a broad education for as many people as possible. There is no screening examination that directs a student at an early age into an academic or non-academic area. A high proportion of the population completes secondary school, which is not as challenging as it is in countries where access to education is more limited. A significant proportion of the population attempts some kind of post-secondary education at the undergraduate level. At a large, public university such as UTA, only about 40% of the people who enter as freshmen eventually graduate.

Specialization

The American educational system also produces specialists, people who have studied a limited range of topics in depth. Specialization comes later in the U.S. system than it does in most others. It is not until the third ("junior") year of undergraduate work that students concentrate on their "major" field. There is further specialization in graduate work, especially as students undertake research for a thesis or dissertation.

Evaluation

It is considered important here to evaluate the work that students do in each class. Therefore, there is a grading system which is used to rank and compare students' academic work. A student's grades receive considerable attention in competition for scholarships and fellowships, for admission to universities and graduate schools, and for jobs.

Conflicts of Goals

There are conflicts among these goals. For example, there is pressure for earlier and greater specialization as opposed to a broader "humanistic" or "liberal arts" education. The grading system is considered by some people to be incompatible with the development of true appreciation of learning. As a result of the existence of these conflicts, there is constant change in the rules, procedures, and practices of the academic system.

Organization of the Academic System

The Semester System

The academic year at UTA is composed of two semesters of approximately 16 weeks in length. In addition, there are three summer sessions, including two five-week sessions and one eleven-week session. While many U.S. universities use the semester system, some divide the academic year into shorter periods, either "quarters" or "trimesters."

Academic Advising

Your academic advisor is a faculty or staff member who helps you plan your program of studies in a way that will best enable you to fulfill your graduation requirements and at the same time tailor your studies to your interests.

Special Notes for Graduate Students (including conditions for admission)

Graduate students work very closely with an academic advisor. He or she helps the student assess interests and choose courses which will develop them. A graduate student is likely to spend many hours in the office or laboratory with his/her advisor. You will notice that interactions between students and their advisors are less formal than they are in many other countries.

Graduate students who are admitted on probation with the stipulation that they must make "B" or better in the first 9 hours should understand that "B" or better is not the same as a "B" average. All the grades in the first 9 hours must be "A" or "B," not "C" or lower.

A graduate student must maintain at least a 3.0 (B) grade point average (GPA) or s/he will be placed on probation. If this happens the GPA must be raised to a 3.0 in the next semester or the student will not be allowed to enroll the following semester.
Special Notes for Undergraduate Students

Students are required to be advised every semester that they are enrolled at UTA. Advisors are available in the academic departments, as well as in the University Advising Center in Davis Hall (241 Davis Hall, tel. 817-272-3140). Consultation with advisors can prevent academic difficulties that could result in situations such as those listed below.

Academic Probation and Dismissal (for Undergraduate Students)

A student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) at UTA to remain academically eligible to register for the subsequent semester or summer session. The minimum average required varies with the total number of college credit hours attempted at UTA and is shown in the Table of Academic Standards below.

Students on academic probation may not take more than 14 semester hours without permission, and international students may not work on campus while on academic probation. Students on academic probation also cannot hold office in any club or organization, represent UTA at any official or social event, or make any University trip without the permission of the appropriate dean or the University Advising Center.

The cumulative University grade point average is calculated on the basis of all work undertaken at UTA, including credit by examination, correspondence and extension, for which a letter grade is given. (The symbols X, W, P and Z are not considered in calculating the grade point average.) Grades earned at any institution other than UTA are not used in calculating the University grade point average, but semester hours of transfer credit accepted by UTA are added to hours taken at the University to determine the total college hours undertaken.

Table of Academic Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total College Hours Undertaken</th>
<th>UTA GPA for Academic Probation</th>
<th>UTA GPA for Academic Dismissal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-29</td>
<td>less than 2.00</td>
<td>less than 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59</td>
<td>less than 2.00</td>
<td>less than 1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or more</td>
<td>less than 2.00</td>
<td>less than 2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information regarding other specific academic regulations, such as removal from academic probation, academic dismissal, second and subsequent academic dismissals, effect of grades in courses repeated, grade replacement policy and other topics may be found in the Undergraduate Catalog under “Academic Regulations.”

Registration for Classes

You must register for the particular set of courses you take each semester. Before you can register, you must meet with your academic advisor, reach agreement on a course schedule, and get your advisor’s approval for your plan.

Information about each semester’s registration schedule and procedures is available on the UTA website. Class registration is also done online through the MyMav system. Continuing students may register for Spring classes early in November, for Summer and for Fall in April.

Credits

The quantity of academic work for a student at the University is measured in “credits.” The number of credits a course is worth usually depends on the number of hours per week that it meets. A “three-credit course,” for example, will meet three hours weekly for one semester. It might meet for three fifty-minute sessions, as undergraduate classes normally do, or for one three-hour session, a fairly common pattern in graduate classes. At the end of the semester, the student who has achieved a passing grade in the course has earned three credits.

A student must earn a specified number of credits in order to graduate. This number varies for undergraduates and graduates. Information about graduation requirements can be found in the University's Graduate or Undergraduate Catalog which can be found online.

Course Numbering System

All courses are identified by two to four letters followed by four digits (numbers). The letters are abbreviations of the department in which the course is taught. Example: ME = Mechanical Engineering, INSY = Information Systems, CSE = Computer Science. The first number of the four digits denotes the level of the course. 1 = Freshman, 2 = Sophomore, 3 = Junior, 4 = Senior, 5 or 6 = Graduate. "Upper level" means a 3000
Methods of Grading

Each teacher at the University has his or her own philosophy and methods of grading. Some use fixed grading scales, whereby each assignment or examination that is graded can receive a fixed maximum of points (e.g., 10 or 100), and the number of points accumulated at the end of the semester is converted into a letter grade (e.g., 450-500 points is an A). An alternative to this method is that of "grading on the curve," whereby a formula is used to assure that there will be a certain number of A's, a certain number of B's, and so on. Under this system, the students in the class are competing with each other for high grades.

Grading System

The letter grade assigned as an evaluation of your work in a course has a numeric equivalent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points per Semester Credit Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superior | Above Average | Average | Below Average | Failing

When used to evaluate individual papers, exams, and presentation, grades A-D may also carry a plus (+) or minus (-) behind them to provide a finer definition of your work, but pluses and minuses do not show up on a final grade or transcript. There are some OTHER GRADES which may appear on your grade report, however. They include X, W, P, and Z. These grades are explained in the UTA Catalog. Some of these grades represent alternatives to the A, B, C, D, F grading system. In particular, you should know when it is possible for you to take a course on a pass-fail basis. Students use this optional grading system to protect their grade point averages. Here is the way that works: In a class that is being taken on a regular grading system, a student must earn an "A" or a "B" in order to have what are generally considered "good grades." If a student earns only a "C" or a "D" his grade is considered marginal and his grade point average suffers.

Grades of "P" (for "pass")

A student can get a "P" grade in a course where he or she does not expect to perform well and his or her grade average will not suffer as a result. (Failing grades in courses taken under these optional systems are taken into account in calculating grade averages.)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A student's grade-point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the number of credits earned into the number of grade points earned. The "cumulative GPA" is the GPA a student has earned for all studies undertaken. A sample undergraduate Grade Point Average is calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 hours 45 grade points
45 ÷ 16 = 2.81 GPA

An undergraduate student has a grade point deficiency when the total number of grade points earned is less than two times the total number of semester hours attempted.

A sample graduate Grade Point Average is calculated below.
Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements specify the number of credits you must earn, the minimum GPA you must achieve, and the distribution of credits you must have from among different departments or fields of study. In addition, it is necessary to apply for graduation when you near the time that you will be completing your graduation requirements. Since graduation requirements vary among various divisions of the University, you should consult the Graduate or Undergraduate Catalogs located on the UTA website.

Instructional Methods of the U.S. Academic System

Lectures

The most common method of instruction here is the classroom lecture. The lectures are supplemented by classroom discussion, by reading assignments in textbooks, library books, from the internet, and perhaps by periodic written assignments.

It is important for the student to contribute to the discussion in the classroom. Questioning or challenging the teacher is viewed as a healthy sign of interest, attention, and independent thinking. In many classes your grade will be determined in part by your contribution to class discussion.

When classes are too large to permit questions and discussion, or if for some other reason you do not have the opportunity to raise questions in class, you can visit privately with teachers during their office hours or make an appointment to see them. Teachers usually announce their office hours at the first meeting of the class. Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) may also be available to answer questions.

Seminars

The seminar is a small class and is typical at the graduate level. It is likely to be devoted entirely to discussion. Students are often required to prepare presentations for the seminar, based on their independent reading or research.

Laboratories

Many courses require work in a laboratory, where the theory learned in a classroom is applied to practical problems.

Term Papers

In many courses you will be required to write a term paper based on study or research you have done in the library or laboratory. Your teacher will usually assign a term paper in the early part of the course. You are expected to work on it during the semester, and submit it near the end. The grade you receive on the paper may constitute a significant portion of your grade for the course. It is wise to complete term papers in advance of their due date so there is time to ask another person to review your paper and suggest revisions.

There are books available in bookstores that explain the format of a term paper, including the use of footnotes and bibliographies. If you have questions, discuss them with the professor.

American university libraries tend to be larger than university libraries elsewhere, and students use them very regularly. It is essential to learn how to use this resource. Each library on campus has trained employees who will answer your questions about the library's organization, the location of specific materials, bibliographies, etc.

Examinations

You will have many examinations. Nearly every class has a final examination at the end of the semester. Most have a mid-term examination near the middle of the semester. There may be additional tests or quizzes given with greater frequency, perhaps even weekly. All these tests are designed to assure that students are doing the work that is assigned to them, and to measure how much they are learning.

You should not look at other students' papers during an examination. To cheat on an examination by getting answers from other students or from materials illicitly brought to the test can result in a zero grade for the examination, an "F" grade in the course, and disciplinary action.

There are two general types of tests:

- **Objective Examinations** - An objective examination tests the student's knowledge of particular facts. There are five different kinds of questions commonly found on objective examinations.

  You will want to learn to deal with each:

  - Multiple choice - student must choose from among a series of answers,
selecting the one (or more) that is most appropriate.
- True and false - student must read a statement and indicate whether it is true or false.
- Matching - student must match words, phrases or statements from two columns.
- Identification - student must identify/briefly explain the significance of a name, term, or phrase.
- Blanks - student must fill in blanks in a statement in order to make it complete and correct.
- **Subjective Examinations** - Sometimes called "essay questions," subjective exams require the student to write an essay in response to a question or statement. This kind of examination tests a student's ability to organize and relate his knowledge of a particular subject.

Some teachers require that you provide your own paper for examinations in the form of a “Blue Book” (generally for subjective exams) or a "scantron" (generally for objective exams). These are available for a small price from the UTA Bookstore, off-campus bookstores, and the Market in the University Center.

**Study Skills**

Remember that the U.S. educational system rewards students who can study a large amount of material concerning a broad range of subjects, who can synthesize material from many sources, and who can take examinations effectively. These activities require skills that can be learned in Counseling Services, 216 Davis Hall. This office offers academic seminars, a schedule of which is published at the beginning of each semester.

**Organizing Your Time**

You will have a large amount of work to do in a limited amount of time. In this situation, you need to use your time effectively.

- Make yourself a weekly study schedule.
- Allot specified periods of time each day for studying.
  - Undergraduates can assume they will need to spend at least two hours studying for each one hour they spend in class.
  - Graduate students can assume at least three hours.
- Look at the course syllabi and notice reading and writing assignments.

**Reading Effectively**

To draw the main points from a large number of readings, here are some things you can do:

- **Skim** - "Skimming" means looking over a reading quickly, paying attention to the table of contents, the titles of the chapters, the headings of the various sections of the chapter, the "topic sentences" that begin most paragraphs, and the summary paragraphs or sections.
- **Read** - Go over the material again, this time more carefully, looking for the main points, the conclusions, the contentions. Write notes about the main points, following the outline of the reading itself.
- **Questions** - Rather than passively accepting what the writer has written, ask yourself questions. “Why is the writer saying this?” “What is the evidence for that?” “Does that agree with what this same writer said earlier, or with what another writer on the same subject said?”
- **Review** - Skim it again. Look at your notes again. Try to retain in your mind the main points.

If you find that you are reading very slowly, or that your vocabulary seems inadequate, one of the academic seminars offered through Counseling & Career Services may be of use to you. Tutoring sessions for specific undergraduate classes are also available through Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC), 132 Ransom Hall. TASC does have a cost, but is fairly reasonable.

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center (411 Central Library, (tel. 817.272.2601) is an excellent resource for when you are preparing papers. It provides free tutoring for any kind of writing.

**Deriving as Much as Possible from Classes**

Since attendance and participation in classes is such an important part of the academic system here, it is prudent to try to gain as much from your classes as you can. Here are some suggestions that will help:

- **Read in advance.** Do the reading before the class so you will understand the lecture better.
- **Take notes.** Write down the main points that the lecturer makes. Many lecturers will use phrases that will help you identify the points they think are important and that you should therefore note.
- **Review.** After class, go over your notes. Fill in things you left out. Mark things you still have questions about. Before class, spend 10-15 minutes reviewing your notes from the previous class.
- **Get help if you need it.** Talk to the teacher or the graduate teaching assistant. Try to find another student in the class who seems to understand better and who is willing to answer your questions. Consider going...
to the office of the appropriate academic department to see if they can help you identify a tutor.

- *Try not to be discouraged.* International students, especially new ones, will inevitably have some difficulties understanding what is happening in at least some of their classes. Many things contribute to this: The teacher talks too fast and/or does not give well-organized presentations; fellow students’ comments are incomprehensible because they use so much slang; the entire setting seems strange and confusing. As time passes and you have more experience, these difficulties will diminish. Be patient.

**Coping with Quizzes and Examinations**

Here are some suggestions that can help you cope with the many quizzes and examinations you will have:

- **Keep up to date on your studies.**
- **Schedule time to review.** Before the test, go over your notes from lectures and readings. Try to anticipate what the instructor will ask on the test by recalling the points that were emphasized during lectures.
- **Rest before the test.** Most people perform better on tests if they have had adequate sleep the night before.
- **Read test instructions carefully.** Notice how much time you have, what choices you have among questions, and which questions count more than others. Notice whether you are allowed to use scratch paper, calculators, or dictionaries. Follow instructions carefully.
- **Schedule your time.** Decide how much time you can afford to spend on each question. Avoid spending all your time on only one or a few of the questions.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Some students get into trouble for what is called cheating, plagiarism, or collusion.

- **Cheating** - getting help that a student is not supposed to get on an assignment, quiz, or examination.
- **Plagiarism** - copying from a book or other publication and not acknowledging that the words used are someone else's, and not the student's.
- **Collusion** is collaborating with another person without proper authorization when preparing an assignment. Any form of academic dishonesty by a student can affect not only that person's grade, but everybody else in the class if the professor grades on a curve.

**What Is Considered "Cheating"?**

In general, students in the U.S. academic system are expected to do their own academic work without getting excessive assistance from other people. This does not mean that you cannot ask other students to help with classwork. Here are some things that are considered cheating:

- Copying other students' assignments
- Copying other students' answers to examination questions
- Providing answers to other students.
- Taking notes or books to an exam and secretly referring to them when answering examination questions.
- Buying, using, stealing, transporting, or soliciting confidential test information.

**Possible Consequences of Cheating**

If cheating is detected, there are negative consequences for the student. After discussion between yourself and the professor involved, the matter is usually referred for further action. You are entitled to an administrative decision made by the Office of Judicial Affairs or a formal hearing. Decisions made can be appealed to UTA's President. Consequences might include:

- a failing grade for the assignment or examination on which the cheating took place;
- a failing grade for the course in which the cheating occurred;
- disciplinary probation
- expulsion from the University.

**Observance of Religious Holy Days**

If observance of a religious holy day necessitates that you will miss an examination, work assignment, or other project, you can be given the opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided you have properly notified your instructor in advance. To meet the "proper notification" requirements, notify each instructor in writing of classes scheduled on dates you will be absent due to observance of a religious holy day.

Notification must be made within the first 15 class days of the semester and either personally delivered, acknowledged, and dated by the instructor or sent certified mail, return receipt requested. A student may not be penalized for these excused absences, but the instructor may appropriately respond if you fail to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.
A "religious holy day" is defined for university purposes as a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. This simply validates that the religion is officially registered with the federal government.
Student Services

International Student Advisors
International Student and Scholar Services in the Office of International Education is located in the Swift Center, 1022 UTA Blvd.
Campus Post Office Box 19028
817-272-2355 (telephone)
817-272-5005 (fax)

The professional staff and support staff in the OIE are here to assist international students enrolled at UTA. The job of the Office of International Education staff is:

- To provide information about immigration regulations and University procedures
- To assist with miscellaneous problem-solving and counseling on personal, social, and financial matters
- To help sponsor activities with international themes
- To develop intercultural educational programs.

From time to time, OIE can also provide information about employment opportunities back in your home country and other matters that relate to international students.

International Admissions
Admissions matters are not handled through the Office of International Education. For undergraduate admissions, contact the Admissions Office in 110 Davis Hall (tel. 817-272-6287). For graduate admissions, contact the Graduate School in 333 Davis Hall (tel. 817-272-2688). These offices issue initial I-20's to bring a student into the country and if a student is absent for more than one long semester before re-enrolling. If a student is going directly from an undergraduate program at UTA to a graduate program at UTA, all normal admissions procedures and deadlines are followed, except that the I-20 is issued by the Office of International Education upon the request of the Graduate School. The admissions offices also evaluate academic transfer credit, whether done in the U.S. or abroad, to judge what credit can be transferred in and sends admissions materials to people who want to attend the University.

Financial Aid
Assistantships/Scholarships
Much of the financial aid available to graduate students is in the form of research or teaching assistantships through their academic departments. Application should be made through the Graduate Advisor as early as January or February for the next academic year. It is rare for undergraduates to have assistantships. However undergraduate students can compete for academic scholarships through the Office of Financial Aid. A student who is awarded a competitive academic scholarship of at least $1,000 per year is granted in-state tuition.

Part-Time Employment
F-1 and J-1 students may work part-time on campus provided they are in good standing and in status according to immigration regulations. While no special permit to work is needed, certain documents need to be completed before the student can begin working on campus. After an offer letter of employment is received, the student must submit the letter along with the passport, I-94, and Social Security card to the Payroll Office.

In order to apply for a Social Security number, the student should apply through the Office of International Education for a letter which will verify the offer of employment, as well as the eligibility to be employed. With this letter and passport, the application must be submitted in person to the Social Security Administration office. Directions are available in the office.

Enrollment Loans
Limited funds are available for the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms to students who are unable to pay their registration fees or make their first payment toward those fees. The funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis to students who are not on academic probation at the University and who have not received financial aid sufficient to pay tuition and course fees. The maximum loan amount will be the amount of the registration fees.
Installment Plan

Students who elect to do so may pay their tuition in installments through the semester. This plan requires payment of approximately 1/3 of tuition and fees at the time of registration by the initial payment deadline (usually several weeks before the beginning of the semester). Two remaining payments of 1/3 each are due in the beginning of October and November for the Fall semester and in March and April for the Spring semester. There are only two installments in the Summer term. There is a $10 charge for each installment, not to exceed $20. Although this is not actually a form of financial aid, it does allow the postponement of payment of registration fees if you do not have enough money immediately available at the beginning of the semester.

Other Campus Based Sources

Undergraduate students with more than 30 hours of credit and a strong academic record (i.e. better than a 3.0 GPA) are eligible to apply for scholarships. Availability varies sometimes by college, school or department. Although some departments have scholarships available within the department, you should always contact the Financial Aid Office for more scholarship information. Students on reciprocal exchange programs with UTA are also eligible for a scholarship through the International Education Fee fund. These scholarships are funded by a collection of one dollar from each student at registration. Contact the Office of International Education for details.

Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG)

The TPEG is a grant offered through the state of Texas for students who pay non-resident tuition rates and who are ineligible to apply for U.S. federal financial aid. In order to be eligible you must be registered and be making satisfactory scholarship progress. Applications are available through the Financial Aid Office only during the month of June and are due July 1.

Financial Transactions with the University

You may call or go in-person to talk with someone about your student account.

Davis Hall Bursar Services 130 Davis Hall, tel. 817-272-2172
Accounting and Business Services is where you pay your University bill or cash a check. Many offices on-campus do not collect money, but instead require you to pay at the Bursar’s Office to settle your bill.

Registrar

The Registrar (129 Davis Hall, tel. 817-272-3272) takes care of changes in registration, name and address changes, grade reports, and transcripts. When you get a social security number, go to the Registrar's Office so they can have your SSN on record. If you become a U.S. permanent resident or for some other reason qualify for in-state tuition, contact the Admissions Office (123 Davis Hall) to have your records changed so that you will be charged appropriately. Letters certifying enrollment of international students at UTA are prepared by the Office of International Education, not the Registrar.

University Libraries

The University Libraries consist of the Central Library and several branches. The Libraries house 1,700,000 books and subscribe to over 5000 current journals and other serials. For more check their website at http://library.uta.edu/. Questions about the University Libraries may be directed to the Central Library (tel. 817-272-3000). Students can borrow materials from the library with their student identification cards.

Community Service Clinic

The Community Service Clinic (School of Social Work, tel. 817-272-2165) is staffed by professionally trained faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work and by graduate Social Work students under the careful supervision of the graduate school faculty. Anyone, including non-students may make use of its facilities. Cost is based on one's ability to pay. The clinic can provide help with personal and interpersonal problems, including anxiety, depression, school stress, weight control, etc. They offer counseling, therapy, biofeedback, hypnosis, relaxation therapy, behavior modification and anger control as appropriate. If the Clinic is unable to help you, they will refer you to an appropriate agency.

Student Legal Services

The Judicial Affairs Office can give consultation and advice to enrolled students, but may not represent a student in legal or administrative proceedings or offer advice about any legal topic involving the University and the student. Students frequently see the attorney regarding landlord-tenant disputes, divorces, and contractual controversies.

To help avoid legal problems, read all agreements before you sign them and consult an attorney before
signing if you have any questions. Two important brochures, available from this office, are recommended: "Services Available and Useful Legal Information" and "Important Facts for Renting Off-Campus."

Career Services
This office (located at 216 Davis Hall, 817-272-3671) provides information, testing, and counseling for students who want help in identifying career interests. It also helps students in the "job search" — writing resumes and cover letters and improving their performance in interviews. Although many jobs that are advertised in job listings in this office may be restricted to U.S. citizens or permanent residents, some are open to those on student visas for use on practical training and some positions may even be advertised with companies in your home country.

Student Employment Services
Student Employment Services (Room 140, University Center, tel. 817-272-2895) helps students find part-time and cooperative education jobs while they are still students. In certain academic programs students can get practical experience through employment in their field of study. This "cooperative education" or curricular practical training must be officially arranged and approved through the OIE. Non-immigrant students can legally be employed under cooperative education programs.

Office of Information Technology (OIT)
In addition to maintaining university databases and computers for academic and research needs, OIT (also operates personal computer labs in the Business, Library, Life Science, and Nedderman buildings. Students may use these computers to write papers and for other purposes.

Extracurricular Activities
A typical U.S. campus has a large number of activities available for students who are seeking extracurricular involvement. This includes professional associations that are organized in various academic departments, intramural sports, hobby clubs, and political organizations.

University Offices
The Office of Student Governance and Organizations (Lower Level, University Center, tel. 817-272-2293) is comprised of Student Congress, the Constituency Councils, the Ambassador program, the UTA HOSTS! Peer Mentor program, and campus Student Organizations. Student Congress is the student governing body comprised of elected representatives from each of the University's Schools and Colleges. Its mission is to be the voice of the students. There are seven Constituency Councils, each representing a UTA School or College. The councils are responsible for programs, publications and policy within their respective college or school. The Constituent Councils are a part of Student Congress. The Ambassadors are the official hosts and hostesses for the University. UTA HOSTS! matches new students with experienced students by academic major to help them better succeed at the University.

The Student Activities Office (Lower Level, University Center, tel. 817-272-2963), in conjunction with EX-CEL, supports an array of social, educational, and cultural activities on the campus. This includes the Cheerleaders, Greek Organizations, and campus-wide leadership training. The Greek System offers students another chance to get involved in campus activities. It is composed of a variety of fraternities (for men) and sororities (for women) which act as social groups for interacting with others. Groups also participate in intramural sports activities and philanthropic/community service. Some fraternities and sororities offer students the option of living in the chapter house. This office also sponsors the Campus and Community Involvement Record (CCIR), an official listing of your extra-curricular involvement while at UTA. There is a $5 charge to initiate your CCIR and all activities will be documented before being listed. Copies of your CCIR can be sent to future employers, graduate school admissions offices, honorary societies considering you for membership, etc.

Activities for International Students
International Clubs
Many nationality groups on the campus have organizations. The Office of Student Governance and Organizations has current information about nationality clubs and how to get in touch with these clubs' advisors.

One club of general interest to both American and international students who are interested in intercultural understanding and appreciation is the International Student Organization (ISO). The ISO sponsors social, recreational, and educational activities. One of the main events carried out by this group is International Week in the Spring. International Week is a week-long celebration and sharing of the cultural diversity at UTA. The Office
Office of International Education Programs

The Office of International Education, in cooperation with other departments or organizations, offers a variety of programs throughout the year with an international focus. All events are open to international and domestic students, and sometimes involve faculty, staff, friends and community members. For more information about any of these programs, contact an International Education Advisor in the Office of International Education at 817-272-2355.

Global Grounds (International Coffee Hour)
Global Grounds is held every other Thursday in the Palo Duro Lounge and is a great way to meet and mingle with friends from around the world. Come sip Indian Chai, coffee, or your favorite tea and enjoy a variety of both local and imported light snacks. Those who attend are welcome to bring contemporary as well as traditional music from their home country.
http://www.uta.edu/oie/?page=programs&program=globalgrounds

The Link: International Friendship Program
Many Arlington area families who are interested in spending some time with students from other countries participate in The Link. International students who want to become acquainted with a Texas family, couple, or individual can complete a form at the Office of International Education and will be put in contact with a family. The program enables international students to see an important aspect of American life, one that they do not see if they confine themselves to academic pursuits. In some cases, it enables them to establish close relationships with Americans. Note that this is a friendship program, and does not include accommodations or other financial sponsorship from the American partner.
http://www.uta.edu/oie/?page=programs&program=the_link

International Education Week
International Education Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education. This week is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange, as well as a chance to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn and exchange experiences in the United States.
http://www.uta.edu/oie/?page=programs&program=international_education_week

International Peer Advisor Program (for new student orientations)
At the beginning of each semester, a team of 20-30 students is selected to be International Peer Advisors for the New International Student Orientations. Peer Advisors play a valuable role throughout orientation as they help with the logistics of orientation as well as conduct small group sessions and provide answers and advice to newly arrived international students. Peer Advisors must complete an application and attend a training session.
http://www.uta.edu/oie/?page=programs&program=peer_advisor

International Week
Each spring, UTA's International Student Organization coordinates a 6-day series of events called International Week. International students and members of nationality or cultural organizations participate in a wide range of activities including a Grand Opening Ceremony, Nationality Exhibits, an International Food Fair, Fashion Show, and Global Extravaganza (Talent Show).
http://www.uta.edu/oie/?page=programs&program=international_week

Employment Seminars
The Office of International Education Staff offer Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training seminars throughout the semester. Find out what OPT and CPT are, how to apply and have your documents reviewed.
Additional Sources of Information

The *International Student & Scholar Handbook* has been designed to introduce you to many of the basics of what you need to know about coming to study in this country. It cannot possibly include everything you need to know, however. For more information, refer as appropriate to the following resources.

**Campus Information Centers**

123 Davis Hall (tel. 817-272-2090)
Stocks campus publications, provides directions and information on campus events, and distributes temporary parking hang-tags for visitors.

**Campus Publications**

*Undergraduate Catalog* Academic and student service information relevant to undergraduate students. Available on-line

*Graduate Catalog* Academic and student service information relevant to graduate students. Available on-line
Chapter 5

Immigration Information
Summary of Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

The United States Constitution guarantees certain rights to the people (not just U.S. citizens and permanent residents) who are living in the country. In general, non-immigrants in the United States (such as international students and scholars) enjoy many of the same constitutional protections as U.S. citizens. At the same time, non-immigrants are subject to immigration laws that do not apply to citizens.

Your Legal Rights

International students and scholars enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, protection from unreasonable searches and seizures, and other protections included in the "Bill of Rights" of the U.S. Constitution.

Non-immigrants are protected against discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, color, and national origin. There are federal, states, municipal, and University rules protecting citizens and non-immigrants from most forms of discrimination. The University's Office of Affirmative Action is responsible for investigating and taking appropriate action in situations where UTA students or staff believes a UTA employee has treated them unfairly because of their race, religion, or national origin. The Office of Affirmative Action is also responsible for enforcing the University's rules against sexual harassment. There are also agencies responsible for handling complaints of discrimination at the state and federal levels.

Your Legal Responsibilities

Non-immigrants, permanent residents and citizens are required to obey national and state laws, which include the following:

- If you drive an automobile, you must have a valid driver's license, auto insurance, and obey the traffic laws.
- Pay for goods and services you receive. Shoplifting and writing fraudulent checks are criminal offenses.
- Avoid public drunkenness and "disorderly conduct." There are strict punishments for driving while under the influence of alcohol.
- Do not abuse your spouse or children, and adequately supervise all minors. What might be acceptable means of controlling or punishing a spouse or child in some countries could be illegal in Texas. Under Texas law, if police are summoned, you could be taken to jail for striking a spouse or child or otherwise abusing them. Inadequate supervision of children--for example, allowing them to be outside the house or apartment on their own without an adult for long periods of time -- may be considered child neglect, which also violates the law.
- Buying, selling and using illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, and heroin is a very serious crime and usually leads to imprisonment and, for non-immigrants, deportation.

Immigration-Related Responsibilities

Like all other countries of the world, the United States has laws and regulations governing non-immigrants who are temporarily within its boundaries. Beginning in 2003, all international students and scholars and their dependents are required to be registered in the web-based immigration service database, called SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). Any changes in the student record, for instance, name change, address change, change of major, extension of stay, change of school, etc, must be reported promptly in the SEVIS system. Details about the student's enrollment are also reported to SEVIS at the beginning of each semester and whenever there is a change in enrollment. Consular Officers, Border Patrol Officers, and Immigration Officers at airports all have access to information in the SEVIS system. In addition, law enforcement agencies, the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service are now able to share information with the immigration service. Your ability to stay in the US and your eligibility for certain benefits depends on the accuracy of the information about you in these shared databases. It is important, therefore, that you are aware of immigration requirements and that you inform the Office of International Education of any reportable changes promptly. Following is a list of your responsibilities as an international student or exchange visitor with respect to immigration law.

- Keep your passport valid at all times.
- If you are an F-1 or J-1 student, maintain full-time enrollment during the fall and spring semester (9 hours for graduate students, 12 hours for undergraduate students.) Enrollment in the summer session is not required unless you are beginning your program of study at UTA in the summer, intend to undertake curricular practical training during the summer, or have been offered a GRA or GTA for the summer.
- File the necessary applications for extension of stay BEFORE your present stay expires (the completion
date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019). Otherwise, you are considered out of status and must file for reinstatement.

- Do not accept any type of off-campus employment without official authorization.
- Do not travel outside the United States, even briefly, without the proper documents.
- If you are about to graduate or otherwise complete the activity for which you came to the United States and want to remain in the U.S. for further study or some other activity, apply BEFORE you complete your current activity for whatever authorization you need to remain here.
- If you move, within 10 days change your SEVIS US address in MyMav within 10 days which will inform the Office of International Education of your address change. We are required by immigration regulation to report the address change to immigration in 21 days.
- Fill out appropriate income tax forms and pay any income tax you owe.
- Give truthful answers on an immigration document or to questions asked by an immigration officer, or any other U.S. government agent.

### Enforcement of Immigration Laws

In 2003, the immigration service (INS) was reorganized and moved from the Department of Justice to the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS). There are three agencies in DHS which are responsible for immigration matters: US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE), and US Customs and Border Protection (USCBP). USCIS is responsible for applications for immigration benefits for persons within the US. USICE is responsible for investigation, detention, deportation and also the SEVIS database. USCBP is responsible for inspections at US ports of entry, including airports. The Exchange Visitor Program is under the Department of State, which also oversees the US Embassies and Consulates abroad. The Department of Homeland Security and Department of State headquarters are in Washington DC. For administrative purposes, however, USCIS has divided the US into a number of regions and districts. The following USCIS offices have jurisdiction over international students and scholars at UTA:

**DISTRICT OFFICE**

USCIS Dallas District Office  
8101 North Stemmons Freeway (I-35E)  
Dallas, TX 75247-4103

**REGIONAL OFFICES for mail-ins**

USCIS Texas Service Center  
P.O. Box 85148  
Mesquite, TX 75185-1488

USCIS Vermont Service Center  
75 Lower Welden St  
Saint Albans, VT 05479

While it is possible to visit the District Office in person, the Texas Service Center is strictly for mail-in applications. USCIS has a telephone information system that addresses its regulations and requirements. When you call 1-800-375-5283, you will get a recording telling you to make choices by pressing various numbers to get the information you need. It is also possible to speak with an officer during normal business hours. USCIS also maintains an informative website which contains information and downloadable forms, at http://uscis.gov/. Information about the Exchange Visitor Program or applying for visas through the US Consulates may be obtained from the Department of State website at http://travel.state.gov.

No person in the Office of International Education is employed by the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State (DOS), or USCIS. UTA has applied to DHS and DOS for permission to admit international students and exchange visitors. In exchange for authorization to do so, UTA and the Office of International Education have agreed to follow all reporting requirements and to provide information about immigration regulations to international students and scholars. Those individuals at UTA responsible for issuing immigration documents and maintaining records are called Designated School Officials (DSO) for the F-1 program and Responsible Officers (RO) for the J-1 program. The names and signatures of these individuals are on record at the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State. Only these individuals are allowed to sign immigration documents for students and scholars at UTA.

The SEVIS system has dramatically changed the volume and type of information about students and scholars that the Office of International Education is required to submit to the Immigration Service. Because the information is transmitted electronically in a web-based system, it is instantly available to the Immigration Service and other agencies. In addition, as part of their enforcement function, the Department of Homeland Security or other law enforcement agencies may contact the Office of International Education to inquire about an individual student’s or exchange visitor’s status, enrollment, or employment at UTA. Although the general responsibility of the Office of International Education to inform students and scholars about immigration regulations and to help them maintain their legal status has not changed, the SEVIS system has placed many more reporting requirements on the Office of International Education. Information required to be reported routinely about students
and exchange visitors are change of address, enrollment less than full time, failure to enroll, any violations of status, transfers, employment, date of graduation, and date of departure.

Students and exchange visitors should be aware that any application they make to USCIS or to a US Consulate will be subject to delays while the applicant goes through a “security clearance”. It will be especially difficult to apply for a visa in a country that is not your own home country.

Basic Travel Documents

You should make photocopies of your travel documents and keep the copies in a safe place. Having these copies is quite helpful if you should lose any of the originals. Copy the following: 1) passport pages with your picture and personal information; 2) passport page with the visa on it; 3) both sides of your Form I-94; and 4) your SEVIS I-20 if you are an F-1 student or your DS-2019 if you are an exchange visitor. If you have changes and updates requiring a new SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, do not throw away your old documents. For certain applications, the immigration service may require you to submit copies of all of your previous immigration documents.

Passport

Your passport is your government’s permit for you to leave and re-enter your country. Most passports contain an expiration date. In place of a passport, some students hold a Certificate of Identity, which is roughly equivalent to a passport.

Renewing Your Passport

Consult your home country’s Consulate or Embassy in the U.S. if you need to renew your passport. They can tell you what forms and fees, if any, are required. If required by your Embassy, you can request an enrollment verification letter from the OIE. Your passport must be valid at all times; you are out of status if you are in the U.S. with an expired passport. Most foreign embassies in the US maintain websites which provide information about extending your passport. Many are listed at http://www.embassy.org/. If your country’s embassy does not have a website, the Office of International Education can help you find the appropriate address.

Visa

The visa stamp placed in your passport by the U.S. Consular Officer abroad was needed to enter the United States. The visa shows the latest date on which you can apply to enter this country. It does not show how long you can stay here. It also indicates the kind of visa you have—usually F-1 or J-1. American visas are a computer-printed, adhesive-backed piece of paper that is placed on a page of the passport. Much of the information on the computer-printed visa is in code.

When you arrive at your port of entry, the U.S. Immigration Inspector examines your passport, your visa, and your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019), and determines whether you are admissible to the U.S. He will then stamp your passport, I-94 and immigration document with the date of entry, type of visa and length of stay. The officer will also enter this information in the SEVIS database. By doing this, your school will immediately know that you have entered the US.

Renewing Your Visa

It is necessary to renew your visa only if you plan to leave and re-enter the U.S. after your visa has expired.

If it is necessary for you to renew your visa in order to re-enter the U.S., you may do so by visiting the U.S. Consulate in the country to which you are traveling. It is not possible to renew an F-1 or a J-1 visa while you are within the borders of the U.S. There may be restrictions on obtaining visas in a country other than your home country. Check with the Office of International Education prior to making travel plans.

Form I-94, Departure Record

The I-94 shows that you have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. The physical I-94 is a small white card, usually stapled onto the U.S. visa page of your passport. It contains an eleven-digit identifying number (called your admission number), which the Immigration Service uses to keep track of your arrival to and departure from the U.S.

The I-94 is usually collected when you leave the U.S. You will receive a new I-94 card when you re-enter the U.S.
The I-94 you receive may be electronic. If you do not receive a physical I-94 card at the border, visit www.cbp.gov/i94 to retrieve and print your number.

Expiration
There may be a hand-written date in the upper right-hand corner of your I-94. You must either leave the U.S., apply for an extension, or apply for a change of status by that date. If "D/S" (duration of status) is noted, you will be considered in status as long as you attend school or pursue your exchange visitor program and your I-20 or DS-2019 has not expired.

Extending Your Stay
If your permission to stay in the U.S. is going to expire and you need additional time to complete your program, you may apply for an extension. You must apply for an extension before, ideally at least 30 days before, your stay expires. As explained below, procedures for extending your stay vary according to visa type. Consult the Office of International Education if you have questions. If you do not apply for the extension before the expiration date on your I-20 or DS-2019, you will be out of status and will have to apply for Reinstatement.

SEVIS I-20
The three-page SEVIS I-20 is issued by the school for the program and level of study the student is currently pursuing. Page three of the I-20 contains space for electronic recording of extensions, full course enrollment waivers, transfers and employment recommendations, as well as endorsements for travel. The SEVIS I-20 contains a bar code and a unique SEVIS ID number beginning N0000…. This number will remain the same for the student throughout his stay in the US. Dependents of students are issued their own SEVIS I-20 and their own unique SEVIS ID number.

SEVIS DS-2019
Exchange Visitors are issued a two-page form DS-2019 by the institution or agency sponsoring their program. The form contains information about the exchange visitor and his purpose in coming to the US, as well as the amount and source of funding. There is a place on the document for endorsements for travel and for transfer. The SEVIS DS-2019 contains a bar code and a unique SEVIS ID number beginning N0000…. This number will remain the same for the exchange visitor throughout his stay in the US. Dependents are issued their own DS-2019 and their own unique SEVIS ID number.

F-1 Student Status and Visa Regulations
There are several qualifications for obtaining an F-1 visa or F-1 status. First, you must be accepted for full-time study by a U.S. educational institution. The school sends you a SEVIS I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility) which you use to obtain an F-1 visa from a US Consulate or Embassy, or to apply to change to F-1 status within the U.S. Second, you must be fluent enough in English to study full-time (unless you are admitted to study the English language, or to study in a language you understand). Finally, you must show proof of financial ability to study full-time. Having shown this, USCIS believes you should not need to work for financial reasons during your first year in the United States.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) imposes severe penalties on non-immigrants who have "overstayed" their period of authorized stay or who are "unlawfully present" in the U.S. Penalties that might affect international students who are out of status and not reinstated include automatic cancellation of visa, bar from re-entry to the U.S. from 3 to 10 years, deportation without appeal and permanent bar from the U.S., depending on the severity of the violation and the length of unlawful presence in the U.S.

The period of unlawful presence begins on the date a USCIS officer or Immigration Judge determines an individual is out of status or on the expiration date on an I-94 card. The visa is automatically cancelled and the individual is barred from re-entry to the US for 3 years if he is unlawfully present from 6 to 12 months; or, if he is unlawfully present for 12 months or more, he is barred from re-entry for 10 years. In certain cases, the individual may be able to get back into status by applying for reinstatement. In most cases, however, the individual may only get back into status by leaving the US, obtaining a new visa in the home country and re-entering as a brand new student, providing he had been unlawfully present in the US for less than 6 months.

Regulations for Maintaining F-1 Status

Full-Time Study
With few exceptions, F-1 students must maintain full-time student status each fall and spring semester until their program is completed. Enrollment in the summer session is not required unless you are beginning your program of study at UTA in the summer, intend to undertake curricular practical training during the summer, or
have been offered a GRA or GTA for the summer. "Full-time study" for international students at the University of Texas at Arlington means the completion of a minimum of nine credit hours for graduate students and twelve credit hours for undergraduate students. Students may use only one online course per a semester for minimum enrollment requirements. Any deviations from this should be discussed with an advisor in the Office of International Education at the beginning of the semester.

If a student begins the semester enrolled full time and later wants to drop a course, he must seek permission of the Office of International Education before dropping the course through his department. Regulations allow exceptions to the full-time enrollment requirement for medical or specific academic reasons. A student may be enrolled less than full time for academic reasons only for one semester per degree level. Less than full time enrollment due to health reasons may be for more than one semester, but new medical documentation must be provided to the Office of International Education each semester in order for the waiver to continue. If a student drops a course or otherwise enrolls less than full time without prior permission of the Office of International Education, the student is considered out of status and must apply for reinstatement. While a reinstatement is pending, the student is not eligible to work or to apply for any other immigration benefit.

Duration of Status

F-1 students have permission to remain in the United States for what is known as "duration of status," noted on the I-20 ID and the Form I-94 and/or passport stamp as “D/S.” Duration of status is defined as the period during which the student is pursuing a full course of study in any educational program (e.g., bachelor's or master's degree, or doctoral program) and any period of authorized practical training after graduation, as well as sixty days following program completion or practical training.

F-1 Program Extension

An F-1 student is required to apply for an extension of stay if the period of time spent at one academic level is longer than the time indicated on the student's Form I-20. The student must apply for the extension BEFORE the ending date on the current I-20 form. If the student fails to apply for the extension within the 30 days prior to expiration, he/she will have to apply for reinstatement.

Change of Educational Level or Major

A student who changes to a different level of study will require a new I-20 and a change in completion date, even if the student is remaining at the same school. The student must show evidence that he is admitted to the new program and current financial support documents before he can be issued a new SEVIS I-20 for the new program.

A student who is admitted to a new major at the same degree level must request a new I-20 to reflect the change within 30 days of making the change. This is important, not only to fulfill immigration requirements of timely reporting in SEVIS, but also because practical training is only available for jobs related to your current field of study.

Travel Outside the United States

If you will travel outside the U.S. you should consult the Office of International Education first. Have your passport and I-20 with you when making inquiries about traveling outside the U.S. Please also note the following:

- Your passport must be valid six months beyond the date on which you plan to re-enter the U.S.
- Your visa must be valid for "multiple" entries into the U.S., and must be valid beyond the proposed re-entry date. Exceptions to this rule are for citizens of some countries for short visits to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands. For such trips you will need only your passport, your endorsed I-20, and a current Form I-94. In the case of trips to other countries, if the visa is valid for only one entry, or has expired, a new visa can be obtained from the US Consulate in the country you are visiting by presenting your current I-20, evidence of financial support and either your current I-20 and an official transcript. You should allow enough time to obtain a new visa. Personal interviews and security clearances may apply and can cause delays in the visa process. There is no guarantee that you will obtain a visa in the country you are visiting; you may be required to travel to your home country for the visa.
- All international students are advised to have their travel documents reviewed in the Office of International Education in order to be certain they have the documents needed to re-enter. The I-20 or DS-2019 must be endorsed by a DSO if you will re-enter the U.S. to continue your program of study.

Transfer of Schools

If a student is accepted by another school and has decided to transfer from UTA to the new school, the student must notify the Office of International Education of the name of the school, provide proof of his/her acceptance for admission, and the date he wishes to be released for transfer to the new school. The release date can be no earlier than the end of the current semester, and no later than 60 days after graduation or end of OPT.
The Office of International Education will check to see if the student is in status and eligible for transfer. If the transfer is possible, the Office of International Education will enter into SEVIS the name of the school to which the student will transfer and the date of release. The new school cannot issue an I-20 to the student until the release date. On the date of release, the old school loses control of the student record, and the student is not eligible to work on campus or attend class at the old school after the release date. When the new school issues the I-20 for the student, the old I-20 is deactivated, meaning all endorsements on the I-20 including CPT and OPT and travel signatures are also deactivated. Students who want to transfer to another school, therefore, must be very careful about the timing of the transfer.

Some schools require a student to submit a transfer clearance form signed by the Office of International Education as part of the admissions application. Other schools require a transfer notification form to be completed by the previous school after a student has been admitted. These forms usually request information about a student’s immigration status, eligibility for transfer, dates of attendance, date of the end of the semester, I-94 or SEVIS ID number, complete name of the school, and contact information for the Office of International Education. After a student is admitted, the new school will also need to know the release date in SEVIS. The Office of International Education will provide any information the new school requires in order to complete the transfer process.

Reinstatement

An F-1 student must apply for reinstatement if he/she failed to maintain full-time enrollment, failed to apply for an extension of stay on time, failed to complete the transfer process, or entered the U.S. but did not enroll in school. A student who works without valid work authorization or exceeds the limits of his work authorization is out of status but not eligible to apply for reinstatement. Reinstatement may be obtained by application or by travel.

The application for reinstatement requires a new SEVIS I-20 endorsed for reinstatement, financial support documents, the original I-94, Form I-539, a check or money order for $290, transcripts from every school attended in the US, and a detailed letter to USCIS explaining the circumstances which caused the student to be out of status. Being out of status is considered a violation of immigration law. While the reinstatement is pending, the student is not eligible to work or transfer or apply for any immigration benefit. The USCIS usually approves the reinstatement, but in some cases will not, especially if the student has been out of status for 5 months or more, or has previously applied for reinstatement. In that event, the USCIS may require the student to leave the US within 30 days. A student denied reinstatement will also need to apply for a new F-1 visa in his home country, even if the current visa is still valid, and pay the $200 SEVIS fee. For additional information please go to www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/index.htm.

Regaining status by travel is possible, but also is not guaranteed. This is the only method available to students who are out of status because of unauthorized employment. The student is given a new SEVIS I-20 for initial attendance and the existing SEVIS record is terminated. The student leaves the US and travels to his home country and either obtains a new visa based on his new I-20, or if the F-1 visa is still valid, the student may use that to return to the US (the latter is possible only if there has not been a denial of a reinstatement by the immigration service.) This method cancels the previous out-of-status condition, but it also cancels previous record of enrollment for the purposes of applying for employment authorization. The student who reinstates by travel enters the US as if he is arriving for the first time. Therefore he/she must be enrolled full time for at least 2 semesters before being eligible to apply for off-campus employment benefits, i.e. CPT, OPT. Even if a new visa is not required, a student who reinstates by travel will be required to pay the $200 SEVIS fee. Please note that this fee is not paid to UT Arlington, but to USCIS. For information on the SEVIS fee, see https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml.

Employment

I-9 Documentation (Verification of Employment Eligibility)

Employment opportunities for international students in the U.S. are restricted by law. It is illegal for employers to knowingly hire non-immigrants who do not have work authorization. Employers are required to verify employment eligibility for every employee, regardless of an employee's citizenship or immigration status, by completing the immigration document, Form I-9. (Note: Verification of employment eligibility is done by the employer. Employment permission, if necessary, is given by a DSO or USCIS, as appropriate.) To complete the I-9, you will be asked to show a document which establishes your identity, such as a passport, and a document which establishes that you are authorized to work in the U.S. This is usually the EAD (Employment Authorization Document), but may be a notation on your I-20 (as in the case of CPT), or a stamp in your passport. Having a Social Security card does not establish your authorization to work unless you are a U.S. citizen.

Besides the I-9, your employer will also ask you to complete a W-4 form so that the correct amount will be withheld from your paycheck to cover your income tax. You should not complete the Personal Allowances
Worksheet attached to the W-4. This is only for those individuals considered “resident for tax purposes”. In box #3 check "single", even if you are married, unless you are from Mexico, Japan, Korea, or Canada. On line 5 write "1", although students and exchange visitors from India may claim an additional deduction for a spouse and for each child born in the U.S. If there is no tax treaty with your home country which would reduce your taxes, you should ask that an additional amount per month be withheld from your paycheck. This is because the withholding tables used by your employer are for resident tax rates, not for the higher tax rates of non-immigrants. On a quarterly basis, your employer sends the money withheld from your paycheck to the Internal Revenue Service. It is important to have enough money withheld from your paycheck because you will be held liable for penalties if you owe more than $500 in taxes when you file your tax return at the end of the year. Alternatively, instead of requesting the additional amount to be withheld, you may check “single” at line 3 and on line 5 write “0”. If you do this, you would not need to ask for the additional amount to be withheld. In either case, do not check box #7 "exempt," even if there is a tax treaty between the U.S. and your country. If you have questions about completing this form, please contact the Payroll Office (817-272-5426).

The Immigration Service considers that the primary purpose of an F-1 non-immigrant is to be a student. Work must not interfere with that objective, and therefore it is limited to 20 hours a week while school is in session. No USCIS permission is required when a full-time student is working on-campus under the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship, since such work is considered to be part of an academic program. However, this type of work cannot qualify as part of a student's registration for full-time study.

Permission from a DSO is required for participation in "cooperative education programs" if such programs are available in the curriculum the student is following. Cooperative education programs (Curricular Practical Training) can allow a student to work part-time or full-time during a semester of the academic year in order to obtain some practical experience. If full-time curricular practical training exceeds one year, the student is not eligible for optional practical training.

On-Campus Employment

An F-1 student holding an I-20 from UTA may work on the UTA campus without having to obtain work authorization. However, the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Office require that employees have a social security number so that UTA can fulfill its reporting obligations to the IRS. Students who have made an application for a Social Security Number may be eligible for a comptroller ID number if SSN processing is taking an excessive amount of time, which the comptroller ID can be used temporarily for on-campus employment when there are delays in processing from the Social Security Administration. The “Comptroller ID” is obtained from the Payroll Office in the Wetsel Building. Students who are not eligible for a Social Security Card are not eligible for a Comptroller ID.

A student in F-1 status, enrolled full-time and in good academic standing may work 20 hours per week as long as the job does not interfere with the student’s ability to continue as a full-time student, and as long as the employment does not displace a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. During vacation periods an F-1 student may work on-campus for more than 20 hours per week. On-campus employment includes working for UTA, for an outside employer providing services to students (ARAMARK Campus Dining Services or University Bookstore), or for an outside employer academically affiliated with UTA (Summer Institute of Linguistics or UT Southwestern Medical Center). The 20 hour per week rule is strictly enforced. Even if the student has 2 jobs or works both for UTA and ARAMARK, the total of all hours worked for both employers each week cannot exceed 20 hours.

Off-Campus Employment (Based on Economic Necessity)

A student who has been in F-1 status at UTA for nine months and is in good academic standing may work off-campus part-time while school is in session, and full-time in the summer, provided he can demonstrate to USCIS that he has a genuine unforeseen economic need for the employment. Circumstances such as loss of scholarship, unexpected medical bills, fluctuation in foreign currency exchange, death of sponsor, or large and unexpected increases in tuition and living expenses, would qualify as unforeseen economic need. Application for off-campus work authorization based on economic need is made to USCIS on form I-765 ($340 fee). If approved, USCIS will give the student an EAD (Employment Authorization Document), indicating that the student is authorized to work for one year. The authorization can be extended if a new application is submitted. A student with this type of work authorization may accept any type of employment. If the student transfers to another school, however, the work authorization is no longer valid.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

A student who has been a full-time student in the US for nine consecutive months, enrolled at UTA for at least one semester, and is in good academic standing may work either part-time or full-time in a job related both to his field of study and to a specific course in which he is concurrently enrolled, as long as that course is described as a practicum or co-op, or independent study for which he will receive course credit. If all conditions are met and if the professor completes the form describing the work experience and how the student will be
graded for the course, the Office of International Education can authorize curricular practical training for a specific employer and for a specific period of time, corresponding to the CPT dates of the semester. Students may begin CPT employment on the day after the last day of class for the previous semester for which CPT is applied and no later than the official midterm date. Students on CPT may also continue CPT employment up to the day before the first day of class of the upcoming semester. All students, including those who transferred to UTA from another school, those who are changing their educational level or those who are changing their major, must have been enrolled full-time in their current program level and current major at UTA for at least one semester before being eligible for curricular practical training. At UTA, a student may have only two semesters of CPT per degree program, unless the training is required by the student’s degree program. Students having a GRA or GTA are not eligible for CPT. Requirements and procedures concerning curricular practical training can be found on the OIE website. OIE offers group information sessions regarding CPT. The current semester CPT info-sessions and CPT dates for that semester will be announced on the OIE webpage.

Optional Practical Training

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training

A student may have a total of 12 months of optional practical training per degree level which he may use either before or after graduating. There are four different situations which qualify for optional practical training:

1) During summer vacation, if student intends to enroll the following semester,
2) During the academic year (work may only be part-time),
3) After completing all course requirements for the degree, except for thesis or dissertation
4) After completion of all requirements for the degree, or graduation.

In all cases the student must have been in student status for one academic year, in good academic standing, and the work must be related to the student's area of study. Application is made to USCIS on form I-765 ($300 fee). Work may be either full-time or part-time, except in the case of employment during the academic year which can only be part-time, and employment after graduation, which may only be full-time. Part-time employment counts against the 12 month total at a ratio of 2:1 (2 months of part-time employment count as one month of full-time employment.)

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training

There are two different situations which qualify for pre-completion optional practical training:

1) After completing all course requirements for the degree, except for thesis or dissertation (pre- or post-completion OPT is available in this case).
2) After completion of all requirements for the degree, or graduation.

Applications for optional practical training after completion of studies may be submitted to USCIS 90 days prior and up to 60 days after the completion date. All practical training must end no later than 14 months after completion date. Optional practical training is not available to a student who has worked more than 12 months in full-time curricular practical training. Students are required by USCIS regulation to report the name and address of employers to the OIE. OIE then forwards that information to the SEVIS system. Students are also required to report periods of unemployment. During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization. Please note that there will be an additional case management fee of $100 for 12-month OPT applications and a fee of $150 for 17-month-Extension applications to the Office of International Education effective fall 2011 semester. For more details, please check OIE website.

17-month Extension of OPT for STEM students

The 12-month limit on F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) will be extended by 17 months, for a total of 29 months, for certain STEM degree holders (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) in the following fields:

- Actuarial Science
- Computer Science Applications
- Engineering
- Engineering Technologies
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Military Technologies
- Physical Sciences
- Science Technologies
- Medical Scientist (MS, PhD)

Eligibility is based on the following criterion:

1) The student must be currently participating in a period of standard Post-Completion OPT, working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student’s major area of study.
2) Student must have successfully completed a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a field on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List (shown above), from a SEVIS-certified college or university.
3) Student must have a job offer from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system. The student is responsible to provide the E-Verify information on line #17 of form I-765.
4) The student has not previously received a 17-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree. This benefit is a one-time benefit. Once you have received the 17-month extension you are no longer eligible for extensions in the future regardless of the number of degrees you receive.

5) Student will have to apply for the 17-month extension on Form I-765 with fee.

6) Applications for the 17-month STEM extension must be filed before the current EAD expires.

7) Students who timely file (prior to expiration of the 12-month OPT) an application for the 17-month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

8) The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to the DSO or through "any other means or process identified by DHS." An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of five consecutive business days without the employer's consent.

The employment authorization period for the 17-month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization, and ends 17 months later, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved. During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization. Students granted a 17-month OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month OPT period.

Please note that there will be an additional case management fee of $150 for 17-month-Extension applications to the Office of International Education. For more details, please check the OIE website.

**Additional Student Reporting Requirements while on OPT**

All students on OPT are required to report to the DSO: any change of name or address, employer name, employer address, and/or loss of employment and any interruption of such employment. All students on the 17-month OPT extension must make a validation report to the DSO every six months starting from the date the 17-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the 17-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first. The validation is a confirmation that the student's name and address, employer name and address, and/or loss of employment is current and accurate. The report is due to the DSO within 10 business days of each reporting date.

Information explaining the requirements and procedures for applying for OPT can be found on the OIE website. Group information sessions on OPT are also available. Please check the OIE webpage for the current semester schedule.

**F-2 Status**

The spouse or child of an F-1 student enters the U.S. in F-2 status and is admitted for the same length of time as the F-1 student. Each F-2 dependent has his or her own SEVIS I-20, which is signed by the F-1 student. If the spouse or child does not accompany the student to the U.S., but intends to arrive later, the Office of International Education will prepare a SEVIS I-20 for them which the F-1 student will sign before sending the documents to the dependents. The Office of International Education will also prepare a status letter for the student if he wishes. Any student wishing to bring a spouse and/or child to the U.S. should visit the Office of International Education to discuss the financial implications of the action and to have the necessary documents prepared. Spouses in F-2 status are neither allowed to work in the U.S., nor are they eligible to attend school. An F-2 spouse who wishes to enroll in school would first be required to change status to F-1. F-2 children may attend primary or secondary school full time.

**J-1 Exchange Visitor Status and Visa Regulations**

A J-1 visa is issued to a participant in an Exchange Visitor Program approved by the U.S. Department of State. Exchange Visitors may be students, research scholars, international visitors or trainees. To obtain a J-1 visa, the applicant must be accepted by a U.S. institution or agency that has an approved Exchange Visitor Program. Once accepted, the sponsor will send the applicant form DS-2019. Before applying for a J-1 visa, the exchange visitor must pay a SEVIS fee. Information on that fee is available at https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml. The SEVIS fee receipt, the original Form DS-2019, financial documents are required to apply for the J-1 visa.

**Program Sponsor and Program Number**
The agency or institution issuing the DS-2019 is called the sponsor. Each sponsor authorized by the U.S. Department of State to issue Form DS-2019 is assigned a program number for identification purposes. UTA’s program number is P-1-05968. There are also exchange visitors at UTA sponsored by other organizations.

Requirements for J-1 Exchange Visitors

J-1 students must receive a substantial portion of their financial support from non-personal sources, unless the student is taking part in a short-term reciprocal exchange program. Substantial means that more than 50% of the financial support is from a scholarship, assistantship, grant, or through the home country employer. All J-1 Exchange Visitors and their dependents are also required to be covered by health insurance meeting the minimum requirements established by the U.S. Department of State. If the J-1 Exchange Visitor fails to insure himself or his family as required, he will be out of status and could be required to apply for reinstatement or leave the U.S. UTA currently requires all international students, regardless of non-immigrant status, to be covered by health insurance that meets the J-1 requirements. Staff insurance meets the J-1 requirements except for repatriation and medical evacuation insurance. An inexpensive policy for this type of insurance is available for purchase in the Office of International Education. J-1 students and scholars are required to arrive at the sponsoring institution no earlier than 30 days before and no later than 30 days after the start date on form DS-2019.

Change of Status or Category

Exchange Visitors who are in J-1 status and subject to the two-year home residence requirement (which requires you to reside a minimum of two years in your home country after completion of your program) may not change to any other non-immigrant status except that of government official (A-1) or international organization employee or representative (G-1), unless the 2-year residency requirement is waived. Exchange visitors who enter the U.S. in one exchange visitor category, such as “researcher,” are not permitted to change to another category, such as “student,” unless special circumstances exist and such a change is authorized by the U.S. Department of State. In addition, the field of study or research may not change while the student or scholar is in the US, without prior permission from the Dept of State. A non-student exchange visitor may not begin a new program unless he has spent at least two years in his or her home country before beginning the new J-1 program.

Extension of Stay

A J-1 exchange visitor is admitted to the U.S. for duration of status (D/S). The expiration date on the DS-2019 is the completion date of the program. If the program sponsor will extend the program beyond the original termination date, the exchange visitor must apply for an extension of stay before the expiration date is past. If the sponsor is an institution or agency other than UTA, the exchange visitor should present a copy of the new DS-2019 to the Office of International Education. If the exchange visitor is sponsored by UTA (program number P-1-05968), he/she should consult with the Office of International Education about procedures for extension. In order to extend the exchange visitor’s stay, the Office of International Education will need a new appointment form from the sponsoring department, or, in the case of a student, a recommendation for extension from the academic advisor, and new financial support documents to cover the period of the proposed extension of stay.

If the expiration date on the DS-2019 is past, an exchange visitor is considered out of status and may not extend his stay until he is reinstated by the U.S. Department of State at a cost of $198. There is a maximum period for which some exchange visitors may remain in the U.S. Including extensions, the total time spent in the U.S. as an exchange visitor may not exceed 5 years for professors and researchers. Students may remain in the US for the duration of their programs, assuming they show clear progress toward earning a degree or certificate. Students may be allowed to remain for a maximum of 18 months beyond graduation for academic training. For undergraduate and pre-doctoral training, a student can engage in up to 18 months or the period of full course of study, whichever is less. PhD students may be allowed to remain for a maximum of 36 months beyond graduation for academic training in 18-month increments. At the end of the program, J-1 students and scholars are granted an additional 30 days to travel or settle their affairs in the US before returning to their home countries. The individual may not work, apply for an extension, or a transfer or change of status during this 30-day grace period.

Course-Load Requirements

The sponsor of an Exchange Visitor Program determines the purpose of the program it offers and establishes the definition of full-time study. J-1 students on the P-1-05968 program should consult the Office of International Education regarding questions about full-time study. At UTA, full-time study for graduate students is defined as nine credit hours per semester. For undergraduates, it is twelve credit hours.

Transfer to Another Program

An exchange visitor who wishes to transfer to the Exchange Visitor Program of another sponsor must notify the current sponsor of his intentions. A transfer is allowed only if the transfer contributes to the realization of the
exchange visitor's original purpose in coming to the U.S., only if the exchange visitor has not used all of the time allowed under his category, and only if the application is made before the current DS-2019 expires. The current sponsor enters the new sponsor information into SEVIS and indicates the date the transfer is effective. The new sponsor will not be able to issue a DS-2019 until the transfer date is reached. On the date of transfer, the previous sponsor loses control of the SEVIS record, and employment must cease at that institution.

Travel Outside the United States
The travel instructions in this chapter for students in F-1 status should be followed by those in J-1 status, with one exception. An exchange visitor who wishes to leave the U.S. temporarily must carry the DS-2019, which has been endorsed by the program sponsor which may or may not be UTA. This form is to be shown to the immigration authorities upon re-entry into the U.S. If a J-1 scholar intends to travel outside of the U.S. for more than 30 consecutive days, he/she should contact the Office of International Education prior to traveling to discuss the details of the travel.

J-1 Reinstatement
If a J-1 student or scholar overstays his DS-2019, drops out of his program, or otherwise violates his status, he must apply for reinstatement. The application consists of a statement from both the program sponsor and the J-1 individual, a new DS-2019 endorsed for reinstatement, financial support documents, copies of all previous DS-2019 and IAP-66 forms, and a fee of $367. Reinstatement will not be possible if more than nine months have elapsed. While the application is pending, the J-1 student or scholar may not work. The status violation also affects any dependent in J-2 status, and will automatically cancel any work authorization the J-2 dependent has.

Employment

Part-Time Employment During Academic Year
If a J-1 student needs part-time employment during the academic year due to financial hardship arising from unforeseen circumstances, the program sponsor may authorize off-campus employment for a specific employer for a specific period of time. Such employment cannot interfere with full-time pursuit of the exchange visitor's program objectives. J-1 students sponsored by UTA should consult the Office of International Education.

J-1 students may work part-time on-campus either as a graduate assistant or as an employee of UTA. Work is limited to 20 hours per week and must take place "on the premises" of the University. Because of this stipulation, work at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Duncanville or at UT-SWMC in Dallas, would not qualify as on-campus employment for a J-1 student.

Work during the academic year may not exceed 20 hours per week in total. A student who has an assistantship for 20 hours per week, for instance, may not work another part-time job, either on campus or off-campus. Students working on campus must contact Office of International Education prior to beginning of on-campus employment as the employment must be recorded on their electronic SEVIS DS-2019 record.

Academic Training
Academic Training is employment that is related to the student's field of study. J-1 students are allowed 18 months of academic training which may be used during the academic year, during summers, or after graduation. An offer of employment must be available prior to a J-1 student's graduation so that the DS-2019 can be extended to cover the period of academic training. Ph.D. students who hold post doctoral research positions are allowed an additional 18 months post doctoral academic training. The program sponsor authorizes academic training for a specific employer and for a specific period of time.

Employment of J-1 Researchers and Scholars
Researchers and scholars in J-1 status are authorized to accept employment by their program sponsors. If the J-1 exchange visitor wants to work elsewhere, he is required to transfer to a new program sponsor, and may do so only if that employment is directly related to his original program objectives, and he has not exceeded the five year limit. Short term employment such as consulting work or presenting a lecture at another institution is allowed only with the approval of the program sponsor and the U.S. Department of State. A J-1 Research Scholar who has completed his program must reside outside of the U.S. for 12 months before being admitted in a new J-1 program, whether or not he is subject to the 2-year residency requirement (212e), in addition, a J-1 Research Scholar who has completed his program is not eligible for a repeat participation of such program as a professor or research and must reside outside of the U.S. for 24 months.

J-2 Status
An exchange visitor's spouse or child is issued a separate DS-2019 with a unique SEVIS ID number. The dependent may stay in J-2 status for as long as the J-1 exchange visitor remains in the US. If the spouse or child does not accompany the J-1 visitor to the U.S. and intends to follow later, the DS-2019 forms for dependent travel must be obtained from the sponsor and must be sent to the spouse or child to obtain the J-2 visa. Dependents in J-2 status may attend school full- or part-time. J-2 dependents may not stay in the U.S. for extended periods of time without the J-1.

J-2 Work Permission

A person in J-2 status may apply to USCIS for permission to accept employment. Permission will be granted only if earnings are meant to cover expenses beyond the basic cost of living for spouse and children, and may not be used for the support of the J-1 exchange visitor. An application is sent to the Texas Service Center and consists of Form I-765, a check for $300, a copy of the DS-2019, a copy of the I-94 card, a copy of the visa, and two photographs. Work authorization is limited to the period of time covered by the J-1's program. There is no restriction as to the type of employment.

Trips Outside the U.S., Especially to Canada and Mexico

Any person who would need a Canadian non-immigrant visa to enter Canada directly from his or her own country needs a Canadian visa to enter from the U.S. For specific instructions, see the Canadian Embassy website at www.Canadianembassy.org.

To enter Mexico from the U.S., an international student does not need a Mexican visa if they have a valid U.S visa. For specific instructions, visit the website of the Mexican Embassy at http://portal.sre.gob.mx/was_eng/index.php?Itemid=73.

The U.S. government has a provision called Automatic Revalidation. This allows nonimmigrants traveling to Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent island for 30 days or less to return to the United States without a valid visa. A valid Form I-94 should be carried during the trip. For more information, visit http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1299.html. Students and Scholars traveling to Canada or Mexico for the purpose of renewing the U.S. visa, should be aware that if for some reason the visa is denied and the previous visa is no longer valid, they may not return to the U.S., but would be required to return directly to their home country.

Income Tax

Who Files an Income Tax Return?

Everyone who works in the U.S., regardless of non-immigrant status or income, must file a federal income tax return every year. Most states (but not Texas) also collect income taxes. Although all income must be reported, it is not necessarily all taxable, however. For example:

- Income not for service. If the income is classified as a scholarship, fellowship, or grant and does not involve any service on the student's part, the portion that goes toward tuition, fees, books and required expenses may be exempt from taxation. Scholarships from foreign sources are generally tax-exempt. Graduate assistantships are taxable because the student performs a service (teaching/research) for wages.
- Tax treaty. There may be a tax treaty between your country and the United States. That treaty may exempt some of your income from taxation. The Office of International Education and the Payroll Office have information about tax treaties. If an individual can claim the benefits of a tax treaty, at the beginning of every year he needs to complete IRS form 8833 at the Payroll Office.

When to File Your Income Tax Return

April 15 is the deadline for filing a return on the income earned in the U.S. during the preceding calendar year. If there was no income, only form 8843 must be filed by June 15.

In January each year, your employer will send you a "W-2 form," showing the amount you have earned during the preceding year and the amount of federal and state income tax that was withheld. The W-2 form is used to prepare your income tax return. The amount withheld often exceeds the amount you would be required to pay, so failure to file a tax return may result in a financial loss for you. You must file a return to receive a refund.

Even if you leave the U.S. permanently, you must file a tax return for the last year you were in the U.S. You can get a tax return form from the nearest U.S. consulate in January, or you can download them from the IRS website. Be sure your employer has your home country address so he can send the W-2 form to you. The tax forms needed by most international students and scholars are the Form 1040NR and Form 8843.
Choosing the Appropriate Tax Form

In order to choose the federal tax form that is appropriate for you, you must know whether you are classified as a "resident alien for tax purposes" or a "non-resident alien for tax purposes." In general, international students are classified as non-residents for tax purposes, at least for the first 5 calendar years they are in the U.S. Scholars are classified as non-residents for the first 2 calendar years they are in the U.S.

Where to Get Tax Forms

The Payroll Office oversees a tax preparation software program called Glacier that is available at no cost to international students and scholars. Passwords for the Glacier Online Tax Program can be obtained through the Payroll Office. IRS Forms are also usually available in bank lobbies, post offices, and the UTA and Arlington Public Libraries, but the forms you need may not be available in these locations. Many forms can also be downloaded from the IRS website http://www.irs.ustreas.gov. If you have previously filed an income tax return, a new one will be mailed to you in the following year. Form 8843, that is now required of all international students and exchange visitors, is available only from the IRS website.

Documentation

It is a good idea to keep complete records of your financial transactions. Without good records, completing your income tax returns can be difficult. If you seek assistance from someone else in preparing your income tax returns, that person will need thorough records of your income and expenditures. It is very important to keep a copy of any tax form you submit.

Assistance with Filing Income Tax Returns

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the U.S. agency responsible for collecting income taxes. You may address questions to the IRS by calling at (800) 829-1040, toll free. The IRS sometimes has trained assistants in shopping malls and other public locations to help local residents complete their tax forms. Details of such arrangements are widely publicized in February and March of each year. The volunteers may or may not be able to assist you in filing the 1040NR forms.

The Office of International Education has general information about the software available from Payroll and where to find the required forms. There are a number of businesses that, for a fee, will assist taxpayers in preparing their income tax returns. You can find them in the yellow pages under "Tax Return Preparation." If you choose to hire somebody to help with your tax forms, it would be wise to ask that person if they are trained in the filing of the Form 1040NR before hiring him. Filing your tax returns on the incorrect form can result in penalties.

The Office of International Education cannot provide assistance in preparing tax returns. Income tax laws and procedures are complex and continually changing. Only a trained person whose business it is to remain up-to-date concerning those laws and procedures can help you. You may call the IRS at (800) 829-3676 to get a copy of important tax publications for yourself. In addition to the 1040NR and instructions, especially helpful publications that may not be available at the library include #515 (Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Corporations), #519 (U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens), and #901 (U.S. Tax Treaties). Other publications that are more commonly available are #508 (Educational Expenses), #520 (Scholarships and Fellowships), and #521 (Moving Expenses). Many forms and guides are also available at the IRS website: http://www.irs.ustreas.gov.

Social Security

"Social Security" is the U.S. government's social pension and benefits plan. It is intended to benefit retired people and certain people who are injured, disabled, or left without adequate means of financial support. It is financed by means of withholding some money from employees' pay and by employers' contributions. Almost all Americans have a "Social Security number" which designates their account with the Social Security Administration.

If you are employed in the U.S., you will need a Social Security number even if the income is exempt from Social Security withholding.

Obtaining a Social Security Number

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get a social security number unless you have need for one due secured an offer of employment. Dependents of non-immigrants are rarely allowed to apply for social security numbers, except for those in J-2 status who have already received a work authorization card from USCIS. UTA students and scholars will need to apply for the Social Security Card in person at a Social Security Administration Office. You will need your passport, I-94 (link to I-94 info on p.54), and I-20 or DS-2019, evidence of an offer of employment and the signed SSN Request form from the Office of International Education indicating you are in
valid status and eligible to work. The application form, which is available in the Office of International Education, is brief and simple. Generally people living in Arlington find it most convenient to go to the local Arlington office (see below), but there is also an office in downtown Fort Worth at 819 Taylor Street and downtown Dallas at 3808 W. Clarendon.

Arlington Social Security Office
2010 North Texas 360 (Northridge Technical Center)
Grand Prairie, TX 75050
Tel. (800) 772-1213
Open weekdays 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Exemptions

Students who are in F-1 or J-1 status and who are working legally are not required to pay into the Social Security fund, at least as long as they are classified as non-residents for tax purposes. The University does not withhold Social Security payments from students in F-1 or J-1 status who have been in the US for 5 tax years or less. If you are in F-1 or J-1 status and have an employer other than the University, you should make sure the employer knows you are exempt from Social Security withholding. See IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens, for more information.

Many businesses may indicate that they need a Social Security number in order to serve you. Banks, for example, routinely request such information. If you do not have employment authorization and are not eligible to apply for a Social Security number, however, you will need to explain that situation to the bank. You may need to talk to a bank employee in a supervisory position before you find someone who will understand how to handle your circumstances. The Office of International Education can issue a letter describing your situation if you continue to have trouble with businesses regarding your lack of a social security card.

Normally a social security number is required to apply for a Texas driver’s license or State of Texas identification card. The Department of Public Safety has a form available, DL-13 Social Security Affidavit Form, which you sign, indicating that you are not eligible for a Social Security card. Once you sign that document, you should be able to proceed with your application.

Students and dependents with no Social Security number will need to apply for an IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). The ITIN can substitute for the Social Security number on tax return forms (which must be filed annually by all non-immigrants, regardless of income). ITIN application forms (IRS Form W-7) are available in the Payroll Office.
Appendix II
**University Terminology**

As is true of any other people in the world, Americans have developed certain abbreviations and peculiarities in their everyday language that vary depending on where you are. As a UTA student, you are sure to encounter certain abbreviations and terms unique to this environment with which you will need to be familiar. Some are listed below.

- **academic advisor**: a faculty member appointed to assist a student in planning their academic career.

- **to ace a test**: to get an "A" grade on an exam.

- **add/drop**: period at the beginning of the semester when students may change their programs of studies by "dropping" and "adding" courses. Also refers to the procedure by which this is done.

- **assignment**: out-of-class work required by a professor, due by a specified time.

- **blue book**: a small booklet of paper with a blue cover, often used for essay examinations.

- **bomb a test**: to do poorly on an exam.

- **comps**: comprehensive examination, an examination (written, oral, or both) Master's and Ph.D. students take following completion of all the course work required for the degree.

- **cram**: to study for a test, usually the night before, in a short period of time - implies that one has not studied the material earlier.

- **curve**: grading system in which student is graded on his performance in relation to other students in the class.

- **cut**: to be absent from a class.

- **degreed undergraduate**: 1) student who has already earned his degree, but is required to take more courses before being admitted to the graduate program; 2) someone working on a second bachelor's degree.

- **dissertation**: a scholarly independent research study required to obtain a doctoral degree.

- **drop a course**: to withdraw from a course.

- **to drop out**: to quit the university without graduating.

- **DSO**: Designated School Official (authorized to sign immigration documents on behalf of the school).


- **extracurricular**: those activities such as clubs, sports, etc. in which one participates outside the classroom.

- **final**: last exam of a semester.

- **flunk**: to fail to achieve a passing grade.

- **frat**: an abbreviated and sometimes derogatory word for fraternity.

- **fraternity**: a social organization of men, often living together in a house; also, a professional or academic honorary organization on-campus.

- **freshman**: a student in the first year of study at a college or university (or a four-year secondary school); someone with less than 30 undergraduate credits.

- **GPA**: grade point average.

- **graduate or "grad" student**: a student who has earned a baccalaureate and is pursuing a higher degree.

- **Greek**: member of a fraternity or a sorority.

- **GRA**: graduate research assistant.

- **GTA**: graduate teaching assistant.

- **honor system**: the practice of relying on students not to cheat in any academic matter.

- **incomplete**: a temporary mark given to a student who is doing passing work in a course but who cannot complete all the requirements for the course during the term. The student must have a valid reason and must complete the requirements within a period of time acceptable to the instructor. Indicated by an "I" on a student's grade report.

- **I-Week**: International Week.

- **junior**: a student in the third year of study at a college or university; someone with 60-89 undergraduate credits.

- **major**: a student's primary field of study.

- **matriculate**: to formally enroll in a college or university; to register for classes.

- **mid-term**: the most important test given in the middle of the semester; the week when such tests are given.
**minor** - a student's secondary field of study

**OIE** – Office of International Education

**orals** - oral examinations which a student working toward a doctor’s degree must pass in order to become a "candidate" for a Ph.D. degree. A test of the student's knowledge in the field

**prof** - a professor

**P.E.** - physical education (EXSA) course

**quiz** - a short test, often given without notice

**reading list (syllabus)** - a list of books and articles prepared by the professor. Required and suggested texts are usually so indicated.

**registrar** - official recorder of a student's academic information such as courses taken and grades received

**registration** - procedure of enrolling officially in classes at the beginning of each semester

**semester** - one term, or half an academic year

**senior** - a student in the fourth year of study at a college or university; someone with more than 89 undergraduate credits

**skim** - to read something quickly to get a general idea of its contents

**sophomore** - a student in the second year of study at a college or university; someone with 30-59 undergraduate credits

**sorority** - comparable to a fraternity, except that it is for females instead of males

**syllabus** - an outline of class activities provided by the professor with information on assignments, readings, and exams

**TA** - teaching assistant, often referred to as GTA

**thesis** - a scholarly research paper which may be required to obtain a master's degree

**transcript** - official record of a student's grades and courses

**transfer student** - someone who changes to another school before completing a degree

**UC** - the University Center

**undergraduate** - a student working towards his or her bachelor's degree
Appendix III

Chart for Converting Clothing Sizes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's Sizes</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>England</th>
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**Adult clothing** sizes vary from one manufacturer to another. It is wise to try clothing on in the store's dressing room if possible before you make a purchase. If you buy a wrong size, you may or may not be able to return it for cash (or credit toward another purchase). If you do return something, it is best if you haven't removed the tags and still have the packaging and receipt.

**Children's clothing** is sized according to the child's age from infancy through approximately six years. Infant's clothes will be sized according to months of age, from newborn (or NB) through 18 months. It is always wise to consider the child's height and weight when buying clothing. It is not uncommon for infants and toddlers to wear much larger sizes than what their age indicates. Ask a salesperson for assistance until you are familiar with children's clothing sizes.
Appendix IV

International Spouses and Children

The spouses -- wives or husbands -- of international students and scholars are sometimes discouraged by the fact that their spouse is so busy, and that they are left alone for such long hours with nothing to do. This can be an unpleasant situation for everyone concerned. It can be improved somewhat if the spouse has the opportunity to participate in some activities of his/her own, and to meet some people. It is quite possible for a spouse who can manage some English and who is interested and outgoing to become extremely involved in educational and social activities in Arlington. Here are some possibilities:

- Church-sponsored student centers such as the Baptist Student Union and Lutheran Student Center often plan daytime activities to learn more about local society and language usage.
- Arlington Public Libraries (George W. Hawkes Central Library is on Abram between Center and Mesquite Streets). Movies, records, videotapes, and a good selection of books are available to be checked out. The public libraries also sponsor free activities for children.
- Arlington Parks and Recreation Department plan classes in swimming, crafts, and physical fitness.
- Volunteer for a charity or other non-profit agency. Such organizations are often in need of assistance and would welcome your time. Note that you cannot be paid or otherwise reimbursed for your work due to your immigration status.
- Adult education classes on a variety of topics are offered through the Continuing Education Division, 140 W Mitchell St Arlington, TX 76010. Call 817-272-2581 for more information.

English Classes for Spouses

Many international spouses want to study English. UTA's English Language Institute (ELI, tel. 817-272-2730) offers an intensive English Program in which students study English for 20 hours weekly. There are six levels of instruction. In each level students learn reading, writing, grammar, and communication skills. There are also accent reduction classes.

Short-term English as a Second Language classes are offered through UTA's Continuing Education Division, as well as through adult education classes sponsored by the Fort Worth Independent School District, tel. 817-531-4300. Several of the church-related student centers around campus (Baptist Student Union, First Baptist Church, and Lutheran Student Center) also offer informal conversational English Classes.

Television is a good aid to learning English. Children's programs such as "Sesame Street" are especially good for beginners.

Pre-Schools and Day-Care Centers

These schools are for children younger than five. These schools vary considerably with respect to cost, philosophy of instruction, pupil-teacher ratio, and schedule. Generally, a pre-school has shorter sessions and emphasizes educational activity. Day-care facilities have longer hours and are intended to be places where children can receive care while their parents are otherwise occupied.

Public Schools

Public schools in the U.S. provide free education for children between the ages of 5 and 18. They are divided into three levels: elementary -- kindergarten through 6th grade (ages 5 to 12); junior high -- 7th through 9th grade (ages 12 to 15); and senior high -- 10th through 12th grade (ages 15 to 18).

To register, children must be 5 years old by September 1 of the year they enter kindergarten. If your child is entering school for the first time, you will need a birth certificate or other proof of your child's age. If your child has previously attended school, you will need a transcript of grades or some other document indicating the grade level at which your child should be placed. English as a Second Language classes are available through the public schools.

Children usually attend the public school nearest their place of residence. To find out which public school is nearest to your place of residence, and to get more information, call the Arlington Independent School District (AISD) Administration at 817-459-7342. The AISD English as a Second Language Program Coordinator can be reached at 817-459-7429. To register a child for the first time, you must have:

1) The student accompanied by a parent or guardian,
2) Proof of address such as a lease or utility bill,
3) Satisfactory evidence of required immunizations,
4) A birth certificate for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade,
5) For second through 12th graders a) their last report card, and b) the name and address of their previous
school. The Arlington school district will send for the student's school records.

6) Student's Social Security card if he or she has one.

School children must meet certain immunization requirements. In order to enroll in classes, your child must have had vaccines for Polio, Diptheria-Tetanus, Rubella (German three-day measles), Measles, Mumps, and Haemophilus influenza. The complete date (month, day, year) and the name of the physician or clinic where each immunization was given must be included. For more information on immunizations, you can call the Arlington Independent School District (tel. (682) 867-4611) or the Agape Group (tel. 817-265-3003).

Private Schools

Unlike public schools, private schools do not provide free education. The families of children attending such schools must pay tuition. Costs vary, depending on the age or grade and on the particular school. Like public schools, however, private schools are open to any student, regardless of religious affiliation.

Babysitting

A babysitter is a person you pay to stay with and care for your children for a given period of time while you are away from your home. Babysitters receive $6 or more per hour. Information about students who babysit can be obtained from the classified advertisements of the newspaper. You may also place a request for a babysitter with UTA Student Employment Services. It is wise to ask for names of past employers or other references before hiring someone you just recently met. A babysitter is not always a person who knows the children.

Safety

Leaving children alone at home or not keeping an eye on them is a potential safety hazard and is considered neglect. Severe cases of such neglect could result in the removal of children from the home or the jailing of the parents.

Cleaning products in the U.S. (e.g., laundry detergents, floor and car waxes, oven cleaners, etc.) may be different from those you are accustomed to using. Cleaning products are usually harmful and can be fatal if not used properly. They are particularly dangerous for children, who may play with them or eat them if the products are left within reach. Other things that can be harmful to children are certain household plants, which may have poisonous leaves or berries, and plastic bags. Practice safety by keeping harmful products where your children cannot reach them. Simple things such as laundry detergent are poisonous if eaten. If your child has played with or eaten something you think might be harmful call:

POISON CONTROL: 1-800-764-7661
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